

Opponent's report on the doctoral thesis

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Title: Analysis of the Impact of Innovation Policies on Regional Development

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Aims and hypotheses

In the Introduction, the author set as her main aim to “examine to what extent the innovation policy affects the firm innovation, which leads to regional development in emerging, moderate, and strong innovators countries.” This aim was further specified through the definition of two objectives. I state that the defined objectives have been fulfilled, and all hypotheses and research questions have been answered.

Content and structure

The work is divided into five chapters (plus Conclusions), and their structure is logical. The author proceeds from general theoretical frameworks to specific topics. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the theoretical basis for the topic of the dissertation. The first chapter (longer) focuses on the issue of regional development, while the second (shorter) deals with innovation and innovation policy. I consider Chapter 2 to be crucial, especially with regard to the topic of the dissertation. Therefore, in my opinion, the topic of regional development could have been given less attention, and, on the contrary, chapter two (particularly chapter 2.5) should have been elaborated in more detail. Eleven pages of text (pp. 50 - 60) are devoted to innovation policy, which is relatively little. This topic could have been explained more carefully. However, the work contains the most important insights about innovation policy. On the other hand, I appreciate the large number of literary sources on which the review is based.

Chapter 3 explains and justifies the objectives of the dissertation. Within objective 1, two groups of hypotheses were defined, with each group containing three hypotheses (i.e., a total of 6 hypotheses). No hypotheses were defined within objective 2, but 6 research questions were defined. This does not seem consistent compared to objective 1. I would rather recommend defining only hypotheses or only research questions. However, this approach can be accepted. A smaller number would be sufficient.

Chapter 4 deals with data collection and applied methods. The chapter also explains the selection of countries. Within Objective 1, Norway was chosen as a representative of strong innovators. However, Norway differs from the other analyzed countries in that it is not a member of the European Union. In my view, it would be more appropriate to choose Finland, for example, which also has a lot of experience in implementing demand-side innovation policy. In chapter 4.1.4, contrary to the title, the countries to be examined under Objective 2 are not defined. Figure 13 should have been included a few pages earlier as it relates to Objective 1.

The author uses quantitative research methods, specifically structural equation modelling (for Objective 1) and logistic regression and propensity score matching methods (for Objective 2). The use of these methods is appropriate, and I have no reservations about them. The author thereby demonstrates her ability to conduct research work. The results themselves are presented in Chapter 5. The author presents a large number of tables here and gives final statements on the hypotheses and research questions. The main part of the research is based on the CIS statistical survey 2012-2014. On page 72, the author admits that this data is quite outdated. It would be interesting to add some partial research based on more recent data.

Questions for explanation at defence:

1. Your research is based on quantitative data and methods. However, demand-side innovation policy is a relatively new issue and is not used to the same extent as supply-side innovation policy. Could you please give a specific example of the implementation of a demand-side innovation policy in a European country? Which organization implemented this measure and what was its essence?
2. On page 61 (paragraph 2), you cite several sources that deal with the impacts of innovation policies. Can you specify which countries these studies focused on and what types of innovation policies they focused on?
3. On page 89, you refuse the hypotheses (H1a and H1b) that demand-side innovation policy positively and significantly affects firm innovation. On page 101, as an answer to question RQ4 you write that “the demand-side approach, innovative public procurement has a significant effect on product, process innovation”. How would you explain the difference in the results for hypothesis H1 and Research Question Q4?
4. What are the limits of your research, and where do you see space for future research?

Overall assessment

The research topic is original and has not yet received sufficient scientific attention. The dissertation brings new insights, and the author's contribution is clearly evident. Despite the above minor comments, the thesis meets the standards required for dissertations. The author has demonstrated the ability to do analytical and synthetic creative work in the field of research. In addition, the student has proved this ability by publishing a relatively large number of papers in scientific journals. I recommend the dissertation thesis for defence. After a successful defence, I recommend conferring Ph.D. title on Yee Yee Sein.

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