

OPINION

Вх. №

P20-244 / 12.02.2026

on a Thesis for Acquiring the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor"

Submitted by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmila Mihaylova Mihaylova, "Angel Kanchev" University of Ruse, Scientific Field "Economics and Management".

Reason for Writing: Orders RD 06-188/01.12.2025 of the Rector of the Economic University, Varna, and Decision of the Meeting of the Scientific Jury on 05.12.2025.

Thesis Topic: Crisis Management in Organisations Engaged in Sorting and Trading Second-hand Textiles.

Author: Desislava Pavlova Pavlova.

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Radka Petrova Ivanova, PhD.

1. General Presentation of the Thesis

The dissertation is dedicated to the crisis management in the organizations for sorting and trading with used textiles in Bulgaria, focusing on the development and implementation of an anti-crisis and communication plan for sustainability and competitiveness of the sector. The relevance of the topic stems from the dynamic and uncertain environment, increased environmental demands, globalization and the development of the circular economy, which pose new challenges to organizations for survival and development.

The dissertation of Desislava Pavlova Pavlova consists of 204 pages, including 187 pages of main text, 11 pages of bibliography and 6 pages of appendices. The main text consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and references. The dissertation contains 31 figures and 12 tables. The list of references includes 111 sources, most of them foreign sources. The abstract, as part of the documentation of the dissertation defence, is a summary of the research. It also includes a declaration of originality and a list of contributions and publications on the topic. The above mentioned formal and substantive aspects of the thesis give grounds to conclude that it complies with Art. 27 (2) of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in Bulgaria and has all the necessary elements of a complete scientific study.

2. Publications and Participation in Scientific Forums

The PhD student has submitted two peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals and two scientific papers published in conference proceedings as part of the dissertation defence procedure. The papers are independent, have been published in specialist scientific journals and highlight key aspects of the dissertation research. The total number of points obtained as a result of the publications exceeds the quantitative requirements of Art. 35, par. 1, items 1-4 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at IU-Varna.

3. Assessment of the Dissertation Structure and Content

The structure of the thesis is clearly divided into three main chapters: theoretical and methodological aspects of crisis management, sector analysis and guidelines for effective crisis management, complemented by empirical research and practical recommendations. The theoretical framework includes a detailed review of definitions, typologies, models and stages of crises. Leading international and Bulgarian researchers (Fink, Mitroff, Coombs, Zafirova, etc.) are analysed, as well as the applicability of the models to Bulgarian conditions. Crisis management is considered as a process in three main stages: pre-crisis (prevention and preparation), actual (response) and post-crisis (recovery and learning), requiring an integrated approach and continuous updating of plans. The anti-crisis plan and the crisis communication plan are identified as the basic tools for prevention, timely response and recovery, focusing on the role of communication with stakeholders in maintaining trust and reputation.

The empirical research covers seven of the nine leading companies in the sector, through surveys and observations, and analyses the existence and effectiveness of crisis plans, crisis prevention and management preparedness, and the main obstacles companies face. Based on it, the main challenges facing the sector are highlighted, i.e. lack or insufficient formalisation of crisis and communication plans, limited management focus on crisis management, lack of resources and expertise, and insufficient systematic approach to risk. Global comparisons show that the Bulgarian sector lags behind global trends in terms of

formalisation and implementation of crisis plans, but there are growing awareness and willingness to adapt best practices.

Overall, the language and style of the dissertation are scientific, and the tools used are effective. The abstract accompanying the dissertation includes the main elements of the research as well as the most important conclusions.

4. Identifying and Evaluating the Contributions in the Dissertation

The scientific and applied contributions are expressed in the development of a conceptual framework for an anti-crisis and communication plan, tailored to the specifics of the sector; empirical assessment of the preparedness of organizations to cope with crises; formulation of practical guidelines and recommendations for increasing sustainability; integration of international models in Bulgarian management practice.

5. Critical Comments and Recommendations

Without diminishing the results achieved within the framework of the study, criticisms can be made in relation to the limited representativeness of the empirical study and the need for a more in-depth analysis of the external environment and institutional framework. Rather, they can be kept in mind for future research on the topic.

