

## REVIEW

of prof. Tsvetan Iliev, PhD in the procedure for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree “PhD” in the field of **higher education 3.” Social, economic and legal; sciences”, professional direction 3.8 “Economics”, scientific specialty (PhD program) “Economics and Management (Industry)”**.

The review was prepared in my capacity of a member of the scientific jury, appointed by Order № 23/01.02.2023 of the Rector of IBS – Botevgrad, and meets the requirements of Art. 10 para 1 of LDASRB and Art. 32 para 1 of the Regulations for its implementation.

**Candidate for the procedure: Andrian Georgiev Georgiev**

**Dissertation topic: “Development of a model of management strategy for increasing the knowledge and skills of the Bulgarian population in the first aid”**

**SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISOR: Sonya Mileva, PhD Scn**

### **I. Evaluation of the dissertation structure**

The dissertation submitted by Andrian Georgiev is 173 standard pages, including 156 pp. main text and 17 pp. applications. Structurally, it is relatively balanced, with the content divided as follows: introduction, exposition in three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and three appendices. The dissertation includes 38 tables and 37 figures. The bibliographic reference comprises 108 titles, 9 of which in Bulgarian, 41 in English, 8 normative documents and 50 Internet resources

Regarding the structure, I can say that the dissertation has a whole and complete form, which corresponds to the requirements for such a work.

### **II. Evaluation of the dissertation content**

The main motive in the selection and development of the topic, according to the PhD student, is related to the need to implement a systematic, strategic approach to eliminate the consequences of ignorance and non-differentiation of emergency situations, as well as the need to develop a sustainable model and mechanism to ensure the effectiveness of the

process. PhD student Georgiev believes that from managerial point of view the focus should be on establishing the relationship and dependencies of the different participants, their roles and responsibilities in the first aid. The participants in the process are identified as first responders, emergency aid structures, Bulgarian Red Cross and a wide range of other participants (municipal structures, NGOs, etc.) and stakeholders directly and indirectly related to the timely provision of first aid in public places.

The topic of the dissertation is interdisciplinary, which implies the possibility of using scientific approaches, methods and tools in the field of management, psychology and behavioral sciences.

The **object** of study in the dissertation is the knowledge and attitudes in Bulgarian society about first aid. **The subject of the study** are the possibilities for the formation of knowledge and skills for first aid among the Bulgarian society, in particular – teachers of lower secondary and upper secondary education, and their dissemination among students.

On the basis of the object and subject thus outlined, **the aim** of the dissertation is to investigate the knowledge and skills of the population in first aid, creating and testing a conceptual model for their improvement. In order to achieve the outlined goal, PhD student Georgiev foresees the implementation of the following **tasks**:

1. Situational analysis of the Bulgarian first aid legislation. Comparative benchmarking analysis of best practices from leading European countries.

2. conduct an empirical study on the preparedness and readiness of the Bulgarian population to provide first aid in case of an accident or acute illness.

3. development and testing of model strategy for increasing first aid knowledge and skills on the example of the target group.

The fulfillment of the tasks set by the PhD student, I believe, implies the achievement of the dissertation objective.

The **thesis**, which PhD Georgiev defends in the dissertation, is that **the application of a model for the formation and development of first aid skills will lead to an increase and development of adequate knowledge and skills among the representatives of the target groups. This would have a direct bearing on reducing mortality, respectively optimizing costs (in hospital treatment, for the maintenance of emergency teams, etc.), quality of life and achieving strategic objectives in the health sector.** To confirm it, the following **research hypotheses** are considered:

1. The lack of legal and normative regulation has a negative impact on the maintenance of first aid knowledge and skills among the Bulgarian society.

2. The low proportion of people trained in first aid and the absence of a system for monitoring and evaluation/self-assessment of the level of knowledge and skills are the main factors responsible for the poor self-assessment of the Bulgarian society in first aid.

3. The implementation of a national model management strategy will lead to a significant, lasting and sustainable increase in first aid knowledge and skills among Bulgarian society.

For the formation of his point of view on the above-mentioned issues the PhD student has taken into account the best practices in a number of European countries (Germany, Austria, Norway, England) and the experience in international organizations working on the topic - European Resuscitation Council (ERC), American Heart Association (AHA), International federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), European Emergency Number Association 112 (EENA 112), etc.

