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Report of the member of Thesis' Council on the thesis
"Approaches to personnel training and development of innovation-active
companies in the BRIC countries"

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specialty 08.00.05 Economics and management of national economy
(management)

(кандидат экономических наук по специальности 08.00.05 – Экономика и
управление народным хозяйством (менеджмент))

by Artem Ivanovich Alsufyev
at Saint-Petersburg State University

Viva Report for PhD submission

Artem I. Alsufyev:

APPROACHES TO PERSONNEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF
INNOVATION-ACTIVE COMPANIES IN THE BRIC COUNTRIES

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Outline

The dissertation tackled the issue of stimulating innovation activity by using approaches to personnel training and development in companies from Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). To this purpose, the dissertation provided a conceptual overview of research on approaches to personnel training and development in innovation-active companies as well as country-specific features, followed by an empirical study. Data from 200 innovation-active companies from BRIC countries were used, and data was analyzed via cluster and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis.

Assessment

Relevance of the topic of dissertation research

Among all the functional elements of human resource management systems, the elements of personnel training and development are the most controversial and under-researched area in different countries. At the same time, it is widely recognized that personnel training and development practices are the most important tools for achieving the goals of stimulating the innovation activity of companies.

The dissertation by Artem Alsufyev was carried out on a very topical area, since it was aimed at identifying the most successful practices in personnel training and development of the BRIC countries, which will allow the development of theory in this area of research and help Russian companies to choose certain practices for working with personnel that meet specific goals and objectives of innovation-active companies.

Degree of validity of scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation

Theoretical and methodological basis of the research are works of leading authors on the issues of human resources management, strategic management, human

resource management, organizational behavior, personnel training and development, innovation and comparative management. The reliability of the results of the dissertation research is proved by empirical data and calculations performed by the author in the dissertation.

Structure and content of the dissertation

The thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, 9 annexes and references (258 sources). The dissertation includes 26 tables, 10 figures.

Overall, the study was written in good English, with appropriate use of academic terminology. The argument progressed well, relevant literature was used throughout and in an appropriate way. Seminal pieces of literature were cited. Theory development and empirical parts were done to a standard required from a PhD dissertation. The dissertation had a clear contribution and interesting results, addressing a timely and important issues. There are no significant gaps or important criticisms bearing in mind the overall quality of the work, however, in my 'Specific Areas of Discussion' I outline some of the issues which could be tackled to make this an even better dissertation.

Specific Areas of Discussion:

Introduction

The introduction generally provided a good overview and motivation of the topic. In the introduction, the topicality of the chosen research domain was described, the degree of its development in the scientific literature was characterized, the goal and objectives of the dissertation research were formulated. The introduction also included the theoretical, methodological, theoretical base of the study, research methods, and structure of work. The author described the main results of the research, their scientific novelty, and practical implications.

Main Body

In the first chapter "Theoretical foundations of research on approaches to personnel training and development in innovation-active companies", the author provided an overview of the concept of innovation activity of the company, the place of the personnel training and development system among other research fields. Artem also outlined the main directions of research on the relationship of approaches to training and development of personnel and innovation activity.

In the second chapter, "Country features of the influence of personnel training and development approaches on company innovation activity", the author conducted comparative studies in management that revealed the main factors influencing the approaches to personnel training and development. He also provided an overview of the institutional and cultural characteristics of the BRIC countries, and reviewed the areas of research on approaches to personnel training and development in innovation-active companies of the BRIC countries.

In the third chapter "Approaches to personnel training and development in innovation active companies of BRIC countries: methodology and research results" the methodology of research and sample characteristics were presented, a typology of approaches to personnel training and development in innovation-active companies of the BRIC countries was developed (qualitative comparative analysis based on fuzzy sets).

Some aspects of concern that limit the research study.

First, the use of perceptive indicators of training and development practices and innovation activity might lead to less valid results in terms of interpretation of the findings. Although, such use of perceptive indicators is much easier for data collection, it still limits levels of generalizability.

Second, absence of quantitative impact of training and development practices on innovation activity in companies of BRIC countries makes it difficult to apply in real business settings.

Third, the basic configuration models of training and development practices for innovation-active companies in BRIC countries including such aspects of training and development as financing, long-term investments, generalist approach to training and development, firm-specific training, cross-functional training, teambuilding, induction programs, interpersonal communications training can only be used in practice provided that they are proved to have statistically significant effect.

Fourth, the sampling of 200 innovation-active companies of BRIC countries was produced without taking into account industry representation criterion and types of innovations criterion, which imposes a certain restriction on generalizability of the author's conclusions.

Conclusion

The conclusions are good but remain a reiteration of the results.

Bibliography/appendix

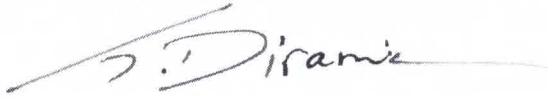
The format of the bibliography is non-standard (possibly a requirement of the host university). The appendix is very helpful and appropriate.

Overall, the evaluation of the impact of training and development practices on the level of innovation activity in comparative management is an underdeveloped area of research and the current dissertation study is an attempt to fill this gap.

The dissertation by Artem Alsufyev is a completed and independently executed scientific research aimed at solving the current scientific and practical problem of increasing the innovation activity of Russian as well as BRIC companies. It contains new scientific ideas and is of interest for the development of management theory and practice.

Thus, the dissertation research carried out by Artem A. Alsufyev "Approaches to personnel training and development of innovation-active companies in the BRIC

countries", presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics meets the qualification requirements for candidate dissertations on specialty 08.00.05 Economics and management of national economy (management).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Dirani", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Khalil M. Dirani. PhD.

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