6. Conclusion

The dissertation on "Crisis Management in Used Textile Sorting and Trading Organizations" by Desislava Pavlova Pavlova demonstrates a high degree of theoretical grounding, systematic and practical orientation and meets the requirements of the regulatory framework in Bulgaria.

All submitted materials show that PhD student Desislava Pavlova Pavlova possesses knowledge and abilities for conducting scientific research, which gives me grounds to make an excellent evaluation of the dissertation and to propose to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to its author.

07/02/2026

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

(Assoc. Prof. L. Mihaylova)

OPINION

on a Thesis for Acquiring the Educational and Scientific Degree “Doctor”

Submitted by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emil Krastev Papazov, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Scientific Field “Economics and Management”.

Reason for Writing: Orders RD 06-188/01.12.2025 of the Rector of the Economic University, Varna, and Decision of the Meeting of the Scientific Jury on 05.12.2025.

Thesis Topic: Crisis Management in Organisations Engaged in Sorting and Trading Second-Hand Textiles

Author: Desislava Pavlova Pavlova

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Radka Petrova Ivanova, PhD

1. Overview of the PhD Thesis

Crisis management in organizations engaged in the operation and trading of used goods is a topic that has been studied only recently. Information on this topic is scarce and relatively poorly analysed. All this, combined with the significance of the problem, makes the dissertation relevant.

Desislava Pavlova Pavlova’s thesis has a total *volume* of 204 pages, of which 187 pages are main text, 11 pages are bibliography and 6 pages are appendices. In terms of structure, the *main text* consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references. The thesis also contains 31 figures and 12 tables. The list of references includes 111 sources, of which 24 are in Cyrillic and 87 are in Latin. The abstract, as part of the doctoral student’s scientific output, contains a summary of the research, a declaration of originality, and a reference to the contributions and publications on the topic. The formal aspects of the thesis and their content review give reason to believe that it complies with Article 27 (2) of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in Bulgaria and has all the necessary elements of a completed scientific study.

2. Publications and Participation in Scientific Forums

As part of the thesis defence procedure, the doctoral student presented two articles published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal and two scientific papers published in

conference proceedings. The publications are independent, made in specialised scientific editions and reflect important findings from the thesis research. The total number of points received from them exceeds the quantitative requirements under Article 35, paragraph 1, items 1-4 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at IU-Varna.

3. Assessment of the Thesis Structure and Content

The conceptual framework of the study includes: **firstly**, the identification of the *object* (organisations involved in the sorting and trade of used textiles in Bulgaria), the *subject* (crisis management of such organisations), the *goal* (analysis of possible crisis situations and ways to deal with them), the *tasks*, the *hypotheses*, the *research approaches and methods*, as well as the *limitations* of the study (primarily focus on the anti-crisis plan and its communications); **secondly**, presentation of the scientific basis for understanding crises, their development and management, basic models and tools necessary for effective coping with them, and views on subsequent empirical and practical research on the topic; **thirdly**, a comprehensive picture of the environment, challenges and practices in the used textile sector in Bulgaria, with an analysis of vulnerabilities, potential crises and the actual preparedness of companies in terms of their management; **fourthly**, a practical framework and specific steps for building and improving crisis management and communication in the sector; **fifthly**, the conclusion that systematic and integrated crisis management is key to the future and success of the sector, and its development requires a focus on planning, training, partnerships and adaptability. The framework developed is logical and the doctoral student follows it consistently in the development of his thesis.

In connection with the thesis put forward by the doctoral student that the anti-crisis plan and its communication are key prerequisites for the prevention and successful outcome of a crisis, a survey was conducted among the nine main Bulgarian companies involved in the sorting and trade of used textiles in Bulgaria. The survey was supplemented with a synthesis of information from secondary sources. Statistical methods and appropriate software were used to process and analyse the information. This ensures the representativeness, relevance and reliability of the empirical data collected.

It can be said that, overall, the language and style demonstrated in the dissertation are scientific, and the tools used are appropriate. The bibliography demonstrates the doctoral

student's good scientific knowledge of the subject, and the accompanying thesis abstract contains the main points of the research and its most important results.

