

# **REVIEW OPINION**

by Assoc. Dr. Stella Ivanova Baltova  
scientific specialty "Economics (Business Services)"

**Regarding :** dissertation work on the topic " **The role of intercultural communication in the management and development of modern business organizations** " for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty (doctoral program) "Administration and Management (Business Administration)".

**Author of the dissertation:** Militsa Nebojsa Milenkovic

**Scientific supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Vanche Boykov

**Grounds for presenting the opinion:** according to Order No. 240 / 3.11.2023 of the Rector of the International Business School to determine the composition of the Scientific Jury by competition, and the decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury dated 15.11.2023.

## **1. General characteristics of the presented dissertation work**

The dissertation has a total volume of 245 pages, of which 238 are the main text, including 11 pages of a list of information sources. It is structured as follows: introduction, main text systematized in three chapters , conclusion, bibliography and appendices. The appendices on its content (3 items in a volume of 5 pages) contain questionnaires for research and for measuring indicators. The work concludes with a 2-page glossary. The scientific research and the obtained results are well illustrated with 42 tables and 18 figures in the main text.

The reference to the literature used contains 217 literary sources, of which 203 titles are in Latin and 14 titles are in Cyrillic. All sources are relevant to the research area of the dissertation work, and sources from recent years including 2022 were also used, which confirms the relevance of the researched thematic area and the relevance of the cited research results.

The dissertation is designed according to the technical requirements, together with the abstract and the presented eight scientific publications on the subject, represent a finished product of independent scientific research.

The dissertation is dedicated to **an actual** social and management issue . Despite the variety of publications in the field of communications, the research interest in the topic, and more specifically in the role of intercultural communication for the development of business organizations, determine its relevance.

The introduction presents the topicality of the topic, the degree of elaboration of the problem and a review of scientific literature on the topic, the main research thesis and research questions, the object and subject of the research, the aim and tasks of the dissertation, the structure of the dissertation.

**The main goal** of the dissertation research is clearly defined "to investigate the significance of intercultural communication in the management and development of modern organizations, while at the same time trying to show the existence of relationships between the factors of intercultural communication competence and the components of intercultural sensitivity" (p. 6 in the dissertation). Two aspects of the main objective are framed, a construct that allows the study to be more specific and yet comprehensive in its entirety. In order to achieve the goal, three research tasks were formulated, which were carried out within the framework of the dissertation work.

The defended **research thesis** of the dissertation work is that "intercultural communication plays a key role in the management of organizations operating in an intercultural environment and including culturally different individuals in their composition. For the successful management of these organizations, employees need certain levels of intercultural communication competence, which can be improved in order to overcome cultural distances / barriers and the successful functioning of organizations through intercultural interaction. ( page 8 in the dissertation). Very synthesized and correct in the introduction, the author presents the main aspects of the research methodology. Limitations of the study are clearly stated.

In its entirety, the dissertation research has a practical-applied character.

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

The presentation of the dissertation work is presented in three chapters, with a good balance achieved in terms of their volumes, as well as their individual paragraphs, as both reasoned and a priori logical, the third chapter is relatively the largest and presents an analysis of the results obtained .

**The first chapter** presents the results of the analysis of publications on key theoretical positions and the state of affairs related to intercultural communication. Critically presented

and summarized theoretical statements of the nature and characteristics of intercultural communication and cross-cultural, as a part of intercultural, approaches to studying intercultural communication and cultural identity and intercultural communication. The author pays attention to cultural profiles and cultural indicators in the context of intercultural communication, cultural integration and the relationship with leadership in organizations.

**The second chapter** of the dissertation is devoted in detail to intercultural communication in the management of organizations and to the cultural dimensions of values. Here the author brings out and substantiates the claim that "differences in cultural values, which she presents in detail and critically, lead to differences in organizational behavior in different cultural regions". Barriers to intercultural communication and intercultural conflicts in organizations and their management are very adequately presented, which enables the doctoral student, in the analysis of the collected information, to confirm the hypotheses presented in chapter three.

Milenkovic 's research character and her skills of analytical and comprehensive application of the results of the conducted research are most strongly manifested in the last **third chapter** of the dissertation work.

