

REVIEW

by Prof. PhD Svetlana Raicheva Dimitrakieva,, Technical University - Varna,
professional field 3.7. Administration and Management

regarding a dissertation for acquiring of educational and scientific degree of "Doctor"
(PhD)

in professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, doctoral program "Social
Management"

1. General information

Review prepared by: Prof. PhD Svetlana Raicheva Dimitrakieva

Reason for writing the review: Order № ПД-06-188/01.12.2025 of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna for the appointment of a scientific jury and decision of the scientific jury of 05.12.2025 for the appointment of reviewers

Author of the dissertation: Desislava Pavlova Pavlova

Topic of the dissertation: "Crisis Management in Organizations Engaged in Sorting and Trading Second-Hand Textiles"

Supervisor of the dissertation: Assoc. Prof. Radka Petrova Ivanova

2. Information about the doctoral candidate

Desislava Pavlova graduated from High School of Mathematics "Dr. Petar Beron" in Varna in 1995. She holds a bachelor's degree in "Accounting and Control" from the University of Economics in Varna and a master's degree in "Financial Management" from the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov. From March 1, 2021, to March 26, 2025 (with

a break from November 1, 2023, to November 11, 2024), she was a regular doctoral student in professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, doctoral program "Social Management" at the Department of Management and Administration at the University of Economics - Varna. The doctoral student has fulfilled all obligations under her individual plan and, by order of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna № ПД 17-249/31.03.2025, has been deducted with the right to defend her thesis.

Desislava Pavlova began her professional career in 2000, holding various positions in different organizations. She is currently the financial and administrative manager at Humana People to People Bulgaria EOOD, a company engaged in the import, export, and retail sale of second-hand clothing.

Desislava Pavlova has good communication and organizational skills.

3. General presentation of the dissertation

The presented dissertation meets the requirements of Article 27, paragraph 2 of the regulations for implementing the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. It is developed in a classical form, containing an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and an appendix. The thesis is 204 pages long, including a 6-page appendix. The main text includes 12 tables and 31 figures. For the purposes of the study, doctoral student Desislava Pavlova has used 110 reference sources, 15 of which are informational and normative. There are no grounds for doubting their conscientious use.

The relevance of the dissertation topic is undeniable and is determined by the importance and challenges of crisis management in the changing modern business environment, as well as by their timely diagnosis, improved communication, and the application of successful crisis management models.

4. Assessment of the structure and content of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation is logically constructed and subordinate to the overall development of the research problem.

The introduction outlines the conceptual framework of the dissertation. The necessary research parameters are defined - the object and subject of the study, the research thesis and main hypotheses, the aim of the dissertation and the tasks for its achievement, research methods, and research limitations.

The first chapter, "Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Crisis Management," is theoretical in nature and is devoted to the study and analysis of the essence, characteristics,

and typology of crisis phenomena. It examines the process of crisis management in organizations, as well as various models of crisis management. A comparative analysis is made, which shows that all the models examined focus on prevention, and the differences lie in the degree of detail with which the steps are divided into sub-stages. According to the author, organizations have two alternatives: to adopt a ready-made model that they adapt to their needs or to develop their own model. Special attention is paid to the anti-crisis plan and communication with interested parties. As a result of the analysis of the scientific literature, the mandatory elements of the crisis communication plan are summarized. The study focuses on employees as key interested party and examines several different internal communication strategies. It emphasizes the role of crisis communication as a very important element in the prevention and management of any crisis. Key aspects of researching and developing a conceptual framework for crisis management are examined. At the end of the first chapter, it is summarized that, given the complex environment in which modern organizations operate and the limited resources at their disposal, it is extremely difficult to build a comprehensive universal system for preparedness and prevention. On the other hand, for various reasons, the models known in the scientific literature may be difficult to apply. According to the author, the models provide a framework but not a universal tool for successful crisis management, and therefore every organization faces the strategic task of selecting and adapting the most effective model.