4. Identification and Evaluation of the Contributions in the Dissertation

The research contributes both at the scientific level (theoretical enrichment and adaptation of models) and at the applied level – it provides ready-made solutions, tools and templates that can be implemented by real organisations to increase their resilience and effectiveness in crisis management.

5. Critical Comments and Recommendations

The study would benefit from a broader empirical base, analysis of more quantitative data, and a more thorough cross-sectoral analysis. The critical comments do not detract from the results achieved through scientific research. They can be taken into account in future work on the topic.

6. Conclusion

The dissertation on “Crisis Management in Organisations Engaged in Sorting and Trading Second-hand Textiles” by Desislava Pavlova Pavlova is an original study of a problem that is significant for the Bulgarian economy. It contributes to the theory and practice of crisis management in a specific sector.

All presented materials show that doctoral student Desislava Pavlova Pavlova has the knowledge and abilities to conduct scientific research, which gives me reason to give a positive assessment of the dissertation and to propose its author to be awarded the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor".

Feb. 9th, 2026

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Papazov)



ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА

Вх. № Pa20-261/16.02.2026 STATEMENT

Statement written by **Associate Professor Desislava Borislavova Serafimova, Ph.D.**, Department of Management and Administration, Faculty of Management, University of Economics – Varna, Bulgaria, 77 Knyaz Boris Blvd, e-mail: serafimova_d@ue-varna.bg

Regarding: dissertation work for obtaining a scientific-educational degree "Doctor" in the professional field 3.7 Administration and management

Grounds for preparing the statement: participation in a scientific jury for the defense of a dissertation according to the order of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna, № RD 06-188/01.12.2025.

Author of the dissertation: Desislava Pavlova Pavlova, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Management and Administration at the University of Economics – Varna

Dissertation topic: CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS FOR SORTING AND TRADING WITH USED TEXTILES

I. General presentation of the dissertation work

1.1. Subject

The dissertation examines crisis management in organizations engaged in sorting and trading used textiles in Bulgaria, identifying and analyzing the specific and most important features of this process, emphasizing the role of the anti-crisis plan as a means of crisis prevention. For this purpose, an objective and six research tasks, a thesis and three research hypotheses have been formulated.

1.2. Volume

The dissertation is 204 pages long, of which 187 pages are the main text and 6 pages are appendices. It contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices.

1.3. Structure

The structural elements are logically linked and correspond to the set research tasks, but their volumes are not sufficiently balanced – the first chapter is 85 pages, the second is 53, and the third is 39. The goal and the set of tasks determine the study's logic and correspond to the selected research methodology.

The first chapter presents the theoretical concepts and emphases of other scientists regarding the nature and typology of organisational crises and the processes and models of crisis management. Special attention is paid to the role of the anti-crisis plan and stakeholder communication, which are perceived as appropriate means of preventing and effectively

managing crises. The second chapter analyzes the sector of organizations for sorting and trading in used textiles, describes the empirical study carried out in Bulgaria, and tests the research hypotheses. The third chapter presents summarized conclusions and guidelines for improving the crisis management process in organizations involved in sorting and trading used textiles in Bulgaria, and proposes a conceptual framework for preparing an anti-crisis plan applicable to organizations in the sector.

1.4. Literature

The bibliography contains 110 literary sources, including 87 in English and 23 in Bulgarian.

1.5. Appendices

The appendix presents a questionnaire for conducting an empirical study among enterprises engaged in sorting and trading in used textiles in Bulgaria.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation

2.1. Assessment of the relevance and development of research in the scientific problem of the dissertation

The problem under study is relevant, correctly interpreted, and aligned with the goals set by the doctoral student. Crisis management in organizations sorting and trading used textiles in Bulgaria is a significant issue, the relevance of which has increased in recent years due to the continuous changes in the business environment and increasing regulation in the sector. This implies an analysis of the efforts to achieve sustainability by organizations in the sector, and more specifically the possibilities of the circular economy and the need for innovative solutions for waste management. The main theoretical propositions for crisis management examined by the author are specified in accordance with the specifics of the analyzed sector. A clear focus is placed on studying the role of the anti-crisis plan, its main elements, and approaches to its development, with the greatest applicability to the object of study. The concepts of other authors are presented, on the basis of which a conceptual framework for crisis management has been developed. This constitutes a good basis for describing the author's research model. Representatives of nine local and foreign companies that have long-standing established presences in our country's market and have been sorting and trading used textiles in Bulgaria for more than 15 years participated in the empirical study.

