

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

From Prof. Dr. Stanislav Dimitrov

Professor in Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**"

in Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional field 3.8. Economics

Author: Diana Nikolova

Topic: "Entrepreneurial ecosystems and creating an environment for entrepreneurship development - policies and practices"

1. General description of the presented materials

By Order No. 695 of 16.12.2024 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia prof. Doctor of Law Boris Velchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic "Entrepreneurial ecosystems and creation of an environment for the development of entrepreneurship - policies and practices" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.8. Economics, Doctoral Program "Finance, Insurance and Assurance". The author of the dissertation is Diana Georgieva Nikolova. Research supervisor is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostin Vazov.

By decision of the scientific jury at the first meeting, I have been assigned to prepare an opinion on the candidate's works within the framework of the present procedure.

The materials submitted by the candidate Diana Nikolova include the following:

1. dissertation work;
2. abstract of the dissertation - in Bulgarian and English;
3. declaration of originality;
4. reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional field 3.8. "Economics";
5. list of publications;
6. the publications in the procedure;
7. summaries of publications;
8. brief biographical data.

The doctoral student did not present an independent reference to the contributions. The author indicates the contributions in the dissertation on p. 153.

2. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Doctoral student Diana Nikolova holds a master's degree in Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Business Administration, from NBU, Sofia.

Diana Nikolova has held management positions for 17 years.

3. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation has a volume of 174 pages. The work is structured in Contents, Introduction, Three Chapters, Conclusion and Bibliography. List of tables and List of figures are missing. The sources indicated in the bibliography include a total of 269 sources in Bulgarian and English. Many sources are cited more than once.

The technical requirements for preparing a dissertation have been met to a certain extent by the doctoral student.

In the Introduction, the author introduces the problem.

The topicality and importance of the topic is insufficiently substantiated.

The main hypothesis and auxiliary hypotheses could be formulated more correctly and correspond to a greater extent to the main text.

The first chapter is entitled "Theoretical foundations of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Approach, Analysis and Promotion Policies'. The volume of the First Chapter is 41 pages. This part of the study is structured in one point. A numbering error was made. It is likely that the author intended to structure the first chapter in two points. Some terms and concepts of the entrepreneurial ecosystem are discussed. European policies and initiatives in the field of promoting innovation and entrepreneurship are analyzed. No conclusions are drawn from the analysis in this part of the study.

The second chapter is entitled "Mechanisms and opportunities for the promotion and development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem - a study of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Israel". The volume of the Second Chapter is 55 pages. This part of the study is structured in four points. The emergence and development of Israel's entrepreneurial ecosystem are examined. The venture capital industry in the country is analyzed. At the end, conclusions and recommendations from the analysis in this part of the study are formulated. Conclusions and recommendations are discussed in an excessively long text of 8 pages. There is some repetition of texts within this chapter. Chapter Two could have been structured much better.

The third chapter is entitled "Model for effective improvement of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Bulgaria". The volume of the Third Chapter is 46 pages. This part of the study is structured in three points, which are significantly unbalanced. The first is three pages long, the second - 29 pages and the third - 14 pages. This chapter examines the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Bulgaria. An attempt has been made to formulate recommendations, policies and practices to effectively improve the attractiveness of the Bulgarian economy for starting entrepreneurial ventures. In some places, certain recommendations and suggestions are listed without argument, without critical analysis.

The study ends with a Conclusion. My opinion is that the Conclusion could be improved and fit more to the topic, the main hypothesis, the structure of the thesis and the analysis done in the research.

Based on the dissertation presented in this way, I can assume that the research to some extent represents a significant development of the chosen topic.

The dissertation thus presented gives me grounds to accept to a sufficient degree that the dissertation of the candidate Diana Nikolova contains scientific and scientific-applied results that represent an original contribution to science.

The dissertation shows that the candidate has the necessary in-depth theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the relevant scientific field and the ability for independent scientific research.

4. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

Doctoral student Diana Nikolova formulated on p. 153 6 contributions to the science and practice of dissertation work. To a certain extent, I accept the contributions formulated in this way. I can't find the 4th contribution in the thesis.

5. Assessment of dissertation publications

Doctoral student Diana Nikolova presented a reference for 3 scientific publications. Two of the scientific publications fully correspond to the researched issues in the dissertation work. The third I can accept to a certain extent that it corresponds to the researched issues in the dissertation. In the Abstract, a different publication than the one cited in the abstracts and in the reference for minimum requirements is listed as a third publication. This is probably a technical error.

A recommendation to the doctoral student Diana Nikolova is to carry out research and, accordingly, publications in co-authorship and in English.

The publications fulfill the requirements for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor", laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation.

At the time of preparation of this review, there is no information that would give grounds for doubting the authenticity of the candidate's dissertation and scientific publications.

6. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements

According to the presented materials, I can conclude that the doctoral student Diana Nikolova fulfills the minimum national requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional field 3.8. Economics.

7. Abstract

The abstract is 38 pages long. The abstract contains a description of the main characteristics of the dissertation work, structure and content of the work, summary presentation of the dissertation, publications on the topic of the dissertation. Like the dissertation, the abstract could be presented in a form that more closely meets the requirements accepted for this kind of scientific work.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no significant critical remarks and recommendations regarding the dissertation work and the presented materials of the doctoral student Diana Nikolova.

I have indicated certain inaccuracies and weaknesses of the dissertation work in the points above in this opinion.

It is recommended that the doctoral student strives to summarize and look for highlights in his research.

In addition, it would be positive to work with more literary sources, for example a critical analysis of more Bulgarian and foreign authors.

I have the following question for Diana Nikolova: What is more important for the development of a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem - government policies, financing with private and public capital or the potential of the markets to which the goods and services are directed?

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation

of ZRASRB. The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Regulations for the admission and training of doctoral students at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Diana Nikolova possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in Professional field 3. 8. Economics, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Diana Georgieva Nikolova in the Department of Higher Education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field 3. 8. Economics.

26.12.2024

Reviewer:

(Prof. Dr. Stanislav Dimitrov)