

REVIEW

Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, *Bulgarian Free University,*
Professor in speciality "Social management" in professional field
3.7. Administration and management

Subject: Presented dissertation thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in the doctoral program "Organization and Management of Production (Industry)" in the professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management" at the Department of Economics and Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

Author of the thesis: **Nadezhda Dimova Koprinkova - Noncheva**

Topic of the thesis: **"Opportunities for the application of the dropshipping delivery method in small and medium enterprises "**

Scientific supervisor: **prof. dr. Ivan Tenev Dimitrov**

Grounds for presenting the review: participation in the Scientific Jury for the defense of the dissertation, according to № UD 154 / Burgas, 23.06.2023 of the Rector of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

The review was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff in the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

The materials submitted by the PhD student are in accordance with Article 42 of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

1. Information about the dissertant

Nadezhda Koprinkova - Noncheva has acquired two Bachelor's degrees - in Finance and in Administration and Management from her studies at New Bulgarian University - Sofia. Since 2013 she has a Master's degree in Project Management. Since 06.12.2019 she has been studying in the PhD program "Organization and Management of Production (Industry)" at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

Nadezhda Koprinkova - Noncheva has a rich work and social activity. Since 2016 she has been working at UniCredit Bulbank AD, holding various positions - Customer Consultant,

Business Account Manager, and currently she holds the position of Corporate Account Manager. For a short time in 2012 she worked on a project for ongoing administrative reforms in the Council of Ministers - Council for Administrative Reform. In the same year she also worked in the Directorate of Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity" at the Ministry of Finance. In the period November 2021 - May 2022, she realized a long-term mobility abroad (Republic of North Macedonia) for the purpose of practice. Nadezhda Koprinkova - Noncheva has participated in numerous trainings for acquiring additional qualification - Accounting and Control Specialist; Payroll Specialist, Information Assurance Specialist, etc. She speaks German, English and Russian.

According to the Regulations of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas for obtaining the PhD degree, the minimum number of points required is 50. Nadezhda Koprinkova-Noncheva, PhD student, scored almost three times more points - 140 in the respective indicators in Group A and Group D.

2. General characteristics of the submitted dissertation

2.1. Subject, object and purpose of the dissertation

The subject of the study in the dissertation is the issues related to the introduction of the dropshipping delivery method and its effective and efficient functioning in SMEs and the possibilities for its further development and improvement in Bulgaria.

The object of the research are Bulgarian SMEs doing business in different spheres on the territory of Bulgaria.

The main thesis of the PhD student is that the opportunities for the application of the dropshipping method are influenced by the experience of the company in the use of e-commerce; by the external environment of the organization, expressed in the competition in the market; as well as by the product diversity, characterized by the supply of fast-moving consumer goods at a low price. In defending this thesis, it aims to analyse the possibilities of applying the dropshipping delivery method in SMEs. The research tasks through which the PhD student realised the set objective are described in detail and systematised in 12. They are related to the theoretical study of the application of the dropshipping method in SMEs; the clarification of the methodology and methods for the study of the application of dropshipping in SMEs; the derivation of opportunities for the application, development and improvement of the dropshipping method in the management of SMEs.

It can be noted that the subject and object of the research are clearly defined and together with the correctly set goal and objectives predetermine the subsequent content of

the dissertation.

2.2. Structure and scope of the development

The structure of the dissertation is classical and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of references. The length of the thesis is more than satisfactory - 271 pages, including lists of figures, tables, diagrams, abbreviations, references used and a declaration of originality. The main text is 248 pages. Its content is well balanced by chapter and paragraph, and is supported by 50 figures, 8 diagrams and 32 tables.

In terms of content, in the introduction, the doctoral student presents the main thesis and justifies the relevance of the research and the choice of the topic, clearly stating the aim of the development, the research objectives and the research methodology. The content of chapter one covers the theoretical foundations, opinions and arguments for the application of dropshipping in SMEs. Chapter two presents the methods and methodology for researching the application of dropshipping in SMEs. Chapter three presents the results of the qualitative and quantitative research conducted on the possibilities of applying, developing and improving the dropshipping method in SME management.

Overall, in all three substantive chapters, the PhD student displays a certain ability to clearly outline and argue a scientific defence of her views on the possibilities of applying dropshipping in SMEs, the effects of its offer and its improvement with a view to improving the commercial processes in SMEs.

2.3 Relevance and Significance of the Dissertation Topic

The doctoral candidate has justified the relevance of the topic of her dissertation with the changes in the entrepreneurial process caused by global processes and the transformation of the world into an information society, in which e-commerce largely displaces the traditional market relationship between producer and customer. In this context, the PhD student argues the relevance of the issues explored in the dissertation also in terms of the perception of dropshipping as an alternative to improve the commercial processes in small and medium-sized enterprises and enhance their innovation performance. The thesis is also relevant and significant in terms of the fact that existing publications on the issues under study are not sufficient to cover the problems and future challenges associated with the application of dropshipping.

It can be summarized that the development has significant implications for solving real and complex problems for SMEs related to the application of dropshipping as an alternative to traditional methods of delivery of goods and services. It should be stressed that despite the importance of the issues, it is only partially explored in the current

scientific literature. This strengthens the contributions of the development to overcome the theoretical deficits in the field of application of innovative methods for optimization and modernization of supply management processes.

