

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Milen Ivanov Baltov;

Burgas Free University

Occupational strand 3.8 'Economics'; Science specialising in economics and governance

Concerning: thesis work for the award of a PhD degree in the PhD programme 'Economics and Management (Industry)' in the BSD Iconika MP 3.8.

Basis for the submission of the peer review: participation in the composition of the scientific panel for the protection of dissertation work pursuant to Order No YMO-29/6.10.2022 of the Rector of the BSU.

Author of the dissertation work: Delyan Lazarov Lazarov

Topic of thesis: Shaping and stimulating business innovation

Dissertane information

The Dissertane studied a PhD programme at the Centre for Economic and Management Studies at the Free University of Burgas under the PhD programme 'Economics and Governance (Industry)'. The training took place in regular form in the period 3.10.2017-4.10.2021.

Delyan Lazarov Lazarov graduated from his secondary education at Gen. Vladimir Zamov, Sopot, in 1998, graduated from Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University in Burgas in the specialty of Economics Administration and acquired Bachelor's CSTs and the following year he also acquired TCO 'Master's' in the same field. In 2009, the Dissertane obtained a further qualification of MBA Finance from the Financial Academy of the Government of the Russian Federation.

At the time of his studies, he started working, and he was now the manager of sites in Burgas at the end of his studies. After acquiring TCO, Master's degree continued his career at Lukoil Neftochim Burgas AD and now holds the position of Director of Economics.

Doctoral candidate Lazarov has not held academic positions so far and his relationship with the business world, which is the subject of her research, is much stronger. She has run workshops on Business Planning and Innovation and Investment Management according to its individual plan. On the basis of the longstanding presidency of the Union of Young Professionals in Lukoil, he has also been active with BHS students in multiple classrooms and extracurricular forms.

General characteristic of the reported thesis work

Dissertation work is composed of introductory three chapters, a conclusion, a list of abbreviations used, a list of tables, graphs, figures and diagrams, literature and annexes used. The dissertation is structured in 270 cents, of which an in-depth literature study is presented in the context of the theoretical aspects of innovation and innovation, with the author referring mainly to foreign research. The bibliographic reference contains 348 titles, including scientific literature, reports from international and national scientific conferences, articles indexed to primary and secondary databases, and business research. The presence in the text of 33 figures, 31 tables and 2 graphs is an indication of a clear presentation of the results obtained. The work of a doctoral candidate is fully in line with Article 17 (4) of the BST Academic Staff Development Rules, the PhD has applied 3 publications, which are reports at national scientific conferences. The documents comply with the minimum national requirements laid down in the Act and its implementing rules.

The topic is extremely relevant, mainly because innovation is a top priority for the EU and linked to the successes of all advanced economies in the world. The topic has a place and a very clear definition of the phenomenon of innovation. A firm contribution from a doctorate can be described in theory, showing a high level of analytical ability. The second chapter includes methodological tools to shape, stimulate and develop an enterprise's innovation activity. In a volume of 24 pages, this part of the dissertation work represents the constructs built on the literature survey. The quantitative approach is based on the information from a tailor-made questionnaire for an interview of SME owners, grouping the questions together and substantiating why they are included.

The purpose and tasks of the study are correctly defined. The objective shall be achieved by survey methods using a collection of scientific approaches and methods, including inductive and deductive approaches, statistical methods, comparative methods, case studies, survey and monitoring methods. These methods clarify the origins, characteristics and possibilities for increasing the efficiency of the innovation activity of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Assessment of scientific and applied contributions

A doctorate brings contributions to his autoresphere, all of which are correctly defined and can definitely be recognised as such. Contributions to the fact that it has systematised innovation management in four main aspects; basic designs for each of the main aspects; it has developed a "loop" of continuous improvement in favour of companies' growth. The Disertane builds on the model for Porter's 5 forces by integrating open systems in interdependence with the surrounding competitive

environment within the industry, taking into account global factors affecting the competitive environment.

Scientifically applied to the conditions of our country, it defines factors for successful innovation, examines the vision of a framework instruction for business in managing innovation development. The conceptual model for turning innovation into a competitive advantage for businesses is valuable. Proposes a methodology to form a complex integrated assessment for each of the key aspects of innovative activity and develops a matrix to assess the innovation potential of SMEs from the two regions surveyed in the JUR and SER.

Assessment of the autoresphere and dissertation publications

The autoreferate is structured at a level. Its content correctly presents all the statements and the spirit of the thesis and accurately reflects the doctorate's ideas, with a volume of 59 pages accurately presenting the content of the thesis and the results achieved. It shows Delyan Lazarov's analytical character, in an abbreviated version, to set out the content of his dissertation. Last but not least, the author has shown that he can write well, interesting and precise.

A total of four posts were published by PhD student Lazarov in thesis. All relate to innovation and the subject matter of its research. One of the publications is in English, which increases the chance of being cited by authors from other countries in the future. They contain scientific results relating to the enrichment, specification and refinement of existing scientific knowledge and to the application of a variety of methods to solve a specific economic problem, with conclusions and recommendations for innovation management in enterprises. I have attended the presentation of some of the doctoral reports and have been convinced of the originality of their ideas and the persuasion of their author. They are perceived by colleagues in science and practice with whom I have met. The degree of dissemination of the results obtained is evidenced by the high prizes received by Delyan Lazarov, both within the Lukoil Corporation and in forums such as Stadden Science.

Critical remarks, recommendations and questions

A high level of knowledge of English and Russian from Delyan Lazarov is a prerequisite for future publications in foreign publications and should now plan a strong presence in international fora. Let the doctoral candidate take a position during the defence on the matter: "How much will it cost" (and what) to a client if it wants an external expert to assess his potential innovation?"

Practical results suggest the potential to commercialise doctoral ideas. I recommend that Delyan Lazarov does not give up and look for ways either in the network of existing corporate institutions or under EU programmes (such as Horizon Europe) to finance and implement them.

Conclusion

The teaching work fully complies with the requirements of the ZRASRB, its Implementing Regulation and the Rules for the Development of Academic Staff of the BMS (doctoral part) for the award of doctoral degree.

I am convinced by a positive assessment of the dissertation work on “Shaping and stimulating business innovation” for the award, and I recommend that the Honourable members of the Scientific Jury **award a doctorate degree to Delyan Lazarov.**

15.12.2022 Signature:

GR. Burgas