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Стара Загора
Старият факултет
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REVIEW

on PhD thesis for awarding an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)", professional field 3.8. Economics, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Reviewer: *Assoc. Prof. Teodorina Zhelyazkova Turlakova, PhD*, University of Economics-Varna. The review is prepared in accordance with Ordinance № 2610 / 11.10.2021 of the Rector of Trakia University - Stara Zagora, and Art. 5 (3) and (4) of the Regulation for development of the academic staff at Trakia University.

Author of the PhD thesis: *Ivanka Stoycheva Zhekova*, PhD student in an individual form of education in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, under the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Agriculture)" at the Department of Economics at the Faculty of Economics at Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

Title of the PhD thesis: *"Economic evaluation of the regional branch structure"*

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,

The presented PhD thesis for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" is in the volume of 235 standard pages, including introduction, three chapters, implications and recommendations, conclusion, list of references with 219 literature and information sources, duly formed by individual parts of application development. The accompanying documents are an abstract, CV, information cards, diplomas, a list of publications, as well as a declaration of authenticity of the information, according to the requirements of PRASTRU.

I. Information about the PhD student

Doctoral student Ivanka Stoycheva Zhekova was born on May 2, 1973. In 1997 she graduated with a master's degree from the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" Svishtov, specialty "Accounting and Control". She works as an accountant and teacher at the Trade High School in Stara Zagora, and since 2003 she has been an assistant at Trakia University. She speaks English and Russian, has very good computer abilities and great teamwork skills.

Ivanka Zhekova is a PhD student of individual form at the Department of Economics at Faculty of Economics of the Trakia University - Stara Zagora. Her PhD thesis on "Economic evaluation of the regional industry structure" was discussed at a meeting of the Extended Department Council of the Department of Economics at the Faculty of Economics, held on 10.09.2021 (Protocol № 6), with a decision to admit to public protection.

II. Relevance, goals and tasks of the dissertation

Ivanka Zhekova's PhD thesis is dedicated to an interesting and complex set of problems related to the effectiveness of the sectoral economic structure for generating potential for regional economic growth. The topic is precisely formulated and reflects the performed analysis as well as the achieved economic assessment of the branch structure at national and regional level. The selected topic is relevant and significant, deserves attention and has a place in the scientific debate in both theoretical and practical terms. Despite the availability of research by foreign and Bulgarian authors on socio-economic regional and territorial differences, this scientific field needs to be enriched especially with regard to the study of the role of agriculture and the impact of the overall industry structure on the economic growth on macro and meso economic level. The necessity and the effect of practical application of the economic restructuring (through scientific evaluation methods) in the national and regional economic policy, in strategic and planning documents are substantiated. That is why I accept as reasonable the scientific and applied interest of the doctoral student in this direction.

The aim of the dissertation is clearly formulated, the research thesis and hypotheses correspond to the general research orientation and the stages of analysis. The subject, object and tasks of the research are in logical connection with the set goal. The chosen approach and methodology of the research, as well as the time scope of analysis allow the achievement of the research goal and the solution of the tasks set in the PhD thesis. The rich set of used methods for analysis and the presented limitations in the project dissertation show a high scientific level of the research.

III. Evaluation of the structure and content of the dissertation

The structure of the PhD thesis as elements, relations and connection between them can be considered balanced and logically constructed. It reflects the sequence of the conceptual model of the research adopted by the author in accordance with its purpose and main research thesis. The PhD work contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, literature and appendices.

The introduction of the study defines the main elements of the research infrastructure: its object, subject, research thesis and sub-thesis, goals and tasks. The precise formulation of these elements allows the author to outline conceptually the main points of reference for subsequent research.

In the first chapter of the PhD thesis there are theoretical and methodological issues of economic growth, the factors that characterize it and the methods for economic assessment of structural differences. The author emphasizes the development of theories of economic growth (classifying them into classical, neoclassical and new

theories) and seeks the interdependence between economic growth and the regional industry structure. Paragraph 2 presents the author's critical views on the discussed concepts, substantiating and classifying the action of the factors for economic growth, with sufficient argumentation and comprehensiveness. Quite rightly, based on different approaches and theoretical formulations, the PhD thesis lays the methodological basis for assessing the regional industry structure through the prism of regional efficiency and economic growth. In this regard, the analysis methodology is built very precisely, with consistency and clarity, which includes statistical structural analysis for assessment of structural changes; shift - shear analysis; multifactor regression model for quantitative measurement of factor conditioning. Different author positions and approaches are skillfully used and the dissertation easily manages to upgrade the research methodology, which is a solid basis for applied research and findings made in the second chapter.

