Review
from the external examiner of the thesis “Conceptualising entrepreneurial university: case of the United Kingdom”

by Natalya Radko

presented for the academic degree of the Candidate of Economic Sciences
Specialty 08.00.05 – Economics and Management of National Economy

Relevance of the topic

Entrepreneurial initiatives of the universities, the need for students to develop entrepreneurial knowledge and skills have been actively discussed both in academic circles and in the business community in the last decades. Today, there are rankings of entrepreneurial universities, the concept of the entrepreneurial university has been developed in many scientific publications. However, the methodological issues of the third mission of the university is implemented have not been sufficient, there are no clearly formulated principles defining the role and contribution of different university stakeholders to knowledge creation and transfer, the mechanisms of the formation of the entrepreneurial environment inside and around the university are not described. There is a lack of research to evaluate the drivers and impediments of faculty engagement with different stakeholders. Dissertation of N. Radko contributes to filling these research gaps and demonstrates the topic relevance both from the theoretical, and practical point of view.

Reliability and novelty of the results of the dissertation

The dissertation of N. Radko is based on thorough and extensive research of the existing publications. The author builds up on the numerous definitions of entrepreneurial university managing to combine its most important characteristics: the ability to innovate, recognise and create opportunities, ability to produce and
disseminate knowledge, ability to develop a comprehensive internal system for knowledge commercialisation and commoditisation becoming a “natural incubator” through different stakeholders. It is within this definition of the entrepreneurial university that the author plans and undertakes her research, which is comprehensive and covers different actors, channels of knowledge creation and transfer, various groups of stakeholders and structural elements of the university system for knowledge commercialisation and commodisation.

Dissertation of N. Radko is the first attempt to use stakeholder perspective to analyse the entrepreneurial university technology transfer domain. The 1 chapter of the dissertation describes different actors structuring four groups of entrepreneurial university stakeholders based on their contribution to achieving university goals. The role of each stakeholder in the generation and transfer of new knowledge is analysed through evaluating the existing research papers and case studies. Thus the stakeholder perspective is being conceptualised and the multi-dimensional structure of entrepreneurial university is presented.

Chapter 2 is the first attempt to test the theoretical concept of the entrepreneurial university by an in-depth analysis of the university organizational structure and its connection with different groups of stakeholders. As a result the author identified contribution of the stakeholders to the entrepreneurial outcomes in different university types in the UK.

Chapter 3 contributes to the academic entrepreneurship literature by evaluating the impact of academics engagement with relevant stakeholders. The author identifies the factors which facilitate and inhibit the decision of faculty members of different age and experience to engage with others for knowledge and technologies transfer.

Research is well supported and visualised by tables and figures. The list of references is extensive and contains publications in two languages.
The degree of validity of scientific statements, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation

The dissertation by N. Radko build up on the four main theoretical approaches to the entrepreneurial university concept (by B.Clark, B.Sporn, H.Etzkowitz and D.Kirby). The classification of stakeholders presented is further developing the concept by demonstrating the configurations of stakeholders at an entrepreneurial university, making the conceptualisation possible. Borrowing the ideas of different groups of stakeholders (knowledge enablers, knowledge providers, knowledge codifiers, knowledge facilitators) from different authors N.Radko showed that most papers studied the collaboration issues, rather than the ecosystem approach towards understanding the entrepreneurial university processes. She managed not only to describe the four groups of stakeholders contributions to encourage to knowledge spillovers within and outside the university, but also empirically support the contacts they tend to develop or restrain from within the organisational structure of the entrepreneurial university.