The second chapter, "Analysis of the Sector of Organizations for Sorting and Trading Second-Hand Textiles in Bulgaria," examines the characteristics of the sector, outlines its strategic priorities, and analyzes the main risks arising from both the external and internal environment. Based on the results of the analysis, the author points out that effective crisis management in this sector is linked to understanding the crisis as a process, adapting or developing a proprietary crisis management model, developing a plan to deal with potential crises, and using flexible operational strategies. An empirical study was conducted, which included nine companies operating in the sector of sorting and trading in used textiles in Bulgaria. The empirical study tested and confirmed the three research hypotheses defined in the introduction of the dissertation. The analysis of the data from the empirical study confirms that the implementation, regular updating, and testing of a crisis management plan significantly improves the preparedness of organizations to deal with crisis situations. It has been established that companies in the sector that apply a crisis management model and have a developed communication plan are better prepared in terms of communication. According to the author, there is a direct correlation between the communication preparedness of organizations for crisis prevention and management and the existence of a developed and implemented crisis management model.

The third chapter, "Guidelines for Achieving Effective Crisis Management in Organizations for Sorting and Trading Second-Hand Textiles in Bulgaria," summarizes the

conclusions from the empirical study and the proven hypotheses, and on this basis, specific recommendations are made for improving the effectiveness of crisis management in the sector under study. A conceptual framework has been developed for the preparation of an anti-crisis plan adapted to the needs of organizations in the used textile sorting and trading sector in Bulgaria. It includes a structure, detailed processes, checklists, and auxiliary classifications for each of the stages and elements that can assist organizations in preparing an anti-crisis and communication plan.

The conclusion of the dissertation confirms the main thesis.

The Abstract of the dissertation is 48 pages long and summarizes the content of the main parts of the work.

The dissertation is characterized by a logical connection between the chosen theoretical framework, the research methods used, and the analysis of the results obtained. The style of the work is scientific. The author freely uses the conceptual apparatus.

5. Identification and evaluation of scientific and scientific-practical contributions in the dissertation

Three contributions are listed in the summary of contributions attached to the Abstract (p. 46). I accept that the proposed contributions are the personal work of the doctoral student and adequately reflect the most significant achievements of the dissertation.

I define the following as a theoretical contribution:

- The existing theoretical and applied terminology and methodology for crisis management have been supplemented and specified. The anti-crisis plan and its essential element - the communication plan - are presented as the basis for effective crisis management.

I define the following as practical contributions:

- The main reasons preventing organizations for sorting and trading used textiles in Bulgaria from successfully developing, implementing, and maintaining an anti-crisis plan and a crisis communication plan have been identified. The need for a structured crisis management model has been justified.
- A conceptual framework for crisis management and for the development, implementation, and maintenance of an anti-crisis and communication plan tailored to the specific characteristics of organizations sorting and trading in used textiles in Bulgaria has been proposed.

6. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Four independent publications are attached to the dissertation: two articles and two reports. They popularize the main theses and results of the doctoral student's research. The minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" pursuant to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna, have been met.

7. Confirmed or unconfirmed plagiarism in the dissertation or abstract

I do not find any plagiarism in the dissertation and abstract submitted by the doctoral student. The author declares in writing that the dissertation and publications submitted by her are her own work, that she has complied with copyright requirements with regard to the sources used, and that she has not used other people's texts unlawfully.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

The doctoral student presents a scientific work that clearly demonstrates good theoretical preparation and potential for further research. This gives me reason to recommend initiating an active professional debate on the researched issues with an expansion of the research subject.

Like any research project, the proposed for evaluation dissertation are not without some inaccuracies and omissions, but these do not detract from its achievements and contributions.

9. Questions for the dissertation author

1. Are the basic principles of crisis communication being followed in the organizations you studied, and if not, what is the reason for this?
2. In your opinion, why might the early symptoms of impending crises go unnoticed by organizations?

10. Conclusion

The dissertation presented by doctoral student Desislava Pavlova Pavlova meets the requirements of Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of

REVIEW

By: Prof. Tzveta Yordanova Zafirova, PhD
University of Economics – Varna,
Scientific specialty “Social Management”

In reference to: dissertation for awarding educational and scientific “PhD” in area of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences. professional field 3.7 Administration and Management in UE–Varna

Author of dissertation: Desislava Pavlova Pavlova

Topic of dissertation: “Crisis management in organizations engaged in sorting and trading second-hand textiles”

Grounds for making the review: participation in the board of the scientific jury about defending the dissertation in compliance with Order №RD 06-188 from 1.12.2025 by Rector of UE-Varna and decision of the scientific jury from its first meeting held on 5.12.2025

