



Review

of dissertation work for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)" at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Author of the review: Assoc. Prof. Simeonka Aleksandrova Petrova, Ph.D., Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, Department of Commerce, scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and Management (Trade)"

Ground for writing the review: Participation in a Scientific Jury, determined by Order of the Rector of the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov №231/29.03.2024 under open procedure for public defense of dissertation work

Author of the dissertation: Elena Valerieva Valcheva, d010421249, a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Commerce at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

The topic of the dissertation: "Investigating opportunities for improving logistics transport services in trade"

I. Data on the PhD student

Doctoral student Elena Valerieva Valcheva is studying in the regular form of doctoral studies in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics, in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)" at the Department of Commerce at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. She was enrolled in doctoral studies on 01.04.2021 for a period of three years. Assoc. Prof. Petranka Midova, Ph.D., has been appointed as the scientific supervisor. During the study period, the individual doctoral student plan is implemented according to the planned activities. She is awarded with the right of defense within the period of study, having completed all the study activities, successfully passed the exams and completed seminars and courses, as well as having met the minimum national requirements for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

During the period 2008-2012, Ph.D. student Elena Valerieva Valcheva acquired the educational qualification "Bachelor" in the specialty "Accounting and Control" at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. In 2013, she acquired a master's degree and graduated from the master's program "Industrial Management" at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. She speaks English.

The autobiography presented by the doctoral student confirms that the developed dissertation research is the result of theoretical knowledge and practical professional experience in the field of: creation and processing of accounting documents and registers; producing reports; processing and entering reports using specialized software. The doctoral student has technical skills for word processing, working with various specialized software – accounting and administrative.

II. General presentation of the dissertation work

The review was written in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria – LDASRB, the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. From the documents prepared according to the procedure, it is clear that the doctoral student has the ability to develop independent scientific research and to disseminate the obtained results.

The dissertation submitted for review has a total volume of 216 pages and is structured as follows: introduction – 5 pages; three chapters – 165 pages; conclusion – 4 pages; bibliography - 11 pages, covering 105 sources in Cyrillic, Latin, 21 nos. normative sources and 7 nos. electronic sources; list of figures – 3 pages; list of tables – 1 page; declaration of originality and authenticity; applications – 8 pcs. with a volume of 24 pages. The development is illustrated with 14 tables and 38 figures.

The used literary sources are correctly identified in the general list. The organization of the dissertation research shows the doctoral student's literary awareness and methodological preparation.

III. Judgment of the form and content of the dissertation

The dissertation study is devoted to a current and debatable problem related to the possibilities of improving logistics transport services in trade. The orientation of scientific interest to logistics transport services, considered as a component of supply chain management, as well as to the economic benefits of reducing the time of execution and lowering the magnitude of transport costs, shows a very good orientation of the dissertation to significant for the theory and the practice problematic.

The object of the research is, I quote, "... Bulgarian enterprises carrying out commercial activities, offering and/or using transport services". **The subject of the study** is, I quote, "... logistic transport services in trade". The formulation of the object and subject of the research complies with the purpose of the dissertation work. The main **research objective** is reduced to the conclusion that by analyzing and synthesizing theoretical-methodical and empirical resources, the adaptation and testing of a model for researching the possibilities for improving logistics transport services in trade is facilitated, and conclusions and recommendations are formulated on this basis. To achieve the goal, the author defines five **research tasks**: 1)

clarification of the essential characteristics of logistic transport services and classification of types of transport in trade; 2) conceptually defining the importance of supply chain management in trade; 3) adaptation of a model for researching the possibilities for improving logistics transport services in trade at the micro-, meso- and macro-level on the basis of the existing knowledge in the economic literature; 4) approbation of the proposed model for researching the possibilities for improving logistics transport services in trade; 5) bringing out specific recommendations for the improvement of logistics transport services in trade, observing the obtained research results. The research tasks outlined in this way help achieve the necessary clarity of presentation and argumentation of the accepted scientific ideas.

