

OPINION

from

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Subject: Dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, in professional field 3.9. Tourism

Author: Adelina Stoyanova

Subject of the Dissertation work: “Research of the Ecological Tourism in the context of Experience Industry”

Scientific adviser: Assoc. Prof. Irena Emilova

Ground: Participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation, according to **Order № 3-PK- 302/07.08.2023** r. of the Rector of NBU.

Information for the doctoral student

Adelina Stoyanova is a doctoral student in self-study form at the New Bulgarian University. The development of the doctoral student's biography shows the research activity in a well-structured direction in the field of tourism development through innovative structural approaches of research of the Ecological tourism in the Tourism industry".

1. General characteristics of the presented dissertation

The presented dissertation consists of **206 pages**, which synthesizes the synthesized structural elements of scientific research - **introduction, 3 main chapters, conclusion, references, appendix, bibliography** - Bulgarian and foreign literature, internet sites.

The bibliography consists of 126 electronic and print sources - scientific and specialized literature on the topic, **58 of which are in cyrilic alphabet, 63 - roman alphabet and 30 Internet sources**.

Theme actuality

The title of the dissertation is clearly formulated and is closely related to the doctoral thesis. The topic is actual from the point of view of the role of the importance Ecological tourism not only for the **Experience Industry**, but for the country's economy.

Structure of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation is logical developed as follows:

Firstly, clarify the theoretical statements on the topic;

Secondly, present the various models and classification;

Thirdly, make your own research by analyzing the data;
Fourtrhly, it reveals opportunities, suggestions and guidelines for improvement.

Thesis object and the subject of dissertation

The object and the subject of research are clearly formulated, and the position is supported by **five working hypotheses**, subsequently developed and proven in the overall presentation with the help of analyzes and results of our own empirical research from Adelina Stoyanova.

Research goals and objectives

The main goal outlines the logical steps of the research.

2. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results

The structure of the dissertation is built in accordance with the formulated goal and the detailed tasks.

The **introduction** to the dissertation contains all the necessary "requisites": convincing justification of the problem and its significance; clear and precise formulations of the goal (decomposed into four sub-goals) and research tasks, the object and subject of research; The conditions under which the study itself was conducted have been identified.

In the **First Chapter “Main Characteristics of the Ecological Tourism” (36 pages)** the following **contributions** can be highlighted:

Firstly: theoretical treatments on the topic are clarified as the connection of the notions “ecology”, “education”, “experience” and their interaction;

Secondly: special features of the Ecological tourism are presented and possibilities for enhancing the educational element in ecological tourism is analyzed;

Thirdly: the main aspects and characteristic features of sustainable tourism in the context of Experience Industry are considered”

In my opinion, in the first chapter the doctoral student demonstrates knowledge of the nature and features of the Ecological tourism and shows the ability to draw and formulate appropriate conclusions.

The scientific contributions in the **Second Chapter ”Study the Factors under the Influence of tourist experience in ecological aspect” (33 pages)** are the following:

Firstly: an *attempt for theorytizing* the economy of experience is done;

Secondly: *the study of the specific factors influencing* on the experience during travelling with an ecological goal is executed;

Thirdly: *the results from the study* of tourist experiences are revealed;

Четвърто, детерминирани са типовете потребители по определени критерии по отношение на иновациите и риска, както и подходите за оценка;

Fourthly: *the types of consumers according to the criteria in reference to innovation and risk, and the approaches for assessment* are determined;

Fifthly: *the results of the study are analized.*

In conclusion, in the Second Chapter the doctoral student shows the ability to conduct empirical research and analyze the results.

In the last Third Chapter “Digitalization of ecological travels” (54 pages) the following practical contribution is included:

The most significant contribution is *developing and supplying of new digital product at the tourist market in Bulgaria with ecological element* and accent on experience industry.

In my opinion the contributions of the doctoral student Adelina Stoyanova enriches the existing ecological practice.

3. Description of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The dissertation is a serious scientific study of a topical and significant problem. The main contribution points can be considered and evaluated in two groups - scientific-applied contributions and practical-applied contributions. I accept all the scientific and one practical contribution fully formulated by the doctoral student.

In conclusion, the assessment of the major scientific and applied contributions of the Adelina Stoyanova is high. The contributions in the dissertation work are formulated by the author.

Undoubtedly, the topics covered in dissertation work are up-to-date.

A comprehensiveness of the analysis is achieved as well as tangible mechanisms for implementation of the proposed solutions. The dissertation allows for a number of practical studies in this area and the effectiveness of its application is expected to be high enough. I think that the application of these **contributions** can improve the management practice in tourist industry.

4. Impact of the dissertation on the external environment

The doctoral student has indicated **8 publications on the topic of the dissertation - 5 reports in the country and abroad, 2 articles in Annuals of “Nature Sciences ” Department in NBU and 1 publication abroad in scientific edition.**

5. Evaluation of the abstract

The resume of the study gives an idea of the object, subject, thesis, purpose, objectives, methodology, structure and content of the dissertation work as a whole. It summarizes the main points of the dissertation: general characteristics, content and structure of the work, scientific contributions, publications on the issues of the dissertation.

6. Critical remarks, recommendations and questions

The dissertation work is developed on solid theoretical basis and analysis of a rich empirical material. The practical recommendations are well reasoned.

Critical remarks

The starting critical notes on the content of the dissertation of Adelina Stoyanova’s preliminary defence are mainly of technical nature and are corrected.

I have no specific critical comments on the content of the scientific work and study of Adelina Stoyanova.

Recommendations

The following **recommendations** for her future research and teaching activities can be pointed out:

- **continue expanding the theoretical foundations and the scope of its research** - an attempt can be executed to distinguish various eco forms and subforms, which could be extremely useful to draw the attention in accordance with local resources of the opportunities of the different types of Ecotourism at national and local levels in the following directions:
 - **Nature tourism** - tourism, whose object could be any natural landscape - animate and unanimate nature.
 - **Scientific ecotourism** - tourism, providing a wide-range of information - Geologists, geographer, biologist and etc.
 - **Cognitive ecotourism** - connected with nature sightseengs.
- **continue the research activity** - the PhD student to study in her future academic employment one more dimension of Ecotourism - “human”, “humane”, whatever is the nature of Ecotourism basically - tourism, at which people consciously change their usual life style to meet with the primary environment of habitation and unchanged landscape with the aim to achieve more healthy active and knowledgeable recreation;
- **continue to publish articles on the subjects taught by her.**

Questions

1. *To what extent can it be predicted the future profitability of the proposed new digital product at tourist market in Bulgaria with ecological element and accent on experience industry basis of the study research?*

7. Conclusion

The dissertation work is a scientific research of significant scientific, theoretical and methodological problem and contains practical contributions. This gives me reason to conclude positively that the dissertation meets the requirements of ASDARB and the Regulations for its implementation in, the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for competitions for academic degrees and academic positions at the IBS, therefore with full conviction I propose to the jury to vote for **Adelina Savova Stoyanova's** educational and scientific degree “Doctor”.

Date: 25.10. 2023

Signature:

Assoc. Prof. Milena Karailieva