2.2. Assessment of the language, volume and instrumentation of the dissertation work

The style of the dissertation is good, with a clear and understandable presentation. The theoretical part clarifies the key terms and concepts. The doctoral student purposefully systematizes individual authorial points of view, interprets them and explains their possible application in her research object. Appropriate research approaches and methods have been used, providing good argumentation in testing the research thesis and research hypotheses. Good skills in summarizing and analyzing data, as well as their presentation and interpretation in the context of the topic under consideration, have been demonstrated.

2.3. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract meets the requirements for structure and content; its volume is 48 pages. It accurately presents the dissertation work in a synthesized form, as well as the most important results of the research, including the contributions achieved.

2.4. Quantitative requirements for publications and participation in scientific forums

The abstract lists 4 publications related to the topic of the dissertation – two articles and two papers, all four of which were independently developed by the doctoral student. She has participated in two scientific conferences. The data provided is evidence that the doctoral student meets the quantitative requirements under Art. 57 of the Academic Regulations of the University of Economics in Varna and the national minimum requirements for awarding the PhD degree.

III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work

I accept the theoretical and applied contributions presented in the abstract, and I would formulate them as follows:

- An analysis and addition of the existing terminology and methodology for crisis management has been carried out, with an emphasis on the possibilities for implementing the anti-crisis plan and its component element – the communication plan – as a basis for effective crisis management.
- Through empirical research and comparison with global studies, the main reasons preventing organizations for sorting and trading in used textiles in Bulgaria from successfully developing, implementing and maintaining an anti-crisis plan and a crisis communication plan have been outlined.
- A conceptual framework for crisis management has been proposed, specifically focusing on the process of developing, implementing and maintaining an anti-crisis plan, reflecting the specifics of organizations for sorting and trading in used textiles in Bulgaria.

IV. Notes and questions for the PhD student

1. To reflect the actual content presented and research work carried out by the doctoral student, the title of §3.2 should be corrected, because the proposed “conceptual framework for preparing an anti-crisis plan” applies in particular to the organizations of the research object, and not in principle.
2. Some tables and figures in the dissertation work (e.g. Fig. 10, 11, 12, 13) are indicated as having been developed by the author. At the same time, many of their elements are based on statements and conclusions formulated by other scientists, derived from their research, and commented on in the theoretical review. Academic good faith assumes in such cases that authorship is reflected appropriately and that the statements from the research of other scientists that served as the basis for developing the ideas of the author of the dissertation are indicated.
3. The development would benefit if the doctoral student presented some of her concepts more precisely, highlighting her personal position more categorically (e.g., on the role of the life cycle concept in crisis management, pp. 35-36; the purpose of crisis communication, pp. 62-63, etc.).
4. The usefulness of some figures (e.g., Fig. 10) is a matter of controversy. It requires argumentation or refinement of the way the elements in them are presented in order to have greater informational and scientific value.
5. In academic texts, it is not accepted to insert graphic images resembling emoticons or small pictures into sentences, as are present in some places in the text of the dissertation (p. 82) and the abstract (p. 22). In this regard, my question to the doctoral student is –

were tools assisted by artificial intelligence used in writing some parts of the dissertation, in which parts and to what extent?

V. Summary evaluation of the dissertation work and conclusion

Based on the above, I believe that the presented dissertation represents a completed scientific study and meets the requirements of the Law on the Research and Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Law on the Research and Development of the Republic of Bulgaria and the relevant internal rules of the University of Economics - Varna. The author Desislava Pavlova demonstrates skills for independent research work at a good level, as well as the ability to work with appropriate scientific tools. Results of a significant scientific and applied nature have been obtained.

The above arguments give me reason to give a positive assessment of the dissertation work and to propose to the members of the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to doctoral student Desislava Pavlova Pavlova in the field of higher education: 3.7 "Administration and Management".

15.02.2026 г.
Varna

Statement prepared by:

(assoc. prof. D. Serafimova, PhD)

Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679