The **research methodology** used by the PhD student includes:

1. Literature review and critical analysis of available secondary information on the topic related to the provision of FP and population preparedness.

2. Situation analysis and primary data from the 2019 Society and First Aid Authored National Survey (Wave 1).

3. An empirical survey “Society and First Aid II” of 2022 (wave 2) was conducted to investigate the knowledge and skills of the population in first aid.

4. Development and testing of a conceptual model to enhance the training of the population in the provision of PP based on the specific target group – teachers of junior secondary and high school and their dissemination to student.

This gives me a reason to point out that PhD student Georgiev knows and can use a wide range of research methods and approaches, on the basis of which he tests the above hypotheses to confirm his position on the problems so outlined.

## **FIRST CHAPTER**

### **ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY BASE IN BULGARIA CONCERNING THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THE BULGARIAN POPULATION IN FIRST AID**

It provides an overview and clarification of concepts and an overview of the legal framework, examines the economic aspects and financing of emergency care in Bulgaria. On this basis, a comparative analysis of best practices from leading European countries is also made. Good impression is made by the approach chosen by the PhD student to review and evaluate the legal framework in our country regarding the definition of the concept of first aid. As a result, An. Georgiev finds that there is no comprehensive definition in the Bulgarian normative base and therefore turns to finding such a definition in the documents of a number of international organizations.

From the study of the documents of these organizations I can define as logical the conclusion made by the PhD student that the lack of clear scope, boundaries,

recommendations and models for the development of first aid in Bulgarian legislation directly affects not only public health, quality of life, but also has a serious economic impact.

Among the key issues that are also addressed in chapter one are those on the efficiency of the allocation of financial resources in the health sector, in particular, for emergency care. Here PhD student Georgiev concludes that the lack of sufficient efficiency in the allocation of funds causes losses for society as a whole. In this sense, it is stated that only the severe and serious cases, which require immediate medical attention and treatment of patients, should be admitted to the structure of emergency care, whose activity is paid by the state, excluding incidents of a less serious nature. First aid, apart from being life-saving, is directly related to other complex issues such as readiness and willingness to help, knowledge and skills to do so, or the transfer of responsibility to Emergency Medical Centers.

In this context, emphasis is placed on the National Health Strategy (2014-2020) that insufficient funding is one of the reasons for the worsening staffing, insufficient qualification and motivation of those working in the MNS. Building on this, the PhD recognizes the existence of a drive to improve emergency outpatient care through the implementation of various policies linked to specific outcomes. To this end, the need for a strategic model to provide first aid training for the country's citizens is outlined as an imperative. As an example in this direction is the review made by An. Georgiev on the practice in Norway, Germany and the UK.

## **SECOND CHAPTER**

### **APPROACH AND METHODOLOGICAL TOOLKIT FOR CONDUCTING AND EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS OF THE BULGARIAN POPULATION TO RESPOND TO AN ACCIDENT OR ACUTE ILLNESS**

The second chapter of the dissertation is of a methodological nature. The PhD student pays attention to the importance of acquiring first aid skills. It is predetermined by the fact that even the fastest ambulances in the world cannot arrive at the scene immediately after reporting to the emergency services.

The lack of sufficient volume and quality information on the problem is a reason for PhD student Georgiev to offer his methodology for data collection, evaluation and proposing management solutions. For this purpose, a survey called "The Society and First Aid" is carried out. It is organized and conducted with the support of the First Aid School of the FirstAidbg.com and the First Three Minutes Foundation, and the initiator and organizer of the study is the dissertant.

The main objective of the study is to get a clear picture of how people perceive their preparation to provide assistance in the event of an accident or acute illness, reaching the

maximum number of people. On the other hand, the study aims to examine the attitude of the population towards first aid as an act of assistance, as well as how it perceives the placement of life-saving AVD equipment in public place. The main tool of the survey is an online questionnaire.

The results of the survey have enabled the PhD student to draw the following more important conclusions:

1. There is an increasing need to increase and/or strengthen the knowledge and skills of society for first aid and use of life-saving equipment AVD.

2. The preparation of a proposal for a model management strategy and the introduction of a legal framework for mandatory refresher courses in first aid will channel this need and Bulgaria will reach and even surpass the threshold of 30% trained population – such that is considered acceptable at European level.