The scientific study verifies and proves **the research thesis defined by the doctoral student**, related to the possibilities of applying an appropriate system of indicators, integrated into a model for analyzing and evaluating logistics transport services at the micro-, meso- and macro-level, determining the decisions of the studied Bulgarian enterprises to improve supply chain management in trade.

The dissertation study is based on a **methodological apparatus described in detail and justified by the doctoral student**, the applied methods for collecting and analyzing the data, the used methodological techniques and their influence on the integrity of the obtained results. In the process of the research, the dissertation student introduces **restrictive conditions**, which he correctly highlights in the introduction. The focus on the scientific problem, interpreted in the dissertation study, allows highlighting certain recommendations and novelties for the improvement of logistics transport services in trade. The literature survey made presupposes **an analysis of the degree of elaboration of the researched issues** by other authors and leads to a reflection of the dissertation's own attitude on the researched issues.

In general, the observance of the outlined theoretical-methodological framework and the adopted research toolkit contribute to the development of the dissertation work. The study of the specialized literature and the determination of the problematic issues give the doctoral student a reason to: bring leading statements about the place and essential characteristics of logistic transport services in trade; to highlight classification aspects of the types of transport in trade; to systematize conceptual statements about the importance of supply chain management in trade; to propose a measuring device and a methodological framework for the study of logistics transport services in trade at the micro-, meso- and macro level. Of research value are the presented practical aspects of improving logistics transport services in trade, as well as the derivation and testing of a model for researching the possibilities of improving logistics transport services in trade, as a form of evaluating the economic benefits generated by them.

The structure of **the introduction** (pp. 3-7) includes the main components that should be defined in a dissertation. The topicality of the researched issues is substantiated. The topic of the study corresponds to the identified tasks of the

development. Appropriate research methods were chosen to carry out the overall scientific study.

Chapter one (pp. 8-68) of the dissertation is entitled "Theoretical Aspects of Logistics Transport Services and Supply Chain Management in Commerce". On the basis of an evaluation of theoretical views and judgments in the exposition, the dissertation student clarifies the essence of the concept of "logistics transport services". Base statements are distinguished, which are conceptually related to the defined concept. The types of transport in trade are determined. Proving the topicality of the topic, in the first chapter the doctoral student presents the importance of supply chain management in trade.

Chapter two (pp. 69-106) is entitled "Methodological Aspects of Research on Logistics Transport Services in Trade". In it, the dissertation student presents in a logical sequence: a measuring device and adaptation of a model for researching the possibilities for improving logistics transport services in trade; methodological framework of the study of logistics transport services in micro-level trade; methodological framework of the study of logistics transport services in trade at the meso - and macro level. The research focus is placed on the adaptation of a model to explore the possibilities of improving logistics transport services in trade.

Chapter three (pp. 107-172) is entitled " Practical Aspects of Improving Logistics Transport Services in Trade". In this part of the dissertation development, the dissertation student presents empirically oriented results from: a study of logistics transport services in trade at the micro level; study of logistics transport services in trade at the meso - and macro level. The last paragraph formulates conclusions and recommendations for improving logistics transport services in trade. Within the framework of chapter three, the developed model is tested. The results obtained by the doctoral student are of research value on the basis of the application of a suitable system of indicators, integrated in the model for researching the possibilities for improving logistics transport services at the micro-, meso- and macro-level. At the end of the third chapter, conclusions and recommendations for improving logistics transport services in trade are presented.

In the last part of the dissertation research – **conclusion** (pages 173-176), the dissertation student systematizes the main conclusions and generalizations reached within the framework of the conducted scientific research, as well as determines possible directions for subsequent author searches. The purpose and tasks of the study are linked to the obtained results.

Overall, the volume and structure of the dissertation sufficiently correspond to the author's main goal of the research, which ensures the achievement of the desired completeness. The presentation presented is characterized by the necessary argumentation, allowing to reach the sought research results. A significant number of literary and informational sources, totaling 133, were used in the development of the dissertation. A substantial part of the presented theoretical and empirical data is

illustrated with the help of appropriately and **relevantly developed 14 (fourteen) tables and 38 (thirty-eight) figures.**

What has been stated so far gives grounds for **the assessment that the dissertation meets the requirements for the structure and content of a development of this nature** and can be defined as a completed scientific product with evidence of scientific results.

