

## **STANDPOINT**

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About the doctoral dissertation of prof. dr. Desislava Yordanova for obtaining the scientific degree “doctor of sciences”

The standpoint is prepared based on the Order RD 38- 462 from 27 July 2022 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

### **General overview of the dissertation**

The presented dissertation authored by prof. dr. Desislava Yordanova for obtaining the scientific degree “doctor of sciences” is dedicated to the role of university for technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students. The dissertation is written in English and its volume is 342 pages (including 311 pages main text and 31 pages appendices). Дисертационният труд е написан и представен на английски език и е в обем от 342 стр. (в т.ч. 311 стр. основен текст и 31 стр. приложения). It is structured in introduction, three chapters, conclusions, references, and two appendices. The references contain 439 titles in English which indicates good knowledge of the scientific literature on the researched topic. The content is visualized with 22 figures and 54 tables in the main text and 62 tables in Appendix 2. The author has 14 publications in prestigious Bulgarian and international scientific editions.

In the introduction the author discusses the research relevance and significance, object and subject, research objective and tasks, research thesis, the scope of the research, the research methodology, sources of information, utility, novelty, and limitations of the study. The relevance of the topic of the dissertation results from the need of better understanding of the process of technology entrepreneurship in its entirety and the influence of university on different stages of this process. Technology entrepreneurship has an important role for economic development, while STEM students are an important source of technology entrepreneurs. The topic corresponds to the search of answer of the significant question about

fostering entrepreneurial activity among young people. The object of the study are the attitudes, intentions, and behaviour for development of technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students, while the subject of the study is the influence of the factors related to the university on the attitudes, intentions, and behaviour for development of technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students. The research objective defined in the introduction, is „to identify university factors that influence technopreneurial attitudes, intentions and behaviour of Bulgarian STEM students“ (стр. 20). The research objective is specified in 5 research tasks, which allow the author to achieve the formulated research goal and to examine comprehensively the topic of the dissertation. The study in the dissertation is based on the scientific thesis that „university factors influence technopreneurial attitudes, intentions and behaviour of Bulgarian STEM students“. The defense of the scientific thesis is based on the test of 23 working hypotheses.

### **Evaluation of the scientific and applied contributions**

The first chapter presents four theoretical streams that build the conceptual base of the research on the influence of university on the technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students. The first chapter presents four theoretical streams that build the theoretical base of the research on the influence of the university on technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students. Entrepreneurship is viewed as a process and different theoretical models of entrepreneurial process are presented. The nature of technology entrepreneurship as a specific type of entrepreneurship is described and its distinctive characteristics of are discussed. The link between the institutional environment in the university and entrepreneurship among students, academics, and employees in the university is examined. The nature of the entrepreneurial university is clarified and the elements and factors for the development of the entrepreneurial university are systematized.

The second chapter presents a review of the literature on individual and university factors influencing entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. The identified individual determinants of entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions, and behaviour include demographic characteristics, attitudes, psychological traits, human capital, social capital, and

role models. The university determinants of entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions, and behaviour highlighted by previous empirical studies are entrepreneurship education, different types of support for entrepreneurship development provided by the university, research excellence of the university, entrepreneurial attitudes of academics, successful role models in the university, university – industry links.

The proposed four conceptual models of the study are based on the theoretical framework and the literature review on the topic. They depict the influence of entrepreneurial attitudes of academics, entrepreneurship education, concept development support, business development support, and industry ties on the stages of the process of technology entrepreneurship. Based on the proposed conceptual models, 23 working hypotheses are proposed.

In the third chapter the methodology of the study is described. The analysis of the context of the research reveals numerous disadvantages in the environment of entrepreneurship development as well as low level and low economic impact of the entrepreneurial activity in Bulgaria. The author concludes that Bulgarian universities need to be more proactive in providing entrepreneurship education to their students and to transform themselves in entrepreneurial universities. This chapter contains description of the methods for data collection, the characteristics of the sample, the variable used in the empirical analysis and the method for data analysis.

In the fourth chapter the results of the empirical analysis are presented. The findings demonstrate that according to the sampled students the universities do not provide enough concept development support and business development support. The studied university factors have different effects on the different stages of the entrepreneurial process. The study identifies factors related to the university which stimulate the transition through the stages of the entrepreneurial process.

### **Evaluation of the scientific and applied contributions**

In the process of fulfillment of the research objective of the dissertation and through solving the formulated research tasks using the methodological instrument the author makes several scientific and applied contributions. I accept the systematized scientific contributions by the

author related to enriching the theory and development of conceptual models describing the influence of factors related to the university on the stages of entrepreneurial process among STEM students as well as the development of an instrument for investigating attitudes, intentions, and behaviour for development of technology entrepreneurship among STEM students. I agree with the applied contributions related to the generated new knowledge about the role of the university for the development of technology entrepreneurship among Bulgarian STEM students. Several minor critical comments can be addressed to the dissertation which however do not my overall positive evaluation. It is highly satisfying that research results were published in specialized scientific outlets which help to gain academic recognition.

I vote convincingly for prof. Yordanova to be awarded the scientific degree “doctor of sciences”.

Author of the standpoint:

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