



REVIEW

on the dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: Organization and management of production (agriculture and sub-sectors)

Author of the dissertation: Dimitar Totev Stoenchev, full-time doctoral student at the Department of "Management and Marketing", at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv

Topic of the dissertation: "Strategic management of human resources in the organization of production processes in agriculture"

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Kostov - Plovdiv University of Higher Education, 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: economics and management, appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. RD – 16-478 of 02.04.2026 by the Rector of the Academy of Sciences.

1. Brief presentation of the candidate

Doctoral student Dimitar Totev Stoenchev was born on 23.05.1978. In 2010, he acquired a Master of Science in Project Management, Investment Policy and Planning at the Academy of Sciences – Plovdiv.

Since 2010 and currently works at Tedtrans OOD, Plovdiv as a sales manager. He has acquired administrative management experience and works well in a team. He is fluent in English and German.

2. Relevance of the problem

The problem of labor resources in agriculture is not only relevant, but also catastrophic. The Bulgarian countryside is already depopulated. There are no resources for Bulgarian agriculture. The lands are abandoned and are increasingly becoming deserted.

Against this background of the state of agriculture, the topic of the dissertation work on labor resources is not only relevant, but also very necessary for practice. It is especially relevant as a tool for the few remaining agricultural producers and has both scientific and practical application.

3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of the study

The purpose of the dissertation work is correctly defined. It is specific and makes it possible to assess what will be developed on the problem.

The tasks are specific and correctly defined. They are in such an order that each of them serves to build on the next ones so that the volume of the overall scientific research is best covered. They clarify the essence of the importance of strategic management of human resources in agriculture. A methodology has been developed for their application and recommendations have been made, which serve as the basis for the preparation of a model for strategic management of human resources in agriculture.

The object of the study is indicated precisely in the title itself.

The subject of the study is the management activities in planning, organizing, motivating and controlling human resources in agricultural holdings.

The thesis is well specified, clear, brief and justified. It is supplemented with several sub-theses that aim to clarify the essence of production processes in agriculture, to show the factors for them, as well as to indicate the potential for implementing human resource management in agricultural production holdings.

The methods have been applied correctly and justified. They are both traditional and modern.

4. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results

The dissertation is 111 pages long, of which 106 are expositions, with 12 tables and 10 figures. 26 literary sources were used.

5. Discussion of the results and the literature used

The structure of the dissertation is a classic three-part type.

In the first part of the work, the theoretical and methodological foundations of strategic human resource management are analyzed. In this part of the dissertation, a very detailed commentary on the literary sources used is made. The analysis primarily covers clarifying the essence of strategic management. Considerable attention is paid to the approaches, models and principles.

The doctoral student very precisely defines and specifies the approaches by groups and types. For each of them, he indicates the main idea, their strength and possible limitations. All this is summarized in a table. The author's contribution is the conclusion

that is made on the basis of the analysis concerning the essence of strategic management.

In this part of the dissertation, the doctoral student has made a very good study of the relationship between strategic management and organizational effectiveness. Here he has indicated the connections between the elements of strategic human resource management in the organization and their influence on management effectiveness. This is also an author's contribution, which is important for the study itself and helps to delve into the essence of human resource management in agriculture. This has given him the opportunity to determine with greater accuracy the specifics of resource management in the agricultural sector.

Based on the very well-made analyses of these specific problems, the doctoral student has identified and specified the problems and challenges that exist in human resource management in agribusiness in Bulgaria. This has allowed him to indicate his author's contribution to theoretical research and, more specifically, to the specific problems themselves, classifying them in a certain order.

The well-developed theoretical part of the dissertation has allowed the doctoral student to make a specific analysis of human resource management practices in agricultural holdings. This was done in the main regions of the country by surveying agricultural producers, which is a personal contribution of the doctoral student. The empirical study was conducted through 312 agricultural producers from the country. This large number of producers outlines very well the problems related to human resources in agriculture in Bulgaria.

The author of the dissertation has included in the survey the most important indicators related to the employment of the workforce and the degree of mechanization in agricultural holdings.

The analysis of the statistical information from the survey has allowed him to draw up a diagram of the relationship between management determinants and indicators of the activity of the agricultural enterprise.

Based on the well-conducted research through the surveys, the doctoral student has developed a model for strategic management of human resources in agriculture. This model is the personal work of the doctoral student and a contribution of the dissertation work.

This model will allow agricultural enterprises to use human capital more effectively, at the same time to increase labor productivity and to adapt better to technological changes. This development is in line with the EU requirements for sustainable agriculture.

In addition to the specific model of the study, the author has made and proposed recommendations including the measures that should be taken to improve human resource management in agriculture in Bulgaria. These recommendations are aimed at creating a sustainable environment for strategic human resource management, which encompasses the processes of selection, training, qualification, assessment and motivation, tailored to the specific needs of the agricultural sector. This will allow increasing the efficiency of production processes, strengthening the social sustainability of rural areas and achieving competitiveness of Bulgarian agriculture. All this meets the requirements of the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

The dissertation ends with a well-made conclusion, which is very clear and specific.

6. Contributions of the dissertation

A. Scientific contributions

1. A model for improving human resource management in agricultural holdings based on the strategic approach has been developed.
2. The mechanism of human resource management in the agricultural sector has been clarified.
3. Human resource management practices in agriculture related to the social sustainability of rural areas have been determined.
4. The relationship between strategic management and organizational efficiency in the agricultural sector has been determined.

B. Scientific and applied contributions

1. An empirical analysis of the factors in agricultural holdings influencing organizational management has been prepared.
2. Specific recommendations have been made for improving human resource management in agriculture in Bulgaria.
3. The measures that need to be taken at the level of an individual agricultural holding have been determined.
4. What national and European strategic mechanisms should be applied to stimulate human resource management in agriculture in Bulgaria have been determined.

7. Critical notes and questions and recommendations

I believe that the author of the dissertation should develop a brochure to be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture for use by agricultural producers.

8. Published articles and citations

The author of the dissertation has published the required number of publications, according to the requirements of the regulatory documents.

The presented abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION:

The dissertation is a completed scientific study with scientific and practical contributions.

Based on the various research methods learned and applied by the doctoral student and the correctly conducted research, summaries and conclusions, I believe that the presented dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on Agricultural Research and Agricultural Research and the Regulations of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it positively.

I would like to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to also vote positively and award Dimitar Totev Stoenchev the ONS DOCTOR in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty: Organization and management (agriculture and sub-sectors).

Date: 20.04.2026

Kostov

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