

Review of the doctoral dissertation by Inna Balahurovska

entitled “Development of methodological bases for evaluating the effectiveness of leadership style”, written in 2026 at the Silesian University of Technology and Sumy State University under the supervision of Prof. SUT Aleksandra Kuzior, PhD, DSc, and co-supervision of Prof. Hanna Shvindina, PhD, DSc

Formal Basis

The basis for preparing this review is the letter dated 28 May 2026 informing me of my appointment by the Council for the Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences of the Silesian University of Technology as a reviewer of the doctoral dissertation submitted by Ms. Inna Balahurovska. The substantive assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements specified in Article 187 of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science, as amended.

The subject of the evaluation is a doctoral dissertation prepared in English, consisting of 268 pages, including the bibliography and appendices. The dissertation contains the formal elements required for doctoral dissertations and has been presented in a form enabling substantive evaluation.

The review is structured around five main areas: the assessment of the choice of topic and research objectives, the evaluation of the applied research methods, the formal assessment of the dissertation, the substantive evaluation of the work, and the final conclusions.

1. Assessment of the choice of topic and research objectives

The dissertation addresses the evaluation of leadership style effectiveness in contemporary organizations. The topic is highly relevant to the discipline of management and quality sciences, as leadership effectiveness remains an important factor influencing organizational performance, employee well-being, motivation, and human resource management. The attempt to develop a diagnostic tool that could support leadership assessment and development also gives the dissertation a clear practical dimension.

At the same time, the research problem has been defined very broadly. The dissertation seeks to integrate considerations concerning the nature of leadership, the evolution of leadership theories, classifications of leadership styles, bibliometric and content analyses, qualitative

interviews, quantitative modelling, and the development of a diagnostic instrument. This ambitious scope reflects the Author's considerable research effort, but it also creates a risk of conceptual dispersion. The dissertation would benefit from a more precise delimitation of the research problem and a clearer identification of the central theoretical perspective integrating its individual components.

The declared objective of the dissertation "...to develop a tool to assess the effectiveness of leadership style in modern organisations..."(p. 2) is both relevant and practically significant. However, this objective could have been defined more precisely in terms of the organizational context, level of analysis, type of effectiveness under consideration, and intended area of application. The dissertation moves between leadership style, leadership effectiveness, employee performance, team effectiveness, organizational outcomes, motivation, stress, compensation, financial well-being, and strategic management. Although the Author recognizes that leadership effectiveness and organizational effectiveness are conceptually distinct, this distinction is not maintained with equal precision throughout the empirical and interpretative sections.

The identified research gap is relevant, but it is presented in relatively general terms. The Author repeatedly argues that existing approaches to leadership assessment are fragmented and that a more holistic instrument is therefore required. This argument is understandable, but it requires more precise justification. The dissertation should clearly identify the theoretical and methodological limitations of existing leadership assessment instruments that the proposed framework seeks to address. It should also explain how the framework extends beyond validated leadership questionnaires, emotional intelligence and personality measures, and feedback-based assessment procedures.

The research questions and hypotheses are extensive and generally aligned with the objectives of the dissertation. Some of them, however, are formulated in a manner that may imply causal relationships. Given the exploratory nature of the qualitative stage and the cross-sectional design of the survey, it would be methodologically more appropriate to refer to perceived relationships, associations, and configurations rather than direct effects or causal influence. This does not undermine the value of the research, but it requires greater caution in the formulation and interpretation of conclusions.

A further issue concerns the relationship between the broad title, which refers to contemporary organizations in general, and the empirical contexts examined in the dissertation. The qualitative component is based on managers representing selected sectors and is strongly embedded in the Ukrainian organizational context. This constitutes valuable empirical material;

however, the extent to which the findings can be generalized to contemporary organizations more broadly should be presented with greater caution.

In summary, the topic of the dissertation is relevant and its research objectives are ambitious. The principal limitation of this part of the work lies not in the importance of the research problem, but in the excessive breadth of the conceptual framework and the need to define more precisely the theoretical boundaries of the claimed scholarly contribution.

2. Assessment of the Research Methods

The dissertation employs a multi-stage research design combining a literature review, bibliometric analysis, content analysis, semi-structured interviews, a pilot study, survey research, factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. This methodological architecture demonstrates considerable ambition and an effort to integrate qualitative and quantitative evidence. It may therefore be regarded as potentially valuable. Nevertheless, several aspects of its methodological execution require critical consideration.

First, the literature review and bibliometric analysis are based on broad search strategies, including the keyword “leader*” and the query “leadership AND performance AND assessment.” Although such searches make it possible to capture a wide range of publications, they also produce a highly heterogeneous body of literature, including studies that are only indirectly related to the assessment of leadership style effectiveness. The dissertation would benefit from a more transparent systematic review protocol, clearly specified inclusion and exclusion criteria, an appraisal of source quality, and a fuller justification of the final analytical corpus.

The use of total citation counts to identify key publications also has certain limitations. Highly cited studies are often older and more general in scope; therefore, citation frequency does not necessarily identify the studies most relevant to the specific problem of evaluating leadership style effectiveness. This does not invalidate the usefulness of the bibliometric component, but it suggests that its findings should be interpreted primarily as a broad mapping of the research field rather than as a precise reconstruction of the state of knowledge concerning the dissertation’s central research problem.

The qualitative study is based on 22 semi-structured interviews with managers representing several sectors. The diversity of the sample enabled the collection of rich managerial accounts. At the same time, its heterogeneity requires careful interpretation. Conclusions concerning sectoral differences or stable leadership configurations should be formulated cautiously, given the limited number of participants representing each sector. The

methodological rigour of the dissertation would be strengthened by more convincing evidence of theoretical saturation, a more detailed account of the coding procedure, and a fuller explanation of how interpretative decisions were reached.

The qualitative data analysis process is described in terms of transcription, translation into English, coding with Taguette, and thematic analysis. This provides a useful account of the research procedure. However, the dissertation would benefit from additional information concerning coding reliability, researcher reflexivity, the maintenance of an audit trail, and the quality assurance of the translation process. Since the interviews were translated into English, a more explicit discussion of semantic equivalence and the potential influence of translation on the interpretation of the material would improve methodological transparency.

The pilot study was conducted among 10 healthcare employees who evaluated a single leader. As an initial test of the questionnaire's clarity and usability, such a pilot may be regarded as acceptable. Its findings should, however, be treated solely as a preliminary verification of the instrument's operational logic. They do not provide a sufficiently strong basis for validating the instrument. The dissertation should distinguish more clearly between pilot testing and comprehensive psychometric validation.

The quantitative study involved 227 respondents, providing a basis for exploratory modelling. However, the sampling procedure, participant recruitment, response rate, distribution of respondents across organizations, number of leaders assessed, and possible nesting of respondents within organizations or teams require more detailed explanation. These issues are important for evaluating the independence of observations and the extent to which the findings may be generalized.

The measurement model represents one of the most important areas requiring further development. The dissertation proposes a new questionnaire covering numerous leadership parameters and categories of effectiveness. This is an interesting undertaking; however, some components appear to be measured with a limited number of items. A more robust validation strategy would require stronger evidence of convergent validity, discriminant validity, criterion validity, temporal stability, and external validity established through comparison with recognized leadership measures.

The use of exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modelling demonstrates the Author's effort to employ advanced quantitative methods. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the factor structures and SEM results should be more cautious. The four identified configurations—innovative—decisive, strategic—crisis, humanistic—visionary, and

communicative—inspirational—constitute interesting diagnostic profiles, but their distinctiveness from established leadership theories should be demonstrated more convincingly. A further methodological limitation concerns the perceptual and cross-sectional nature of the data. Leadership styles and effectiveness-related outcomes were assessed at the same point in time and largely on the basis of respondents' subjective perceptions. This may increase the risk of common method bias, the influence of a general affective evaluation of the leader, and social desirability effects. These risks should be addressed more explicitly through appropriate procedural or statistical remedies or, at a minimum, acknowledged more clearly as limitations of the study.

Overall, the methodological design is ambitious and reflects a substantial research effort. Its principal limitations concern the need for stronger construct operationalization, more transparent validation procedures, more cautious interpretation of cross-sectional perceptual data, and clearer positioning of the proposed tool as an exploratory diagnostic framework rather than as a fully validated instrument ready for broad organizational implementation.

3. Formal Assessment

The dissertation has a clearly recognizable and generally logical structure. It comprises an introduction, four substantive chapters, conclusions, references, lists of tables and figures, and appendices. The sequence of chapters follows a conventional research logic, progressing from the theoretical foundations through bibliometric and content analyses, qualitative research, and quantitative modelling to the development of the proposed instrument.

The overall structure may therefore be considered appropriate. However, the dissertation is highly extensive and, in some sections, overloaded with content. Chapters One and Two contain numerous classifications, definitions, and summaries of leadership concepts. These sections demonstrate the Author's familiarity with a broad range of literature, but at times they resemble an encyclopaedic overview rather than a selective and critical theoretical argument. A more concise presentation would make it easier to foreground the dissertation's central research problem.

The dissertation would also benefit from editorial condensation. Certain arguments are repeated across different sections, particularly those concerning the multidimensional nature of leadership, the need for holistic assessment, and the practical usefulness of the proposed tool. Reducing such repetition would help clarify the dissertation's scholarly contribution and improve the coherence of its argumentation.

The work also contains linguistic and editorial imperfections. Although the dissertation is generally comprehensible, it includes awkward formulations, grammatical errors, typographical mistakes, and occasional terminological inconsistencies. In a dissertation devoted to methodological foundations and assessment instruments, terminological precision is particularly important, as even minor inconsistencies may create uncertainty regarding the variables, models, and conclusions.

The dissertation contains numerous tables and figures, some of which are useful. Their analytical value, however, is uneven. Certain visual materials effectively synthesize the argument, while others primarily repeat information already presented in the text or are not sufficiently integrated into the analytical narrative. The dissertation would be strengthened if each table and figure were more clearly connected to the research logic and the interpretation of the results.

The bibliography is extensive and includes both classical and recent sources, which constitutes a formal strength of the dissertation. Nevertheless, the quality of the literature review would be improved by a more selective and critical use of sources and by a clearer distinction between foundational theories, validated measurement instruments, empirical studies, practitioner-oriented publications, and contextual reports.

In formal terms, the dissertation is complete and structurally coherent. It would nevertheless benefit from greater editorial discipline, conciseness, and more thorough linguistic refinement.

4. Substantive Assessment

The dissertation addresses an important research problem and represents the outcome of a considerable scholarly effort. Its principal value lies in its attempt to combine theoretical reflection on leadership with empirical research and the development of a diagnostic framework for evaluating leadership style effectiveness. This ambition should be recognized positively. At the same time, the substantive contribution of the dissertation should be assessed with certain reservations.

The theoretical contribution of the dissertation has not been defined with sufficient clarity. The Author proposes new criteria for classifying leadership styles and identifies hybrid leadership configurations, but does not explain unequivocally how these configurations differ from or extend existing leadership theories. The proposals presented in the dissertation are interesting as diagnostic categories; however, it has not been fully demonstrated whether they constitute genuinely new leadership styles, hybrid forms of existing styles, or empirical profiles

combining already established dimensions. The relationships between the proposed configurations and established concepts such as transformational, ethical, servant, authentic, visionary, empowering, adaptive, and crisis leadership should be examined in greater depth.

The dissertation would also benefit from a more extensive discussion of construct overlap. Many of the identified components-including empathy, integrity, team support, communication, inspiration, vision, and strategic orientation-are already incorporated into well-established leadership theories. This does not mean that their integration lacks value. However, the Author should define more precisely whether the contribution of the dissertation consists of a new theory, a new typology, a diagnostic profile, or an integrative assessment framework.

The concept of “X-Leadership” is another element requiring clarification. It is introduced as a potentially new and not yet fully defined form of leadership, but it is not developed in a sufficiently systematic manner. If this concept is to be retained, it should be more firmly grounded in theory and linked directly to the empirical findings. Otherwise, it should be presented as a preliminary proposition rather than as a substantive theoretical contribution of the dissertation.

The qualitative findings provide interesting insights into managers’ perceptions of leadership practices, values, and behaviours. However, these findings are based primarily on managerial self-reports and should therefore be interpreted as perceived leadership narratives rather than as direct evidence of leadership effectiveness. The study would be strengthened by triangulating these accounts with employee data, behavioural observations, or objective indicators of organizational performance.

The quantitative component provides useful empirical evidence, although the strength of the findings is uneven. Several hypotheses were not supported or received only partial support, while some of the expected relationships involving stress, job satisfaction, compensation-related outcomes, or financial well-being proved weaker than anticipated. These findings are important and should not be regarded as weaknesses of the study itself. Rather, they indicate that leadership style is only one among many factors shaping employee and organizational outcomes.

The interpretation of the SEM results should also be more balanced. While some model-fit indices are acceptable, others are less satisfactory. This suggests that the proposed instrument has potential but requires further refinement and validation before it can be regarded as a robust diagnostic tool. Practical recommendations should therefore be presented as preliminary and developmental rather than definitive.

The practical contribution of the dissertation is promising but has not yet been fully verified. The proposed tool may support reflection on leadership development and provide a useful starting point for organizational diagnosis. Before it is applied in personnel decisions, succession planning, or formal managerial appraisal, however, it should be tested on independent samples, across diverse organizational contexts, and preferably with the use of multi-source and longitudinal data.

The dissertation should also provide a broader discussion of the ethical and organizational conditions governing the use of leadership assessment tools. Issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, responsible feedback, the potential misuse of assessment results, and the consequences of evaluation for managers and employees are particularly important if the proposed instrument is to be implemented in organizational practice.

Overall, the dissertation has cognitive and practical value and reflects a substantial research effort. However, the theoretical contribution of the proposed framework remains insufficiently demonstrated, while the diagnostic tool has not yet reached the level of psychometric validation required for reliable and broad organizational application. In its current form, the framework should therefore be regarded as a preliminary and promising proposal rather than a fully developed and empirically established instrument.

During the public defence, the doctoral candidate should be invited to address several issues that would help clarify the theoretical foundations, methodological choices, and potential practical applications of the proposed diagnostic framework. In particular, the following questions may be raised:

1. What is the theoretical status of the leadership configurations identified in the dissertation, namely the innovative–decisive, strategic–crisis, humanistic–visionary, and communicative–inspirational configurations? Should they be understood as distinct leadership styles, diagnostic profiles, or configurations of dimensions already established in the leadership literature?
2. In what respects do the proposed configurations differ from established leadership concepts, such as transformational, ethical, servant, authentic, visionary, adaptive, or empowering leadership?
3. What further validation procedures would be required before the proposed diagnostic tool could be regarded as a fully validated instrument suitable for both research and practical application?

4. How does the doctoral candidate assess the limitations arising from the cross-sectional and perceptual nature of the quantitative data, particularly with regard to drawing conclusions about the influence of leadership styles on employee outcomes?
5. Under what organizational conditions could the proposed tool be responsibly applied in human resource management practice, and which aspects of its implementation would require particular caution?

Final Conclusions

The doctoral dissertation by Ms. Inna Balahurovska addresses a relevant and practically significant problem in management and quality sciences: the assessment of leadership style effectiveness in contemporary organizations. Its strengths include the integration of theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative approaches, the collection of original empirical material, the use of a broad range of research methods, and the development of a framework with potential application in leadership diagnosis and development.

The principal limitations concern the excessive breadth of the research problem, insufficient differentiation between constructs and levels of analysis, and the unclear theoretical status of the proposed leadership configurations. The literature review is extensive but partly descriptive, while the bibliometric and qualitative procedures require greater methodological transparency. In addition, the cross-sectional and perceptual nature of the quantitative data limits causal interpretation and increases the risk of common method bias.

These reservations do not undermine the scientific value of the dissertation. The proposed methodological and diagnostic framework constitutes an original solution to a scientific problem, although it requires further theoretical development, empirical verification, and refinement before it can be applied as a fully validated organizational assessment tool.

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate possesses general theoretical knowledge in the discipline of management and quality sciences and has the ability to conduct independent scientific research. I therefore conclude that the dissertation meets the requirements laid down in Article 187 of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science, as amended, and recommend that it be admitted to public defence.