In the second chapter, on the basis of secondary data and by applying different methods of analysis, the doctoral student examines the structural economic differences through comparisons between Bulgaria and the EU countries and by regions of the country. By examining the structural changes in the share of employees, GVA and relative labor productivity, the redirection of resources from one sector to another is monitored and on this basis the degree of economic growth is assessed. The changes in employment by sectors of the economy and by regions in Bulgaria have been studied, Shift share analysis, localization coefficient, specialization coefficient, etc. are very appropriately applied. Extensive statistical material has been processed, the analyzes are at a high scientific level. I consider the overall diagnostic, regional and retrospective analysis of the structural differences and the intensity of the structural changes by areas (including their assessment by a summary coefficient) to be competent and comprehensive.

In the third chapter, the doctoral student skillfully deepens the research in the direction of regression and cluster analysis. The problems of the regional branch differences are treated as on the basis of various indicators (number of employees, GVA, relative labor productivity, GDP per capita and population density) an indicator for ranking of the districts in the country is formed. The necessary conditions for verification in the regression analysis are observed, the results of the cluster analysis are clear and allow for strategic recommendations for the specific administrative region.

In the conclusion of the PhD thesis summaries and implications are made for each of the administrative regions of the country. As an important contribution of the paper I accept the formulated recommendations for the implementation of a targeted regional policy related to building a favorable regional sectoral structure.

The bibliographic reference shows excellent theoretical and practical awareness of the author of the dissertation.

Given the basic requirements for the development of PhD thesis, the following significant findings can be made regarding the reviewed paper:

1. The dissertation work of Ivanka Zhekova not only treats a significant and little studied problem. It is a serious and in-depth study of the regional sectoral structure and its impact on regional economic growth.
2. The doctoral student has precisely outlined the object and the subject of his research, has clearly formulated the main goal and the specific tasks she has set for herself. It can be reasonably argued that the purpose and objectives of the study have been successfully achieved as a whole.
3. The student has started the implementation of the development on the basis of serious theoretical training with very good knowledge and ability to interpret the scientific achievements in the field of industry structure. The scientific summaries of the theories of economic growth and regional efficiency in terms of content provide an opportunity to clarify the basic conceptual apparatus and discussion issues in this area.
4. An interesting methodology has been developed and appropriate statistical tools and analysis methodology have been used. The selected research methodology with application of various static-mathematical and other methods and also based on well-known indicators for analysis such as BDS, employment, etc. provides an opportunity for a thorough economic assessment, conclusions and recommendations for specific regions of the country.
5. The doctoral student has collected, systematized and interpreted significant factual material. Skills to critically interpret and evaluate the results of scientific research are shown.
6. In developing the dissertation the doctoral student has used a good scientific style, in structural terms the thesis is balanced and purposeful. The language and style of development are scientific. The citation is correct. The scientific substantiation and argumentation of the made conclusions and recommendations is evident.

IV. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the PhD thesis

The main scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation can be divided into the following areas:

- with theoretical orientation - the generalization and systematization of the methodology for structural analysis;
- a methodology for grouping regions according to criteria for assessment of regional structural differences has been developed and tested;
- rich empirical material has been collected and systematized, using a complex approach and regularities as well as tendencies in the branch structure have been derived;

- a practical-applied model has been tested, including a set of statistical-economic methods, through which key factor influences have been derived;
- specific measures of the regional policy for achieving regional economic growth are proposed and substantiated.

These main points of contribution can be defined as an attempt to supplement and further develop the theory and practice of the regional industry structure and methodological tools for its economic evaluation.

V. Recommendations

The dissertation has a high scientific value of the research, so I would recommend the PhD student to continue research on this issue, expanding and enriching them in the direction of regional cross-sectoral links.

VI. Publications on the topic of the PhD thesis and the dissertation summary

The summary of the PhD thesis is with a volume of 39 standard pages. It correctly reflects the structure, logic and content, assessments and conclusions presented in the dissertation. The analyzes, conclusions and scientific contributions in the dissertation are sufficiently presented.

Three articles are attached to the documents, two of which are independent, in English (one of which is cited) and one co-authored article in Bulgarian. These articles are published in prestigious journals: Economic Thought of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Trakia Journal of Science of Trakia University - Stara Zagora. In general, the publications provided by the doctoral student reflect significant parts of the dissertation and are sufficient in order to present the issue and the author to the scientific community

VII. Conclusion and proposal

The peer-reviewed doctorate is a complete, independent scientific work, which has a complete form and contains original scientific and practical contributions. It is characterized by purposefulness and in-depth study of the theoretical and practical-applied aspects of the economic evaluation of the regional branch structure. The main goal and the specific tasks of the development have been successfully achieved as a whole. Through the presented scientific research the candidate presents himself as an

established researcher, with proven opportunities to create a methodology and formulate his own solutions to the problems of the branch structure.

Based on the above, I propose with conviction and responsibility to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)", professional field 3.8. Economics, field of education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences of **Ivanka Stoycheva Zhekova**.

Заличено!

10.11.2021
Varna

Signature:.....

/Assoc. Prof. T. Turlakova, PhD/

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