



STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Stella Ivanova Baltova, PhD
scientific specialty "Economics (Business Services)"

Subject: "Doctor" in professional field 3.8 Economics, doctoral program "Economics and Management (Industry)" at the International Higher Business School, Botevgrad

Ground for submitting the opinion: Order No. 23/01.02.2023 of the Rector of IBS and Decision of the Scientific Jury taken at its meeting on 02.02.2023.

Author of the dissertation: Andrian Georgiev Georgiev

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

I. Information of the doctoral student

Doctoral candidate Andriyan Georgiev Georgiev has been studying in the independent form of study in the Ph.D. degree in Economics, Ph.D. program Economics and Management (Industry) according to the Order of the Rector of MBBU No.2 dated 06.01.2021.

Andrian Georgiev graduated from the Master's Program in Digital Marketing at the International Business School in 2020 as a graduating class valedictorian. In 2021/2022, as a PhD student, he taught in the Master's degree courses "Security and Safety in Event Organization" and "Security, Safety and Risk Management". In the meantime, Adrian Georgiev has built a career of over 13 years at Bright Marketing Research Ltd and is currently the company's Vice President of Business Development. Additional qualifications in the fields of pre-medical first aid, paediatric first aid, first aid at work, etc., as well as working in these fields in various positions form a good basis for the development of Adrian Georgiev's research interests in the field of first aid systems. This development over the years is a testament to the PhD student's drive for upgrading and improvement.

II. General characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation is developed in a volume of 173 pages, of which 138 pages of main text, structured in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The main text of the study includes 37 figures and 38 tables, which impressively are relatively evenly distributed both in the theoretical part of the work and in the presentation of the results, and contain a clear

indication of the source of their data. This shows the doctoral student's endeavour to present the theoretical concepts, results and arguments in support of the hypotheses derived in the thesis research in a complete and comprehensible manner. Along with the dissertation there are 3 appendices on its contents in the amount of 17 pages. The dissertation, together with the abstract and the presented scientific publications on the topic (4 in total), constitute a complete product, which I evaluate as an independent scientific research.

108 literature sources were used, of which 39 titles in Bulgarian and the rest in English. Of the sources in both Bulgarian and English, the predominant are those on the Internet, which are of an applied nature, statistical information, results of project activities of a non-scientific nature, regulations in the field of research in the dissertation. It can be concluded that all literature sources are in the thematic area of the research, some of them are not suitable for the level of dissertation such as "Wikipedia". All figures and tables and their place in the text are described thoroughly at the beginning of the thesis.

The topic of the dissertation is dedicated to a topical and significant for the society issue related to the knowledge and skills of the population in Bulgaria for first aid, and in particular to the approach in a strategic plan for their improvement.

The defined subject and object are clearly differentiated and directly linked to the main aim, the research thesis, the set tasks and the formulated hypotheses.

The subject of the dissertation research is "the opportunities for the formation of knowledge and skills for first aid among the Bulgarian society, in particular -the teachers of junior secondary and high school and their dissemination among students".

The object of the research is "the availability of knowledge and attitudes in Bulgarian society for first aid".

The aim of the work is to investigate the knowledge and skills of the population for first aid, creating and testing a conceptual model for their improvement in the long term. I believe that the outlined main research tasks are formulated logically and are coherent in order to realize the set research thesis and achieve the set aim of the dissertation research. The constraints under which the research was conducted are clearly described.

The defended thesis is that "the application of a model for the formation and development of first aid skills will lead to the increase and development of adequate knowledge and skills among the representatives of the target groups. This will have a direct bearing on lowering 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." The verification of the research thesis is specified in three hypotheses.

In its entirety, the thesis research has a practical-applied nature.

III. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and applied results

The first chapter presents a logical sequential study and updating of the conceptual apparatus, a review of the regulatory framework in the thematic area of the study, economic aspects and financing of emergency care, as well as a critical comparative analysis of best practices in

leading European countries. This allows the PhD student to justify the economic benefits of developing a strategic model for first aid training and also that, in addition to economic, first aid knowledge and skills have a human aspect.

Chapter two presents the methodology of the study, with the first part devoted to the empirical study of the preparation and readiness of the Bulgarian population to provide first aid in case of an accident or acute illness. The survey is national in nature and covers all 28 districts in the country and the methodology is based on empirical quantitative methods, statistical method, descriptive method. This chapter also presents a model for the development of a management strategy to increase the knowledge and skills of the population in first aid based on the SMART target setting approach. This provides an elegant opportunity for the PhD student to combine it with the detailed decision-making model presented (problem-object-objective) and transfer it to concrete dimensions and specifics of the study for the purpose of the thesis.

