

REVIEW

Regarding: assessment of dissertation for awarding an educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, professional field 3.8 Economics, doctoral programme “Economics and Management (Industry)”

Reviewer: Prof. Lyubcho Varamezov, PhD., Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship, Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Author of the doctoral thesis: PhD student Snezhana Veselinova Naydenova, part-time form of study, doctoral programme “Economics and Management (Industry)”

Topic of the dissertation: “Innovations within the education system in the context of the entrepreneurial model of training”

Grounds for submission of the review: Order №1184/29.10.2024 of the Rector of Tsenov Academy of Economics, approving the composition of the scientific jury, as well as a decision of the scientific jury at the first meeting held on 30.10.2024.

I. Information about the candidate

PhD student Snezhana Veselinova Naydenova was born on 23.12.1987 in Sofia. She completed her secondary education at the Vocational High School of Mechano-Electrical Engineering, Pirdop (major in Machine Information Processing), and her higher education at the Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov, majoring in Industrial Economics (bachelor's degree) and Corporate Management (master's degree). At the Academy of Economics, she also acquired a professional qualification in Economic Pedagogy. She gained her professional experience as a specialist (specialist in Payroll, Production and Technical Department) and manager (head of the Production and Technical Department, Administrative Department) in Bulgarian companies. She also holds a number of additional qualifications (fifth professional qualification level; planning of interactive lessons for students; project-based learning; financial literacy among students; cybersecurity and digital citizenship for teachers; education in an electronic environment, etc.). She is fluent

in Russian and English. She currently works at the Vocational High School of Mechano-Electrical Engineering, Pirdop, as a teacher of Economics.

PhD student Snezhana Naydenova, according to Order No. 159/23.03.2021 of the Rector of the Tsenov Academy of Economics, has been enrolled in doctoral studies, part-time form of study, starting from 01.04.2021, with a study period of 4 years. She was enrolled with the right to defense by a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce (Protocol No. 3/28.10.24).

II. General characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation is developed in a volume of 227 pages, with the following structural elements: title page, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, list of appendices in the dissertation, terms and abbreviations, introduction, three main parts (three chapters), conclusion, literary sources and appendices. The main parts of the dissertation are interconnected and developed in a logical sequence. A rich bibliography is presented (36 literary sources in Latin and 119 in Cyrillic). To visualize the information presented, the author uses 65 figures and 13 tables.

The **object** of the study is innovations in the educational system of the Republic of Bulgaria, and its **subject** matter is the possibilities for improving the educational system through the introduction/use of innovations based on the entrepreneurial model of education.

The aim of the research is to explore the possibilities for improving the education system through the introduction/use of innovations based on the entrepreneurial learning model. To achieve the goal thus defined, the author identifies 5 research tasks.

In his study, the author defends the **thesis** that the integration of the entrepreneurial learning model as a set of educational innovations at the school, regional and national levels provides real benefits from the formation and use of the entrepreneurial vision in the spirit of entrepreneurial thinking and behavior in the Bulgarian education system.

In the process of the study, the author uses a rich palette of **research approaches** (historical, descriptive, targeted, systemic, process, structural, functional, cluster, etc.) and

methods (analysis and synthesis of information, analysis of basic data and information sources, documentary and content analysis, secondary data analysis, observation, interviewing, consulting, recording primary information from the units of study, comparison, expert assessments, logical method, induction and deduction, formalization, modeling, graphical and tabular presentation of information, statistical analysis, etc.).

The dissertation used various **sources of information** (specialized scientific literature; official information from the National Statistical Institute; data from empirical studies with topics and scope close to the present study; specialized periodicals, brochures, catalogs; data from survey studies, interviews and consultations; information from observations and registration of statistical data; Internet sites and databases, etc.). Within the framework of the empirical study, conducted during the period 01.04.2021 - 01.04.2023, questionnaires from 1168 respondents were processed. Additionally, interviews and consultations were carried out.

The limiting conditions in the dissertation work regarding the object, subject and period of research are correctly stated. They outline the overall conceptual framework of the research. The doctoral student also shares the main problems she encountered during the research (difficulties in obtaining information, reluctance of respondents to answer the questions posed, etc.).

