



Международно Висше Бизнес Училище  
International Business School

## **REVIEW**

from Prof. Dr. Milena Filipova

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on a dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty "Administration and management /Business administration/", professional direction 3.7. Administration and management, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

**on the subject:**

**"The role of intercultural communication in the management and development of modern business organizations"**

**developed by a Ph.D student**

**Militsa Nebojsa Milenkovic**

*The opinion was prepared according to the order of the Rector of the International Higher Business School No. 240 of 03.11.2023. and decision of the first meeting of the scientific jury held on 15.11.2023.*

### ***I. Brief biographical data***

Doctoral student Militsa Milenkovic completed her bachelor's degree in " Business Economics, Accounting and Auditing " at Singidunum University - Niš Center in 2019. In 2021, she completed her master's degree in "Engineering Management", module - International Project Management and received an academic degree Master of Engineering in Management. While a student, as a member of the student parliament, she was a lecturer and participant in a number of conferences and seminars in the country and abroad. She was enrolled as a doctoral student in an independent form of study at the International Business School, according to № 243 from 30.11.2021 of the Rector of the MVBU on the doctoral program "Administration and Management (Business Administration)". Holds the position of financial director, business organization, management, planning and presentation of financial reports at Odjinka LLC.

### ***II. General characteristics of the dissertation work***

The topic of the dissertation is clearly formulated and is closely related to the doctoral thesis. The topicality of the topic is dictated by the attitudes, knowledge and skills of people to communicate in intercultural organizational environments. The specified elements, united under the general name "intercultural communication competence", are of key importance for the successful management of organizations operating in an intercultural environment and/or communicating with culturally different individuals. The research is aimed at intercultural communication in the management and development of modern business organizations. It

justifies the existence of connections between the components of intercultural communication competence .

The dissertation has a classic structure of introduction, exposition in three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendices. The total volume of the scientific work is 245 standard pages. 217 literary sources were used, of which 14 in Cyrillic, 203 in Latin. The information sources used reflect the extensive knowledge of the doctoral student in the researched field and were used in good faith and correctly in the process of researching the issues, the subject of the dissertation research. The rules of scientific ethics were followed. The dissertation includes 42 tables, 18 figures and 3 appendices.

The writing style is concise and understandable. The scientific language and the scientific apparatus correspond to the specifics of the researched issues. The research methodology for processing the research results includes: reliability analysis, factor analysis, analysis of variance-ANOVA, T- test , correlation analysis, regression analysis, method of analysis and synthesis and method of comparison . The results of the empirical research were processed with the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics . Frequency distribution tables and pie charts with percentage ratios are also used to visualize the survey sample and summarize the results.

The mandatory attributes for dissertation research - subject and object of research, main scientific thesis, research goal and tasks are highlighted, which outlines the framework of the development. It is characterized by a sustained structure of the individual parts of the exhibition and a clear logical connection. The building is subordinated to the purpose and tasks of the study.

**The subject** of research in the dissertation is intercultural communication and its main aspects as a key area of communication processes in an intercultural environment, and **the subject** of research is the management of intercultural communication for the development of modern business organizations. **The main goal** is to study, present and analyze the importance and significance of intercultural communication in the management and development of modern business organizations, while at the same time trying to show the existence of connections between the components of intercultural communication competence. A main goal was achieved through the realization of four research tasks.

**The research thesis** , which is advocated in the dissertation, is that intercultural communication plays a key role in the management of organizations operating in an intercultural environment and including culturally different individuals. For the successful management of these organizations, employees need certain levels of intercultural communication competence, which can be improved in order to overcome cultural barriers and the successful functioning of organizations through intercultural interaction. This position is supported by one main hypothesis and four working sub-hypotheses , subsequently developed and proven in the overall presentation. **I believe that the thesis and working hypotheses are protected in the dissertation research. What was assumed in the general hypothesis about the presence of significant relationships between the investigated factors of intercultural communication competence and the components of intercultural sensitivity of individuals is confirmed. ( main hypothesis ).**

**In Chapter One** attention is directed to theoretical analysis of the nature of intercultural communications. A comprehensive literature review of the theory on the subject was made, the definitions of leading authors were systematized, the main concepts were clarified, a parallel was drawn between them, as well as a comment by the author of the study. The main concepts in the dissertation work and their definition according to various Bulgarian and foreign authors are

clarified. The PhD student formulates a working definition of "communication", which I define as scholarly contribution. An analysis of the concept of "intercultural communication" in the definition of various authors has been made, and own conclusions and conclusions have been drawn. The approaches to studying intercultural communication are systematized. Attention is focused on the integration of the three main methodological perspectives in studying the problems of intercultural communication: social, interpretive, critical and dialectical approach (with four building blocks of intercultural communication: culture, communication, context and power).

