D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov

REVIEW
of a PhD dissertation by Prof. Dr. Andrey Boyanov Zahariev
on the PhD dissertation titled: "Economic and Social Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tax Revenues in Bulgaria"
Author: Doctoral student Svetlana Dimitrova Avrionova,
PhD student No D010221243

Form of doctoral studies: Full-time
Department conducting the training: Department of "Finance and Credit" at the Faculty of Finance, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov
Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Rumyana Lilova
Doctoral program: "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance" (Finance)

1. Fulfillment of formal requirements for the dissertation and presentation of the doctoral candidate
The submitted dissertation follows a classical research framework in three chapters. The introduction presents and justifies the research problem area, including: relevance, object, subject, thesis, goal, objectives and methodology. In this regard, the work fully meets the standards and requirements for a dissertation.

2. Structural assessment of the work
The submitted dissertation is 236 pages long and includes Introduction; Chapter One: Positioning of Taxes in Non-discretionary and Discretionary State Policy; Chapter Two: Trends in Changes of Tax Revenue Sources in the EU in the Context of Adopted Practices for Counteracting the Covid-19 Crisis; Chapter Three: Planning Tax Revenue Receipts Under Socio-Economic Risks. The conclusion presents the main results of the dissertation. Key findings are outlined and directions for future research on the topic are formulated. The work includes an APA-style bibliography with 125 titles, which includes research works by the department faculty, providing a foundation for thorough theoretical analysis.

The dissertation includes a representative number of tables and figures. Review of the used citations, main content and bibliography allows confirmation of proper adherence to requirements for bibliographic citation and description. Data from the similarity checking system indicates a very high level of originality with proper citation of author research and publications according to the doctoral plan.

3. Scientific and content assessment of the work

The research addresses a topic of undisputed relevance, scientific merit and practical application.

3.1. Object and subject of research

The object of research is tax revenues in Bulgaria and EU member states. The subject of the dissertation is the toolkit for assessing factors affecting the state of tax revenues in Bulgaria and EU member states.

3.2. Goal and objectives of the dissertation

The goal of the dissertation is to study the socio-economic effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has on tax revenue receipts in Bulgaria, focusing on problems related to justifying the significance and possibilities for macroeconomic impact through tax instruments; evaluating national and European approaches (practices) for counteracting the crisis and overcoming the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; and revealing the factor conditionality of receipts from tax sources in order to plan tax revenues in conditions of a dynamic socio-economic environment.

The research objectives are formulated as follows:
- To perform critical analysis of views regarding the significance of taxes in the modern world and the possibility for macroeconomic impact under economic shocks as a basis for positioning them in the context of tax/fiscal policy
- To study European practices for overcoming the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and on this basis evaluate national measures for counteracting the crisis resulting from the pandemic in Bulgaria
- To analyze trends in changes of tax revenue sources in the EU to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on them through macro-, fiscal and structural indicators
- To construct an econometric model for assessing factors affecting the state of tax revenues of EU member states in conditions of a dynamic socio-economic environment
- To forecast tax revenue receipts in the EU under the influence of established factor conditionality and draw recommendations regarding their future planning

3.3. Research thesis

The leading research thesis in the dissertation is that, under the conditions of a dynamic socio-economic environment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Bulgaria maintains stable budget receipts from tax sources, in the absence of individual and aggregate conditionality between them and the main economic, fiscal and social indicators affecting their dynamics, which is characteristic of the other EU member

states.

3.4. Research methodology

The conducted research is based on using a wide toolkit of scientific and applied methods - the historical method and chronological analysis, comparative and critical analysis method, inductive and deductive research approach, content analysis and synthesis method, quantitative dependency analysis methods and graphical analysis. To achieve the research objectives, publicly available data from official information databases was used.

4. Achieved results and contributions

The scope of the dissertation emphasizes the socio-economic crisis resulting from a health crisis, given the fact that it can also be a health, social, debt, financial, political, currency crisis, etc. In presenting practices for overcoming the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU, focus countries from Western and Central Europe, Scandinavia and the Balkan Peninsula, including Bulgaria, are used. The empirical part of the dissertation is based on official statistical data current as of the end of 2021 and includes all EU member states, unless otherwise specified in the particular part of the research.

The stated contributions are fully proven and inherent to the exposition:

First. Based on studying the logical connections between taxes as an instrument of fiscal policy and socio-economic risks, the possibilities for macroeconomic impact through taxes and the dependence of tax revenue receipts on specific influencing factors are justified, and in this context, the significance of discretionary and non-discretionary state policy for stabilizing the economy during economic shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic is proven.

Second. The Bulgarian approach to counteracting the crisis resulting from the pandemic is evaluated through studying, systematizing and comparing national and European countercyclical measures for overcoming the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Third. The benefit of empirically studying tax revenue receipts under economic crisis conditions is argued from a research perspective. Trends in changes of tax revenue sources in the EU are analyzed through macro, fiscal and structural indicators for the period 2002-2021, resulting in specific cause-effect relationships and trends being identified for the timeframe of the work, outlining the sensitivity of tax revenue receipts to deviations in economic conditions development, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fourth. Based on an econometric model, factor influences are studied and the

individual and aggregate significance of key macroeconomic, fiscal and socio-economic determinants that trigger changes in tax revenue receipts for EU member states relative to their gross domestic product under Covid-19 pandemic conditions is outlined.

Fifth. Based on the tested econometric model and the identified most significant determinants for changes in tax revenue receipts, a methodology is proposed and these are forecasted for a 5-year period. The ultimate goal of the applied forecast model is to draw important generalizations regarding the development of tax receipts for the national economies of EU member states in post-pandemic conditions, which would help in planning them in the future, under similar socio-economic conditions, or during deviations in economic conditions development, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Compliance with the law requirements

The scientific research and publications comply with and exceed the national requirements under the Regulations for Implementation of the Law on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Conclusion:

The presented dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" possesses the required quantitative and qualitative characteristics according to the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics. The dissertation contains scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution to science. The dissertation work clearly demonstrates that the doctoral candidate possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge in the respective specialty, as well as abilities for independent scientific and practical-applied research. All this provides grounds to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Svetlana Avrionova, for which I vote positively.

02.12.2024

REVIEWER:

(Prof. Dr. Andrey Boyanov Zahariev)