2.4 Research methodology

The doctoral student used a variety of research tools to accomplish the research objective. She shows the ability to apply the analytical, comparative, deductive and inductive methods to the theory in the area under study. In her practical research the author successfully applies sociological methods (survey research, structured interviews), SWOT - analysis and statistical methods of analysis. To collect the data for the purpose of the study, the PhD student conducted a survey and interviews with 372 SMEs operating in different fields: fashion and accessories, cosmetics and personal care, electrical engineering, sports, home goods, food products, children's toys, etc.

2.5 Scientific literature used

The dissertation is based on the study, analysis and systematization of various literature and information sources. The list presented by the PhD student contains a total of 197 sources (books, articles, archival references, reports, regulations, ordinances, manuals, normative documents, statistical studies, presentations, reports of state institutions, strategic documents, opinions, official and specialized websites) in Bulgarian and English.

The literature used is varied and focused on the scientific problem under study, and is appropriately and correctly cited. Good impression is made by the doctoral student's ability to carry out scientific selection and criticism of foreign opinions and concepts when structuring her opinion to prove the main thesis of the dissertation.

3. Evaluation of scientific and applied contributions

The developed dissertation is of interest for scientific and social practice. It contains a number of propositions, suggestions and results that can be evaluated as contributions of scientific and applied nature.

In the reference of the dissertation contributions the doctoral candidate correctly indicates the results of the research tasks defined in the introduction of the development. When evaluating them as contributions they could be grouped as follows:

A. Contributions of scientific - applied character:

* The working definitions proposed by the PhD student on the essence of the dropshipping method as a part of the supply chain and on the essence of the hybrid supply chain management model;

* Modification of the application of SWOT analysis for the generation of alternatives for the application of the dropshipping method in the practice of small and medium enterprises.

B. Contributions of practical and applied nature:

* An alternative analysis model of the issues involved in building websites for dropshipping businesses, taking into account the criteria for achieving sales targets.

* Regression models to predict the impact of the factors: distance between the supplier's warehouse and the recipient's address, order volume, standard order processing time, preparation for shipment on product delivery time on an annual basis when using the dropshipping method, and the impact of the factors product price, marketing costs and market competitiveness on the average number of product sales on an annual basis when using the dropshipping method.

* A model to predict the relationship between the number of sales and the average order value.

* Suggested opportunities for optimizing the management of processes related to the delivery of goods, customer service and increasing customer satisfaction.

4. Evaluation of publications

The doctoral candidate has submitted 11 publications on the topic of the dissertation, three of which are in English. Two of the papers were published in IEEE Xplore Digital Library and indexed in Scopus. Eight of the publications are co-authored, for which no separation protocols have been submitted.

The articles and papers promote the main theses, results and contributions of Nadezhda Koprinkova-Noncheva's research. These publications show the PhD student's ability to adequately inform the scientific community about her research work.

5. Evaluation of the abstract

The submitted abstract is 73 pages long. It is well formatted and its content corresponds correctly with the main work. The abstract is written in accordance with the requirements, reflecting in a synthesised form the content of the three chapters of the thesis, the subject, object, thesis and methodology of the research, as well as the final results obtained.

The abstract also includes a summary of the contributions to the research. The reference is not compiled correctly. It reflects objectively the scientific results achieved by the

doctoral student, but not all of the mentioned can be defined as original contributions to science. For example, numbers 3,4,6,8,9,10,14 of the reference reflect results achieved in the implementation of research tasks and specific proposals based on these results, but cannot be assessed as contributions. The others can be assessed as contributions but it would be better to group them and edit their wording.

6. Remarks, recommendations and questions

I do not find any misconceptions or serious flaws in the thesis that detract from its quality, but I will make some general comments and recommendations:

- The author could have refined the number of research tasks listed in the introduction of the dissertation by grouping them, for example, according to the stages of the research itself, i.e. three main research tasks.

- It would be useful to specify the scientific or practical-applied nature of those results of the research tasks that have been assessed as contributions.

- In places in the text there is frivolous use of conceptual apparatus, which causes semantic problems.

- I recommend the doctoral candidate to set priorities arising from the relevance of the dissertation, to concentrate and deepen their research. I recommend that in the future she should strive for independent publication of the results of her scientific work in reputable international and national journals.

The opinion of the PhD student on the following questions is interesting:

1. Is dropshipping the right delivery method for every business? Are there specific limitations? What are the reasons for a business to move towards using dropshipping in its operations?

2. "Lack of control over the quality of goods and speed of delivery" are cited as the main problems in applying the dropshipping method in the practice of enterprises. What are the alternative solutions to overcome these problems according to the PhD student?

7. Conclusion

The development has the qualities of a dissertation for the award of the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and Management of Production (Industry)". It meets the established requirements for scientific development and contains its own research based on a thorough study of a specific problem, offers a substantiated new solution and demonstrates the achievement of results of real applications.

The developed dissertation is of interest for scientific and business practice. It contains a number of formulations, ideas and proposals that can be evaluated as contributions of scientific and applied nature. The author has popularized the ideas and results of the conducted research in appropriate publications. All this allows me to give with conviction my **positive assessment of the dissertation on "Possibilities for the application of the "Dropshipping" delivery method in small and medium-sized enterprises"** and to recommend to the members of the scientific jury **to award the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and Management of Production (Industry)", from the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management to Nadezhda Dimova Koprinkova - Noncheva.**

01.08.2023

Signature:

Подпис заличен
Чл.2 от ЗЗЛД

/Prof. Galina Kurteva, PhD/