The value of the results of work for science and practice

Several points can be abstracted to confirm the resulting theoretical and practical relevance of the dissertation:

1. Expanding the stakeholder categorisation a typology including four categories of entrepreneurial university stakeholders was proposed: knowledge enablers, knowledge providers, knowledge codifiers and knowledge facilitators (p.34);
2. An integrative view of the conceptual process framework for university faculty engagement with stakeholders was developed (p.49). The author used findings from the literature review on the motivation of academics for engagement and presented the way in which motivation for collaboration with stakeholders leads to engagement with different actors and moves into different knowledge
transfer channels and subsequently results in different entrepreneurial and commercialisation outcomes;

3. The findings of the author suggest that young career researchers tend to interact with a wider set of stakeholders compared to senior academics. This can help develop effective motivation programs to facilitate junior faculty engagement and contribution using both formal and informal (alternative) channels and pathways;

4. Research has clearly shown the relevance of business and entrepreneurial skills, as many academics lack skills that are needed to start a business or commercialise knowledge or technologies. Trainings for gaining business skills and contacting the relevant entities which provide the necessary support for entrepreneurship tend to favour the interest and readiness to start a business. University policy on increasing the faculty engagement with stakeholders for commercialisation should be devoted to nurturing commercialisation and business skills in people.

**Confirmation of the publication of the main results of the dissertation in the scientific press**

Four papers have been, including 1 publication in journal indexed in Scopus, as well as 2 publications in local peer-reviewed journals, recommended by the Ministry of Education in Russ were published by N.Radko. In addition, a book chapter has been accepted for publication. Research findings have been presented at the local and international conferences on the topic.

**Comments on the work;**

With all the research findings and breakthroughs mentioned above the dissertation by N.Radko triggers some questions and comments:
1. The author identified three types of higher education institutions and analyses them separately against the developed set of parameters of an entrepreneurial university. So can we apply the same set of parameters to different universities understanding that historically and at present their goals, missions and strategies in an education system were different, so by definition some of them are meant to be more entrepreneurial than others?

2. Three university types classified by the author are called research oriented (Russel group), teaching oriented and former polytechnics in p. 53, and then referred to as research oriented, teaching oriented and entrepreneurial in p.55. Does that mean that former polytechnics are by definition entrepreneurial?

3. Empirical findings as to the engagement and motivation for entrepreneurship activities of different faculty groups are really relevant and interesting. But the faculty of different age and seniority can undertake different entrepreneurial activities (coordinating, developing the leads, setting start-ups, etc.). Did the author consider and analyse their engagement from this point of view?

4. It is clearly stated both in the title of the dissertation and in the introduction that the case of UK universities is being considered. However the approach and algorithm of research, once developed and clearly identified, could be used for analysis in other countries and other higher education systems. It’s a pity the dissertation does not contain such an algorithm as one of the research results.

5. The concluding part of the thesis (p.143) summarises all relevant research findings. However, the practical actions and decisions to implement them have not been presented. For example, the author concludes “University managers should carefully consider the knowledge transfer mechanism and associated contextual dynamics, including the interrelationship between various groups of stakeholders to make the process more effective and thus facilitate entrepreneurial outcomes” but how can it be done? Using what organizational schemes or programmes? The author continues
“Relying on our results government could build diversified policies taking into account the effect of stakeholders based on university types”, so what policies can these be?

Conclusion on the work on the compliance of the dissertation with the requirements of the Regulations on awarding academic degrees of MGIMO.

The comments and questions above do not impair the scientific or practical saliency of the thesis. The relevance, novelty and soundness of the results achieved by Natalya Radko are undoubtable and well supported. Her thesis "Conceptualising entrepreneurial university: case of the United Kingdom" meets all the requirements for a dissertation presented for the degree of the Candidate of Economic Sciences in Economics and Management of National Economy. So Natalya Radko qualifies in Management, to be awarded the degree of the Candidate of Economic Sciences in Economics and Management of National Economy.

External examiner

Saginova Olga V.
Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor
Professor of the Entrepreneurship and Logistics Department
Plekhanov Russian University of Economics
08.00.05 – Economics and Management of National Economy (marketing, service sphere)

Contact information
Russia, 127473, Moscow, 4 Samotechny lane 3-16
+7(495)800-12-00(1375)
Saginova.ov@rea.ru