1. Information about the author of the dissertation

Desislava Pavlova was born on 17.05.1977. She graduated high school in the Mathematical School “Dr. P. Beron”- Varna in 1995. Between 1995 and 2000 she finished her Bachelor’s degree at the University of Economics-Varna in Accounting and a Master's degree in Finance – at the University “D. A. Tsenov”-Svishtov. She has worked in the field of finance and accounting in various expert and senior management positions - Societe Generale Expressbank, “Petrolholding” AD - Sofia and “KPMG Bulgaria” Sofia. Since 2015, she has been a Financial and Administrative Manager at “Humana People to People Bulgaria” engaged for import, export and retail trade in second-hand clothing. Desislava Pavlova has an international qualification in the field of accounting. She speaks English.

The PhD student was trained in a full-time doctoral program at the department of “Management and Administration” in UE-Varna, professional field 3.7 *Administration and Management*, doctoral program *Social Management* from 2.03.2021 to 31.03.2025, when she was discharged with the right to defense by Order of the Rector of the University of Economic -Varna N RD-17-249.

2. General presentation of the dissertation

Desislava Pavlova's dissertation presents the results of her own research on a significant problem in the contemporary economy – the planning of crisis situations and the ability of management to cope with them.

The Introduction provides a reasoned justification for the topicality of the topic. The degree of research on the problem is indicated by chronologically indicating the more famous scientists – foreign and Bulgarian – who have published their results in the specialized literature. The subject of the study is correctly and precisely stated as “crisis management in the context of developing and maintenance of a crisis management plan, including a crisis communication plan, as fundamental tools for effective crisis management in organizations”. The object is formulated as “organizations in the sector of sorting and trading second-hand textiles in Bulgaria”. Desislava Pavlova sets herself the goal of “analyzing crises and their management in companies that sort, and trade second-hand textiles in Bulgaria, with emphasis on the importance of the crisis management plan, as well as the communication plan, as its essential element, for the prevention and effective management of crises”. Six research tasks have been set for its implementation.

The thesis is clearly and precisely formulated, which follows from the structure and content of the individual chapters, are presented in a strict logical sequence. Three research working hypotheses have been derived to prove it.

An appropriate research toolkit is applied, demonstrating the author's knowledge and skills in the field. Various approaches and methods have been applied, with the expert evaluation, empirical research and specific types of analysis and synthesis. Nine companies with local and foreign participation, established in the market, are studied.

In the analysis of the primary data, anonymous questionnaires and direct observations of practical challenges are used. Secondary sources of information include studies of consulting companies conducted in the period 2015-2023 on global trends, related to crisis processes.

I consider the choice of approach and methodology of the study to be very appropriate in view of the stated objective and substantiation of the thesis.

The dissertation meets the requirements of article 27, item 2 from the Regulations for applying the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

3. Assessment of the structure and content of the dissertation

The volume of the dissertation is 187 pages. Its structure includes presents introduction, main body with 3 chapters, conclusion, 12 tables, 31 figures and 1 appendix.

The bibliographic apparatus includes 110 sources, incl. 87 are in English.

In the first chapter, the PhD candidate has logically consistently clarified the theoretical-methodological aspects of crisis management. A historical analysis of the theories and concepts in the field is conducted. The basic concepts and models are discussed, with the author presenting her own generalized interpretations. The emphasis in the chapter is the subject of research – crisis management plan, incl. and communications with stakeholders. The doctoral student shows an enviable knowledge of a sufficiently large volume of literary sources in the field of crisis management and an opportunity to systematize and structure the acquired knowledge.

The second chapter is analytical. It presents the results of Desislava Pavlova's research in the field of the sector sorting and trade with used textile in Bulgaria. The author shows her expertise, both in the field and excellent skills in economic analysis and synthesis. She skillfully interprets the data obtained in various ways and makes very accurate interpretations and generalizations.

This chapter also presents the results of survey studies, which very well confirm the formulated hypotheses, and are also linked to studies of global trends in the development of the economy during the crisis.