In this chapter, one hypothesis, called the "general hypothesis", and 4 sub-hypotheses are formulated . However, I believe that if the hypotheses are already formulated in the introduction, the critical analysis of the theoretical statements on the subject, which in the dissertation work is very comprehensive, specific and pointing to future research, could help to support or reject the working hypotheses derived by the doctoral student.

The achievements in the third chapter I can define as **the most important contribution in the work** , which is reached logically and consistently. However, I would recommend that the research methodology presented in detail be structured in a separate chapter. It is worth paying significantly more attention to the methodological part, because the doctoral student chose very appropriate research methods that were adequately applied and enabled the research to achieve its goals and have scientific value. The SPSS Statistics method and the following analyzes were correctly used : reliability analysis; factor analysis; variance analysis – ANOVA, T- test ; correlation analysis; regression analysis. The results of the research allow establishing a number of dependencies in relation to the role and significance of intercultural communication for the development and success of modern organizations, interpreted responsibly and precisely by the doctoral student at the end of the third chapter. The general hypothesis of the research about the existence of significant relationships between the investigated factors of intercultural communication competence and the components of intercultural sensitivity of people is

defended with arguments, and the deduced sub-hypotheses 1,3,4 and partial hypothesis 2 are confirmed. Chapter three ends with detailed guidelines and recommendations for improvement and improvement of intercultural communication and communication competence in the management and development of organizations.

**The conclusion** summaries the achieved scientific and scientific-applied results in the dissertation work.

### **3. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

Milenkovic are presented , show the exceptional interest of the doctoral student in the researched topic and, respectively, her dedication to the research questions in a wide comprehensiveness.

I accept and support the author's main scientific and scientific-applied contributions (4 in number), identified in the dissertation and formulated in the abstract, which boil down to:

- Systematization of numerous definitions of basic concepts, as well as theoretical views related to intercultural communication, in the scientific, specialized, research literature;
- A research methodology has been applied, combining a toolkit for its empirical purposes, which includes both independent questionnaires and adapted to specific models investigating intercultural communication competence;
- Recommendations and guidelines are proposed for improving and perfecting the intercultural communication of the organizations and developing the communication competence of the employees;
- New opportunities and options for future studies in the field of intercultural communication are outlined, incl. through the search for new meaningful relationships between the components (and models) of intercultural communication competence.

The indicated results and contributions are the personal work of the doctoral student and faithfully reflect the achieved results, creating a prerequisite for continuing and deepening the scientific research, which I wish and recommend to Militsa Milenkovic .

I highly appreciate the doctoral student's individual and elegant approach to every detail of the research. It shows a desire to explore in depth.

### **4. Evaluation of dissertation publications**

The doctoral student has published the main results of the research on the subject of her dissertation in Bulgarian, English and Serbian in eight publications. One of the publications is

independent, and all others are co-authored. They were published in the period 2021-2023 and reflect the main moments and achievements related to the work on the topic of the dissertation work.

### **5. Evaluation of the dissertation summary**

The abstract was developed according to the requirements, reflecting in a volume of 41 pages the content of the dissertation and the main scientific and scientific-applied results achieved. The statement of contributions correctly reflects the results achieved by the author. Contains a list of the author's publications on the dissertation topic.

### **6. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

I congratulate the PhD student and her supervisor for the valuable work.

During the discussion of the dissertation work in the primary unit at MVBU, I had the opportunity to make notes and recommendations to doctoral student Militsa Milenkovic , which I found to be taken into account to the extent judged by the doctoral student. I have no other critical comments and recommendations other than those made above in the opinion.

I would like to address the following question to the doctoral student: How would the introduction of artificial intelligence into all aspects of socio-economic life affect intercultural communication in the management and development of business organizations?

### **7 . Conclusion**

In conclusion, I can state that the presented dissertation work is an in-depth study of current practical problems. It shows that the doctoral student has theoretical knowledge in the researched field and the ability to conduct independent research. The achieved contributions of a scientific and applied nature are categorically proven in the work.

The doctoral thesis meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its application, as well as the established internal rules and norms of the International Business School. This gives me the reason to propose to the respected members of the scientific jury to make a decision to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional direction 3.7 Administration and Management to Militsa Nebojsa Milenkovich.

11.01.2023  
Sofia

Signature: .....  
(Assoc. Prof. Stella Baltova, PhD)