The dissertation contains scientific and scientific applied results, which will be discussed later, and is proof of the author's theoretical knowledge and abilities to conduct independent scientific research. Its type and volume meet the requirements of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

III. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results

The relevance and significance of this dissertation work is undeniable. Education has an irrevocable role in increasing the economic potential of every country and the development of every society. Educational institutions are constantly developing in order to respond to the constantly emerging challenges coming from both the internal and external

environment. They are called upon to adequately respond to the requirements and expectations of business. Therefore, they should develop curricula and programs and introduce new training models that allow for the acquisition of key skills and competencies adequate to modern conditions. The introduction of the entrepreneurial training model is one of the prerequisites for building a modern educational system that gives priority to entrepreneurship.

In **the introduction**, the doctoral student justifies the relevance and significance of the research problem, clearly defines the thesis, object, subject, goal and objectives of the research, outlines the limiting conditions and indicates the problems that arose during the course of the study.

In **the first chapter**, the author examines the Bulgarian education system through the prism of its long-standing traditions and accumulated rich experience. The structure and functions of the education system are presented in detail, emphasizing the centralized model of its management and the main role of the Ministry of Education and Science in it. This model allows the state to control compliance with common standards in education. The strategic framework for the development of education, training and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-2030) is outlined, in which nine priority areas are highlighted. Innovations in the education system are examined, with the doctoral student highlighting their role in the development of education. Special attention is paid to innovative education and training and the author points out the differences between the traditional model of education and the new, innovative one. In the last part of this chapter, doctoral student Naydenova examines the specifics of educational integration and the integration of educational innovations at the three main levels - national, regional and school. The first chapter of the dissertation ends with conclusions and summaries.

Chapter Two is dedicated to the trends and practices for imposing the entrepreneurial vision in the field of education. At the beginning of it, the author presents the methodology that he applies in the research process, as well as its scope. The object, subject, goal and sub-goals of the conducted empirical study are defined, as well as three hypotheses. The tools used, its scope, the information provision of the empirical study are

presented. The main stages through which it goes are explained in detail. The same applies to the profile of the respondents. The entrepreneurial model of education is presented as a system of competencies. The author further develops the issue of the entrepreneurial model in the context of the educational system. The factors that influence the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in the field of education are highlighted. Finally, the author pays attention to the entrepreneurial preparation of the students, obtained as a result of the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Chapter Two also ends with summaries and conclusions.

The third chapter identifies the main problem areas, indicates the expected results and the actions that need to be taken in the future. According to the author of the dissertation, the success of the implementation of the transformation in the educational model and the reformatting of the educational vision in accordance with the needs of society depend on the motivation and commitment of all participants in the process of implementing the entrepreneurial model of education. Good practices in innovative schools in Bulgaria are presented and the benefits of education in the spirit of entrepreneurship are highlighted. The potential effects and results of the introduction of an entrepreneurial model of education are outlined. The results of the study and their analysis allow the author to identify the actions that need to be taken in the future in order to increase/accelerate transformations based on innovations. Doctoral student Naydenova offers two options as starting positions from the point of view of the applicability of the entrepreneurial model of education in the Bulgarian educational system. In conclusion, all three hypotheses defined at the beginning of the second chapter are confirmed. And this chapter, like the previous ones, ends with conclusions and summaries.

In **the conclusion** of the dissertation, the author summarizes the results achieved from the conducted research. The results of the theoretical and empirical study confirm the research thesis, and the recommendations made by the doctoral student can be accepted as a constructive dialogue.

My careful familiarization with the contents of the manuscript allows me to make the following assessments and conclusions:

✓ The dissertation work complies with the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the Tsenov Academy of Economics in terms of its type, volume, content and scientific value.

✓ The researched problem is relevant and significant from a theoretical and especially from a practical and applied point of view.

✓ The literary sources used, in quantitative and qualitative terms, are sufficient to comprehensively present the currently existing knowledge regarding the problem under study.

✓ The structure of the dissertation is logically sound and allows for the achievement of the set goals.

✓ An appropriate methodology was developed and applied, and as a result, all tested hypotheses were confirmed and on this basis the research thesis was proven.

✓ The author appropriately visualizes the main statements, ideas, and results through the use of a large number of figures and tables. на голям брой фигури и таблици.