Terminological clarifications have been made and working definitions for the purposes of the study have been substantiated. Two opposing approaches to the study of values are highlighted: "structural-energetic" and "structural-content". Finally, the cultural indicators that should be taken into account when working with partners from abroad are systematized and it is found that cultural profiling can also be used for recruitment. The PhD student draws a parallel between different countries in the cultural integration of women and men, correctly noting that the main indicator that facilitates integration is language competence - mastering the language of the host company. The need for organizations to have global leaders who can communicate in a multicultural environment is also justified. Leadership competencies and the role of leadership in an intercultural environment are analyzed, and the leading role of communication is highlighted in an integrated model of leadership.

**I can summarize that the doctoral student knows well the state of the problem and analytically and creatively evaluates and interprets the literary sources. Demonstrates excellent knowledge of theoretical positions related to intercultural communication and cultural identity, the role of cultural values and attitudes to communication with culturally different individuals. Draws reasoned conclusions and formulates expedient conclusions.**

**In the second chapter** , the doctoral student skilfully builds on the content of the dissertation research, emphasizing the key cultural values in organizations, intercultural communication and culture shock, barriers and intercultural conflicts, the role of intercultural communication competence, views and models for measurement and evaluation. The role of cultural values, defined as abstract ideas about what is perceived by the community as good, right and desirable, is highlighted. A parallel is drawn between organizational and societal culture ( Schwartz 's approach ), emphasizing the importance of values such as social order, respect for tradition, security and wisdom. The statement about the built-in cultures and the behavior of the subjects in the group is correct, the unifying values here are: social power, authority, humility, wealth. Attention is paid to the behavior of traveling in an intercultural environment and the attitudes of the individual - to accept the new environment with the established cultural values or to prefer one's own views and attitudes, experiencing the so-called "culture shock".

The role of intercultural communication and the management of adaptation processes, barriers to intercultural communication and intercultural conflicts are also followed . Anxiety, language, stereotypes, prejudice, non-verbal interactions, ethnocentrism , xenophobia, racism, discrimination and acceptance of similarities instead of differences - identified by LaRay Barna in the field of education and transferred to different situations of intercultural communication - are indicated as barriers. Manifestations of individualism and collectivism are examined. Communication styles are tracked: direct approach defined as something good and indirect approach - as destructive. It is indicated that the role of the personality type – emotionally expressive and emotionally restrained, as well as a model for resolving conflicts in seven steps – is decisive for the outcome of conflict situations.

**I can summarize that in this chapter the doctoral student shows skills in analyzing literary sources, highlighting problems and barriers to intercultural communication, and making well-founded generalizations.**

**The third chapter** has a practical focus. Contains an analysis of the research framework - aims, objectives, hypotheses, methods, sample of the study with a focus on the role of intercultural communication in the management of organizations. 129 respondents (employees) working in organizations that carry out business relations with culturally different partners participate in the empirical survey. The research was conducted through the Google platform and includes basic socio-demographic and labor characteristics, a questionnaire related to the role of intercultural communications in the development of modern organizations.

The obtained results allow the author to draw relevant conclusions. The main conclusions of the study are the following: The persons studied communicate continuously and very often with people from different cultures. The most common barriers in communication interactions of persons with people from other cultures are language, stereotypes and prejudices; The most common causes of intercultural conflicts are differences of opinion on essential issues and reasons related to misunderstandings in communication regarding cultural norms and values; The communication skills needed to interact with people from different cultures are acquired, learned, developed, like all other communication skills; Companies engage in the processes of intercultural communication mainly by organizing informal meetings, language training and communication training, courses on various programs; People of different cultures can be a valuable organizational resource in achieving company goals; In order to improve the intercultural communication competences of employees, the commitment of managers/leaders of intercultural teams should be increased; to organize more informal meetings; to organize more trainings, incl. language courses related to the specifics of communication in organizations and in the local culture itself; to gain more knowledge about the local culture; to use more tools (attestations, assessments, feedback) in communication with culturally different, based on the specifics of communications in organizations.

The main conclusions of the study of the relationships between the factors of intercultural communication competence (according to the model of G. M. Chen) and intercultural sensitivity (according to the model of Bhauk and Brislin ) are: differences are found in the factors of intercultural communication competence depending on individual and work - organizational characteristics by gender and work in internship and no difference depending on age is established. It is found that there is no statistically significant difference in the values of the components understanding of cultural behavior and cultural flexibility in relation to work experience.

Correlation dependence between the factors of intercultural communication competence and between the components of intercultural sensitivity was also proven ; Correlations between factors of intercultural communication competence and components of intercultural sensitivity . It was concluded that persons with longer working experience are more open to communication interactions, without expectations and stereotypes; they show a higher degree of activity and desire for new knowledge and challenges in communicating with culturally different individuals.

**The formulated hypotheses have been proven in the process of research and analysis.**

Based on the results obtained and the conclusions drawn, guidelines and recommendations are systematized and summarized for the improvement and improvement of

intercultural communication and communication competence in the management and development of organizations , which is a strong contributing point in the dissertation work.

**From the analysis of the presented dissertation, I can summarize that each of its structural units contributes to the formation of the conclusions, summaries and recommendations made by the author. The PhD student she chose correctly the topic on the dissertation si , proved the formulated thesis and 4 hypothesis and, has achieved the set tasks she has done are justified suggestions for refinement on the intercultural communication and communication competence at management and development on the organizations .**

### ***III. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results***

The dissertation work of doctoral student Militsa Milenkovic has indisputable scientific merits. The research is characterized by convincingly and clearly defended positions and conclusions, both in terms of the analyzed theories and in terms of practical guidelines and forecasts. I evaluate as objective and correct the attached reference to the scientific achievements of a contributing nature contained in the dissertation work. My general assessment is that the presented results of the research done in the dissertation work can be characterized as enrichment of existing knowledge and application of scientific achievements.

The dissertation work is an independent development of high scientific value and practical significance. The problem posed in it reveals further possibilities for deepening the research activity. The results and suggestions in the dissertation research can be applied in other organizations after adaptation. Based on what is presented in the dissertation, **I accept** the stated scientific and scientific-applied achievements in the dissertation and consider them to be the personal work of the doctoral student. In my opinion, they could be distinguished into those of a theoretical (the first) and of an applied nature (the other 3 contributions).

### ***IV. Assessment on the publications by the dissertation***

The doctoral student indicated 8 publications related to the dissertation work, independent and co-authored, publications in refereed and indexed editions: articles, reports, in the country and abroad. All publications are in the problem area of the dissertation research. They are written correctly and reflect specific aspects of the doctoral student's research work. They are representative and ensure sufficient dissemination of research results to the academic community. I believe that the scientometric requirements regarding the publication activity of the dissertation student have been fully met .

### ***V. Assessment on the autoref***

The dissertation is accompanied by a 41-page abstract. It accurately and sufficiently precisely reflects the content of the dissertation work. The most important points of the research are highlighted in the abstract. Layout requirements are met and all required attributes are included. By familiarizing yourself with the abstract, you can get a clear idea of the dissertation work and its merits. The doctoral student's contributions are accurately presented.

### ***VI. Critical notes and recommendations***

I have no critical remarks about the dissertation. It fully complies with the content and structure of the minimum national requirements for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor". A strong impression is made by the very good connection between scientific and applied achievements and the possibility of their use in practice.

They are in this relationship mine recommendations to PhD student :

1. In his future research, he should focus on linking research to management on the intercultural communication for development on the modern ones business organizations with the leadership style used and the qualities possessed by the leader.
2. Based on the fact that the topic is significant and affects current problems, I believe that it would cause wider scientific interest. For this reason, I recommend that the obtained results be promoted in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science .

## ***V II . Summary evaluation of the dissertation work***

Milenkovic 's dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Implementation and the Ordinance for the Admission and Training of Doctoral Students at the MVBU. With it, the doctoral student demonstrates the ability to conduct independent research and has achieved theoretical and applied results representing a contribution to science and practice. The proposed development is a serious research work that deserves high praise. With the written dissertation and the publications attached to it, doctoral student Militsa Milenkovic meets the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

The above gives me reason to express my **positive assessment of the dissertation work and to propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to decide on awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty "Administration and Management /Business Administration/" of Militsa Nebojsa Milenkovic .**

20. 12. 2023

Member of a scientific jury: .....  
(Prof. Dr. Milena Filipova)