Chapter three presents the process of testing the model strategy for increasing the first aid knowledge and skills of the specific target group, and highlights and discusses its weaknesses and strengths. It is based on two waves of research in 2019 and in 2021. The survey itself, in order to validate the model, aims to collect primary quantitative information, but it is also educational because the online survey offers an information screen with explanations and definitions of terminology relevant to the survey.

The conclusions based on the study are systematized into several groups:

1. There is a weak link between the community's willingness to undergo courses in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (artificial respiration and indirect cardiac massage) and the way it is stimulated to be trained.
2. There is a weak link between the willingness of the public to undergo first aid courses and the way to stimulate them to train.

In the second part of chapter three of the dissertation, the structure of a model of a management strategy for increasing the preparedness and confidence of the population in first aid in case of an accident or acute illness is proposed, based on the CAF (Common Assessment Framework, CAF) method, which is stated to be "a quality management tool developed specifically for the public sector on the initiative of the European Public Administration Network". The process of testing and validating the model using a control sample is presented in great detail.

The third chapter concludes with a clarification of the economic benefits, value and potential of first aid training in reducing health care costs and in the Bulgarian health system. Recognizing the inability at this stage to determine the cost-effectiveness of first aid training, estimated benefits and cost effects for first aid training as a tool for optimizing health care spending are derived.

The dissertation is a complete study, thoroughly and responsibly conducted and demonstrates the author's capabilities in the research area. The doctoral student successfully derives theoretical generalizations, conducts empirical research and proposes sound practical-applied concepts relevant to the research objective.

IV. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and applied contributions

Familiarity with the presented technology of achieving the goal of the dissertation and with the author's abstract, give me grounds to accept the self-assessment of the doctoral student and to confirm the main contributions formulated by him, which I categorically define as scientific and applied. The derived definition of the concept of "first aid" as a specific area of critical importance in terms of preserving human life to be studied and developed should find real application. The courage to enter into the study of a problem, completely neglected in the last 30 years in Bulgaria, and to propose a model for overcoming the deficits in the knowledge of the population for first aid is a significant contribution of the dissertation and proves the relevance of the study.

V. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation

The doctoral candidate Andrian Georgiev Georgiev has published the main results of the research done on the topic of his dissertation in three publications, two of them independent (participation in a conference and publication in a journal). The third publication is abroad in co-authorship and the personal participation of the PhD student is not indicated. A fourth solo publication of a conference paper has been submitted, which has not been printed, but a document has been submitted that it will be printed in the Conference Proceedings. The scientific publications submitted by the PhD student are related to the topic and content of the thesis and meet the required number of publications.

VI. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract is presented in a form that meets the requirements, in a volume of 54 pages. It corresponds to the dissertation and presents in a synthesized form the object, subject, purpose, results and conclusions of the study, directions for future research on the topic and the applicability of the developed model. The contribution statement correctly reflects the results achieved by the author.

VII. Critical comments, recommendations and questions

During the preliminary discussion of the dissertation in the primary unit at the MBBU, I had the opportunity to make some critical remarks and recommendations related to the correct formulation of various theses, remarks regarding the terminology used, a recommendation to separate a separate section dedicated to the methodology of the study, focusing the study on the economic impact of the potential results of the model for a management strategy to increase the knowledge and skills of the population of Bulgaria to provide first aid. With most of them the author has taken into account, revised, supplemented and improved.

Starting from my conclusion that the results of the dissertation are of a scientifically applied nature and may have a strong social relevance, as well as from the presence in the current programming period of a priority for rapid application of the scientific results in practice, I would like to ask the following questions to the PhD student:

- Are there any barriers to the implementation of the developed model and of what are the reasons for this?
- How and to whom will you propose your model for implementation in practice?

VIII. Conclusion

The dissertation work of Andrian Georgiev Georgiev on the topic "Development of a model of management strategy for increasing the knowledge and skills of the population of Bulgaria for first aid" is a complete independent scientific research dedicated to a clearly defined, topical and significant social, economic and managerial problem in an area, significant and challenging for both the scientific community and practice. It is original research, carried out in good faith, in which the doctoral student demonstrates that he or she possesses a research mindset, is able to conduct independent scientific inquiry and analyze empirical results in order to derive and propose practical solutions. The stated aim and objectives of the research have been successfully met, resulting in results of a scientific and applied nature.

On this basis, I support the awarding of the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in the professional field 3.8 Economics, doctoral programme Economics and Management (Industry) at the International Higher Business School, Botevgrad to Andrian Georgiev Georgiev.

Date : 31.03.2023 г.

Signature: