

REVIEW
by the official reviewer on the dissertation of
Turkebayeva Karina Toleuovna
titled «Regional diversity, development and growth: evidence from Kazakhstan, project approach», submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the field of
6D051800 – «Project Management»

№ p/p	Criteria	Compliance with criteria (select one of the response options)	Justification of the official reviewer's position
1:	The dissertation topic (at the time of its approval) aligns with the directions of science development and/or government (state) programs	<p>1.1 Compliance with priority directions of science development or government (state) programs:</p> <p>1) The dissertation was carried out as part of a project or targeted program funded by the state budget (specify the name and number of the project or program).</p> <p>2) The dissertation was conducted within the framework of another state program (specify the name of the program).</p> <p>3) The dissertation aligns with a priority direction of science development approved by the Higher Scientific and Technical Commission under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (specify the direction).</p>	<p>The dissertation topic aligns with the priority directions of the development of scientific foundations of regional project management in Kazakhstan. The dissertation is related to the Strategy «Kazakhstan – 2050» and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8): Decent Work and Economic Growth, and (SDG 10): Reduced Inequalities.</p> <p>The dissertation is associated with a first-level document of national planning system – the country's National Development Plan, which defines the transition to a new model of public administration, from operational management to the implementation of project approach at all levels of administration: republican, regional, and local, as well as with state programs and national projects in the areas of regional development, digitalization, and the support of entrepreneurship and business in the Republic of Kazakhstan.</p>
2.	Significance for science	The work <u>makes/does not make</u> a significant contribution to science, and its importance is <u>well disclosed/not disclosed</u>	The work makes a significant contribution to science in the field of regional project management, and its importance is well disclosed. The research work examines the stages of formation and evolution of project

			management within the global development and national context. The dissertation presents the theoretical foundations of an innovative author's conception of the organization of regional project management system.
3.	Principle of independence	Level of independence: 1) <u>High</u> ; 2) Medium; 3) Low; 4) No independence	The dissertation demonstrates the principle of independence at a high level. The results of scientific research are validated by publications in journals indexed in the Scopus database, journals from the list recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and conferences.
4.	Principle of internal unity	4.1 Justification of the dissertation's actuality: 1) <u>Justified</u> ; 2) Partially justified; 3) Not justified	The dissertation's actuality is justified and corresponds to the Development Strategy of Kazakhstan, state programs, and national projects. The work addresses the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in terms of stimulating economic growth and reducing inequalities in the context of post-pandemic rehabilitation (SDGs 8 and 10, respectively).
		4.2 The content of the dissertation reflects the dissertation topic: 1) <u>Reflects</u> ; 2) Partially reflects; 3) Does not reflect	The content of the dissertation accurately reflects its topic. It explores the international experience of project management in the regions, standards, and approaches to the organization of project management in the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
		4.3. The goal and objectives correspond to the dissertation topic: 1) <u>Correspond</u> ; 2) Partially correspond; 3) Do not correspond	The goals and objectives correspond to the dissertation topic. All sections of the research are presented in strict accordance with the solutions of the identified tasks.

		<p>4.4. All sections and provisions of the dissertation are logically interconnected:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>fully interconnected</u>; 2) partially interconnected; 3) no interconnection 	<p>The dissertation constitutes a cohesive study where all sections and provisions are logically and fully interconnected. The clearly articulated research goal and objectives have found a consistent theoretical and methodological solution in each section of the dissertation, formed in the main conclusions presented for defense. All results, conclusions, and inferences are internally interconnected.</p>
		<p>4.5 The new solutions (principles, methods) proposed by the author are reasoned and evaluated in comparison with known solutions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>critical analysis is present</u>; 2) analysis is partial; 3) analysis consists of quotations from other authors, not original opinions 	<p>The new solutions proposed by the author, including the methodology for calculating the regional competitiveness index and the model of project management for the development of region, are substantiated and evaluated against previously known solutions based on the analysis of relevant sources and the author's own materials. The author supported her conclusions with statistical analysis of data from the National Statistics Bureau of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, OECD, WEF, IMD, PMI, IPMA, UN and ISO.</p>
5.	Principle of scientific novelty	<p>5.1 Are the scientific results and provisions new?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>completely new</u>; 2) partially new (25-75% are new); 3) not new (less than 25% are new) 	<p>The obtained results and provisions are completely new. The scientific novelty is manifested in the elaboration and theoretical substantiation of a complex of methodological and scientific-practical issues related to the organization of the system of regional management of project activity in Kazakhstan.</p>
		<p>5.2 Are the conclusions of the dissertation new?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>completely new</u>; 2) partially new (25-75% are new); 3) not new (less than 25% are new) 	<p>The conclusions of the dissertation are completely new. In Kazakhstan, the introduction and use of project management tools in the work of government bodies represent a highly relevant new direction. The dissertation contains methodological and practical recommendations that contribute to the significant advancement of scientific understanding of the studied problematics.</p>

		<p>5.3 Are technical, technological, economic or managerial decisions new and justified?</p> <p>1) <u>completely new</u>;</p> <p>2) partially new (25-75% are new);</p> <p>3) not new (less than 25% are new)</p>	<p>Technical, technological, economic or managerial decisions are completely new and justified.</p> <p>The work presents an innovative concept of regional project management, including the institutional environment of project management system, the system of management of region's project activity and the organizational structure of the region.</p>
6.	Validity of the main conclusions	<p>All the main conclusions <u>are based</u>/not based on scientifically significant evidence or are sufficiently justified (for qualitative research and fields of study in the arts and humanities)</p>	<p>The conclusions of the scientific work are based on scientifically significant evidence: reliable literature and official sources, information from international organizations, as well as the results of surveys of employees of local executive bodies of 17 regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The following research methods were used in the dissertation: methods of generalization, comparison, systematization, modeling, synthesis, index method (Gini inequality indices), generalized method of moments (GMM), correlation and regression analysis.</p>
7.	Basic propositions presented for defense	<p>It is necessary to answer the following questions for each provision separately:</p> <p>7.1 Is the position proven?</p> <p>1) <u>proven</u>;</p> <p>2) rather proven;</p> <p>3) rather not proven;</p> <p>4) not proven</p> <p>7.2 Is it trivial?</p> <p>1) yes;</p> <p>2) <u>no</u></p> <p>7.3 Is it new?</p> <p>1) <u>yes</u>;</p> <p>2) no</p> <p>7.4 Level of application:</p> <p>1) narrow;</p> <p>2) medium;</p> <p>3) <u>wide</u></p> <p>7.5 Is it proven in the article?</p>	<p>Basic propositions presented for defense:</p> <p>1. The conceptual provisions of project approach in government management of Kazakhstan regional development were substantiated;</p> <p>2. Factors affecting the benefits of government programs and regional economic development projects were determined;</p> <p>3. The causal relationships between the variables of regional development and growth were identified using correlation and regression analysis;</p> <p>4. An empirical analysis and assessment of project management maturity of Kazakhstan regional executive bodies with ranking of country's regions by the level of project management maturity were conducted;</p> <p>5. It was proposed the methodological innovation in terms of developing the methods for calculating the regional competitiveness index;</p> <p>6. Author model of regional project management was elaborated;</p> <p>7. Recommendations for state regional structures on the optimization of project mechanisms and tools to improve managerial</p>

		1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	practices in the regions of Kazakhstan. The obtained scientific results have been published in 7 papers. 1 article in an international peer-reviewed scientific journal that has a CiteScore percentile of at least 25 in the Scopus database; 4 articles in scientific publications recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and 2 publications in foreign and international conferences. 7.1. proven 7.2. not trivial 7.3. yes 7.4. wide 7.5. proven in the author's articles.
8.	Principle of reliability The reliability of sources and provided information	8.1 Choice of methodology - justified or the methodology is described in sufficient detail 1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	The principle of reliability of the dissertation research is justified by the choice of methodology, sources, and the information provided by the author. The reliability of results is ensured by the applied research methods, including methods of analogy, synthesis, modeling, comparison, generalization, systematization, retrospective, correlation, regression analysis, index method (Gini inequality indices) and generalized method of moments (GMM).
		8.2 The results of the dissertation work were obtained using modern research methods and methods of data processing and interpretation with the application of computer technologies: 1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	Yes. The results of the dissertation work were obtained using modern research methods and methods of data processing and interpretation with the application of computer technologies: software packages Stata 8.0, Statistica and R studio.

		8.3 Theoretical conclusions, models, identified relationships and patterns are proven and confirmed by experimental research (for educational science fields, the results are proven based on a pedagogical experiment): 1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	Theoretical conclusions, models, identified relationships, and patterns are proven and confirmed by the developed methodological innovation (methodology for calculating the regional competitiveness index, ensuring a balanced formation of the GCI of Kazakhstan) and the proposed conception of regional project management.
		8.4 Important statements <u>are confirmed</u> /partially confirmed/not confirmed by references to relevant and reliable scientific literature	Important statements are confirmed by references to relevant and reliable scientific literature. The dissertation adheres to the principles of academic integrity and responsible use of literature sources.
		8.5 The used sources of literature <u>are sufficient</u> /insufficient for a literature review	In the dissertation work, the list of used literature contains 179 sources, which is sufficient for the literature review.
9	Principle of practical value	9.1 The dissertation has theoretical significance: 1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	The dissertation has theoretical significance. The results of research can be used in educational programs on the specialty «Project Management».
		9.2 The dissertation has practical significance, and there is a high probability of applying the obtained results in practice: 1) <u>yes</u> ; 2) no	The dissertation has practical significance with a high probability of applying the obtained results in practice which can be used in the elaboration of national projects and plans of development. The obtained conclusions and recommendations are the valuable resource for building a system of regional management of project activity in Kazakhstan. The materials of the dissertation research can be utilized in teaching classes on the disciplines «Management», «Project Management», «Technological Entrepreneurship», «Managerial Economics», «Regional Economics», «Regional Economics' Management».
		9.3 Are the suggestions for practice new? 1) <u>completely new</u> ; 2) partially new (25-75% are new); 3) not new (less than 25% are new)	The suggestions for practice are completely new, which is confirmed by the act of implementing the research results.

10.	Quality of writing and design	The quality of academic writing: 1) <u>high</u> ; 2) medium; 3) below medium; 4) low.	The quality of academic writing and design of the scientific work is high. The work is performed in accordance with the requirements for dissertation research.
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While highly evaluating the presented dissertation work, it is necessary to note the following recommendation:

The literature review of dissertation includes a large array of foreign sources, more scientific developments of Kazakhstani scholars could be used.

This suggestion does not diminish the scientific value of the conducted research and overall positive assessment of the work.

The dissertation work titled «Regional diversity, development and growth: evidence from Kazakhstan, project approach is conducted at a high professional level and represents a qualified, independent, and complete research that addresses current problems of scientific and practical significance. The dissertation meets the requirements for doctoral research, and its author, Turkebayeva Karina Toleuovna, deserves to be granted the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the field of 6D051800–«Project Management».

Official Reviewer:

PhD, Professor,
Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Management and Law,
International Kazakh-Turkish University
named after Khoja Ahmed Yasawi