3. People are afraid to provide first aid due to lack of sufficient training and periodic refreshment of the knowledge and skills they have.

To take adequate action to neutralize the identified problems An. Georgiev proposes an approach to develop a model of management strategy, the SMART goal-setting approach is appropriate, where there is the greatest opportunity to define specific, measurable, acceptable and realistic goals. This approach the PhD student puts as a methodology of the dissertation research.

### **THIRD CHAPTER**

#### **DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF A MODEL STRATEGY FOR INCREASING THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE SPECIFIC TARGET GROUP**

The third chapter of the dissertation thesis the PhD student begins with the examination of the results of the survey defining the model for increasing the knowledge and skills of the first aid society. The basis for studying the knowledge and skills for first aid is the data collected from a national online survey “Society and First Aid” conducted in 2019 and a second one in 2022. PhD student Georgiev reports that due to the lack of systematic efforts and specific measures to overcome the identified problems, a re-examination is necessary in order to establish the existence of critical areas of intervention and the need to develop a model of strategy.

The data from the empirical studies in 2019 and 2022 prove the second working hypothesis of the doctoral dissertation, namely that low proportion of trained people in first aid, as well as the absence of system for monitoring and assessing the level of knowledge and skills are the main factors responsible for the unsatisfactory self-assessment of the Bulgarian first aid society.

In the second part of Chapter Three, the dissertation paper examines the structure of a model of management strategy. For this purpose, PhD student Georgiev focuses on the CAF (Common Assessment Framework, CAF) method, which is widely applied by the European Network of Public Administration. Using as a starting point the structure of the CAF model, specific stages/elements of the process of developing a model of management strategy to increase the readiness and confidence of the population to provide first aid in the event of an accident or in acute illness have been selected. Here, the PhD student proposes two approaches to developing a model of strategy. The first is “from bottom to top” (from determining the needs of society on the basis of research to preparing a strategy) and the second is “from top to bottom” (from an overview and critical analysis of the national regulatory framework in Bulgaria to the preparation of a strategy for eliminating these weak spots).

The main contribution of the model proposed by the PhD student is the proposal to create an online tool for assessment and self-assessment of first aid knowledge and skills. According to An. Georgiev, on the one hand, this will allow an analysis and assessment of the level of knowledge, and, on the other – will serve as a basis for optimizing the quality of the training offered.

The **conclusion** of the dissertation presents the summarized results and conclusions reached by PhD student Georgiev in the presentation on the three chapters.

### **III. Evaluation of thesis contribution**

On the basis of what is presented in the dissertation, I accept as author's achievement the scientific contributions specified in the report. In my opinion, they could be grouped into two aspects. The first and second contributions are a theoretical nature, and the third and fourth with a practical-applied.

### **IV. Evaluation of the abstract of the dissertation**

The abstract of the dissertation which is presented by the PhD student An. Georgiev has a volume of 54 standard pages and contains all the necessary props for such development. It fully reflects what has been achieved in the dissertation.

### **V. Evaluation of the publication activity of the PhD student**

In the list of publication for participation in the procedure for acquiring ESD „PhD” An. Georgiev has identified a total of four developments. Two papers and one scientific report have been published. For the fourth publication from the list presented in the abstract it is not

clear what character it has and in which edition it has been accepted for printing. All publications are related to the topic of the dissertation and reflect various aspects of it. The scientific creativity, I believe, corresponds to the quantitative and qualitative scientific indicators for the award of the ESD “PhD”.

#### **VI. Critical remarks and recommendations**

Andrian Georgiev’s dissertation is complete and demonstrates the characteristics of a research work. Without detracting from its merits, I can account for a major weakness. It is related to the imbalance between the economic and management levels of study of the problem. The dissertation is dominated by management issues and economic research has remained in the background.

In conclusion, I believe that **PhD student Andrian Georgiev meets the requirements for the award of educational and scientific degree “PhD” in scientific specialty (doctoral program) “Economics and Management (Industry)” and has the necessary qualities. In view of this, I propose to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to support the award of educational and scientific degree “PhD” to Andrian Georgiev on the basis of Chapter Two of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.**

**Data: 23.03.2023**  
**Sofia**

**Prepared the expert opinion:**

  
**/prof. Ts. Iliev, PhD/**