The third chapter presents the guidelines for improving crisis management in organizations for sorting and trading with used textile in Bulgaria. As a result of the conclusions drawn from the research conducted, indicators are derived that can serve to determine the level of resilience to potential crises in the sector. The recommendations in this direction are valuable for practice. The developed conceptual framework for preparing a crisis management plan can be cited as a significant contribution. It includes a structure, scheduled processes, checklists and auxiliary classifications for each of the stages and elements that can assist organizations in preparing a crisis management plan and communication plan. This would facilitate its practical application. The problem of potential risk, which is significant during periods of crisis, is discussed, with the author providing an interesting and significant solution for the sector.

The Conclusion outlines directions for future development of the researched problems.

The style of the dissertation is precise, concise, at a high scientific level. The content shows a thorough knowledge of both the specialized literature and the practice in the field.

In summary, it can be stated that Desislava Pavlova's dissertation has the character of a completed scientific study of a current and significant problem in Bulgaria - crisis

management in the used textile industry and, in particular, the crisis management plan and communications with stakeholders included in it.

In reference of structure and content, the dissertation complies to the requirements of article 34, item 2 and item 3 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna, Section II - Conditions and order for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "PhD".

4. Identification and evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation work

I fully accept the scientific and applied scientific contributions indicated in the abstract, the most important of which are:

- Scientific knowledge in the theory and practice of crisis management has been enriched with new opinions, systematizations and interpretations in the field of the crisis management plan and its component, the communication plan, as an effective means of its implementation.

- Based on empirical research of the used textile industry and comparative analysis with global studies on crisis management practices, the main factors and reasons that hinder the development, implementation and maintenance of crisis management plans, incl. communication plans, in Bulgarian organizations have been identified.

- A conceptual framework for crisis management and for the development, implementation, and maintenance of crisis management plan, incl. communication plan, has been proposed, tailored to the specifics of organizations engaged in the industry with used textiles in Bulgaria, which is practically applicable a practical model to organizations in crisis process with a similar profile.

In summary, it can be stated that the main contributions of the doctoral student's dissertation are the enrichment of existing knowledge and the application of scientific achievements in practice.

The doctoral student has achieved the set goal and fulfilled the research tasks in the presented dissertation work. The three hypotheses have been confirmed, the main thesis has been proven with serious arguments.

5. Publications and participations in scientific forums

The PhD student has published four single-authored publications to the topic of her dissertation, including two articles in English and two reports. The submitted publications present significant results from the dissertation and they are on the researched issues.

With the list of publications, the doctoral candidate proves compliance with the minimum national requirements 40 points (with 30 required) in the field of 3. *Social, Economic and Legal Sciences*, Professional Field 3.7 *Administration and Management*, according to the regulations of the Law on the Development of Academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. That is, the points are exceeded.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract is 46 pages long. It correctly and fully reflects the content of the dissertation. The review meets the normative requirements and rules for its structure and content. It presents in a synthesized form the scientific research carried out by the doctoral student and the results achieved.

7. Plagiarism found or not found in the dissertation paper and abstract

No plagiarism was found in the dissertation and abstract presented by Desislava Pavlova.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no significant comments on the presented dissertation, except for a few editorial notes. I recommend that the author, if possible, deepen the scope of the research object by studying the practice in other countries in this industry.

9. Questions to the PhD student

Aiming at a successful defense of dissertation, I suggest that Desislava Pavlova considers three questions:

- Considering your knowledge of different areas of the economy, in which other areas of the industry is the proposed conceptual framework for developing a crisis management plan, incl. a communication plan, applicable?

- What is the author's opinion, according to her expertise in the field, regarding the different terminology – crisis or anti-crisis management?

- Do you have information or direct observations of how these processes of crisis planning, that you described, are organized in another industry?

10. Conclusion

The dissertation contains scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the relevant Regulations of University of Economic - Varna.

The dissertation shows that the PhD candidate Desislava Pavlova possesses in-dept theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty “Social Management” demonstrating qualities and skills for conducting scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive evaluation for the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contribution, and I propose to the scientific jury to award **Desislava Pavlova Pavlova** the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the field of higher education 3. *Social, Economic and Legal Science*, professional field 3.7 *Administration and Management*, doctoral program “*Social Management*”.

11 January 2026

Varna

Reviewer:.....

/Prof. Tzveta Zafirova, PhD/

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