IV. Evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The dissertation, according to Article 6 (2) of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, must contain scientific or scientific-applied results that represent an original contribution to science. As noted above, Snezhana Naydenova's dissertation is an original work on a topical and significant problem for Bulgarian education and contains both scientific and applied scientific results. The main contributions of the candidate can be formulated as follows:

▪ Based on a wide-ranging and critical study, theoretical knowledge has been enriched regarding the interaction between the education system, innovations, entrepreneurial culture and the entrepreneurial model of training as an innovative practice aimed at improving the quality of educational products/services. The author's classification systematization of the types of innovations in the education system and the content-stage scope of the innovation process from the perspective of the education system are presented.

- Based on the theoretical research, a methodology has been developed and tested for analyzing and assessing the opportunities for improving the quality of educational products/services through the introduction of the entrepreneurial model of education as a type of innovation in the educational system. The main problem areas and benefits of implementing educational innovations in Bulgaria have been identified.

- Based on an empirical study, the opportunities for improving the quality of educational products/services by integrating the entrepreneurial learning model as a set of educational innovations at the school, regional and national levels, and for realizing benefits from the formation and use of the entrepreneurial vision in the spirit of entrepreneurial thinking and behavior in the Bulgarian education system, have been assessed.

- Based on a systematic theoretical and empirical study, the author has developed a Conceptual scheme for the Introduction/Implementation/Application of the entrepreneurial model of education, taking into account the influence of external and internal factors on the education system, the specifics of the individual levels of integration (school, regional and national levels) and the opportunities for realizing benefits from the introduction of innovative (good) educational practices.

V. Evaluation of the publications

The list of scientific publications, presented by Snezhana Naydenova, contains a total of 6 titles (3 articles and 3 reports). All publications are independent, entirely the work of the author and are directly related to the topic of the dissertation. They are completely sufficient in quantitative terms and exceed the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

VI. Evaluation of the synopsis

Along with the dissertation, Snezhana Naydenova has submitted, in accordance with the requirements, a synopsis. The synopsis in its volume (55 pages), form, structure, scope and content is developed in accordance with the usual practice. It summarizes and faithfully

reflects the achievements of the dissertation. The synopsis also contains a Reference for the main contributions of the dissertation, a List of publications on the topic of the dissertation, a Reference for fulfilling the minimum national requirements in connection with the procedure for acquiring the ESD "Doctor", a List of participation in national and international scientific conferences and forums, as well as a Declaration of originality and authenticity.

VII. Critical remarks, recommendation and questions

Snezhana Naydenova has successfully completed her research task. My assessment of the quality of the dissertation work, the achieved scientific and applied scientific results, is high. I do not find any serious weaknesses, except for those mentioned above in the presentation.

Questions:

1. According to the author, Fig. 35 presents some of the main problem areas that hinder the achievement of effective and lasting results from the introduction of educational innovations based on the entrepreneurial learning model (p. 127). What other problems (problem areas) can be identified?
2. Over the past few years, there has been a clear trend of increasing salaries in the field of secondary education (a new one is coming next year). Starting salaries of Bulgarian teachers are higher than those in other EU countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Latvia and similar in size to those in the Czech Republic, etc. How do you assess the effect of increasing salaries in solving the problem/problem area of "Aging of teaching staff" and do they lead to attracting specialists from, as you put it, "high class" (p. 130)?
3. Is doctoral student Naydenova convinced of her statement, again on p. 130 – "The synchronization of Bulgarian education with European good practices allows for sustainability of results, innovation, transparency and popularization of the entrepreneurial model of education"?

VIII. Conclusion

The dissertation submitted for evaluation on the topic "Innovations within the educational system in the context of the entrepreneurial model of training" is a current and original scientific study, with significant results for theory and practice. I believe that the dissertation work of Snezhana Naydenova, in its volume, structure, relevance, practical significance and scientific value, meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Tsenov Academy of Economics for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor". All this gives me sufficient grounds to declare my positive vote for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Snezhana Veselinova Naydenova in professional field 3.8. Economics, doctoral programme "Economics and Management (Industry)".

Svishtov,
06/11/2024

Reviewer:.....
(Prof. L. Varamezov, PhD.)