I did not find any signs of plagiarism and incorrect use of foreign texts in the dissertation development and the author's abstract presented by the dissertation student. When writing the dissertation, **the dissertation student adheres to the rules of scientific ethics. The language and writing style** used by Ph.D. student Elena Valerieva Valcheva are in accordance with the standards of scientific expression. The requirements for bibliographic citation and reference have been met. The literary sources were used by the dissertation student in good faith and correctly.

The author's abstract – in Bulgarian and English, accompanying the dissertation, in a volume of 49 pages, with the necessary completeness and truthfulness reflects the content of the development and the scientific research results achieved by the author.

IV. Identification and assessment of scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation work

The Reference for Contributions in the Dissertation presented by the doctoral student contains four points of contribution, which is in accordance with Art. 6, para. 3 of LDASRB. The content of the dissertation shows that the dissertation student has in-depth theoretical knowledge and abilities for independent scientific research.

One of the formulated contributions is theoretical, two - methodological, and one – practically oriented. The theoretical contribution is related to: (1) on the basis of theoretical interpretation, generalization and synthesis of basic concepts related to logistics transport services in trade, author's definitions are derived and the importance of supply chain management is substantiated. The methodological contributions are reduced to: (2) by means of a study of existing in the specialized theory and practice, a methodological framework of the study is outlined, and indicators for research and analysis of logistics transport services in trade at the micro- , meso- and macro-level are highlighted; (3) as a result of the systematization and presentation of a sequence of stages, a model was adapted for the study of opportunities for improving logistics transport services in trade. The contribution of a practically oriented nature can be found in: (4) based on accumulated empirical resources, the research model has been tested in Bulgarian enterprises performing commercial activity, and specific recommendations have been formulated for the improvement of the logistics transport services implemented.

The contributions formulated by the doctoral student in the dissertation work are defined as actual and complementary to a certain extent to the basic theoretical-practical knowledge of a specific researched scientific problem.

V. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The list of publications on the subject of the dissertation work of the doctoral student Elena Valerieva Valcheva, submitted to the documents, is a basis for the assessment that the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor" according to the order of Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB. The doctoral student is the author of 3 independent publications - 1 of them, published in the scientific publication Annual Almanac "Scientific Research of Doctoral Students" of the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. The publications reported by the dissertation student are in scientific publications and publicize more significant results of the dissertation research carried out.

The doctoral student takes part in 7 scientific forums on the topic of the dissertation, some of which are international in nature.

VI. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no significant critical comments on the dissertation submitted for review. I would like to recommend PhD student Elena Valerieva Valcheva, based on the motivation she has, to continue her research in the future in Bulgarian enterprises offering and/or using logistics transport services in trade. I also recommend that he publish the obtained results in refereed and indexed scientific publications in Bulgaria and abroad.

VII. Questions for the dissertation student

Within the framework of the dissertation development, the author's position on the following issues is of interest:

1. What more important arguments can be given in favor of the statement adopted in the dissertation that transport management is one of the foundations of the logistics system, and on this basis to justify the dependence between the volume of freight transport and the change in the GDP of Bulgaria?
2. In the context of the research thesis defended in the dissertation, what more significant decisions of the Bulgarian enterprises, taken at the micro level, can determine the improvement of the management of the supply chain in trade?

VIII. Conclusion

The presented dissertation work on the topic "Investigating the possibilities for improving logistics transport services in trade" represents a completed scientific study on a current and significant topic for economic theory and practice. The

dissertation development is structured according to the academic standards adopted in the country. The scientific work covers the requirements of the LDASRB and the regulations for its implementation.

The above gives me reason with full conviction to vote **"for"** awarding **Elena Valerieva Valcheva the educational and scientific degree "doctor"** in professional direction 3.8. Economics under Ph.D. program "Economics and Management (Trade)" and to propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to take a positive decision.

Date: May 13, 2024
Svishtov

Prepared the review:.....
(Assoc. Prof. S. Petrova, Ph.D.)