

REVIEW

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Petranka Ivanova Midova, PhD, Department of Commerce, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Author of the dissertation: Siana Plamenova Spasova, PhD student at the Department of Tourism Economics and Management, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Topic of the dissertation: “Diversification of the Tourism Product by Organizing Events”

I. General Presentation of the Dissertation.

The dissertation of Siana Plamenova Spasova has been reviewed and approved for public defense during a meeting of the Department of Tourism Economics and Management at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

This review has been prepared pursuant to Order No. 578/04.07.2025 issued by the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, in my capacity as a member of the Academic Jury, appointed by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce, Protocol No. 14/03.07.2025. The review has been compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its implementing regulations, and the internal regulations of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

The dissertation follows a classical structure – it consists of three logically sequenced chapters, *with a total length of 186 (one hundred and eighty-six) pages, excluding appendices.*

The main aim of the dissertation is to examine the impact of organizing events on the development of a tourist destination. To achieve this aim, *four (4) research objectives* have been formulated, each directly related to the stated aim. I consider that the aim has been met and the research objectives have been successfully addressed. On this basis, it can be concluded that the research thesis has been substantiated, namely: “...that the organization of events constitutes an effective tool for the diversification of the tourism product, which simultaneously contributes to the economic development, social engagement, and cultural sustainability of destinations”. The aim, research objectives, and thesis are clearly and accurately formulated.

The object of the research encompasses tourism enterprises engaged in organizing events within the territory of Svishtov Municipality.

The subject of the research concerns the opportunities for diversifying the tourism product by organizing events.

The dissertation applies *a wide range of scientific methods*, including induction, deduction, comparative analysis and synthesis, content analysis, statistical data processing methods, Likert scale for measuring attitudes, survey and interview methods, empirical observation, historical method, as well as scientific knowledge techniques and logical generalization. The practical research is based on a conducted survey and expert assessments, utilizing standardized validation matrices for the results. The *research limitations* are outlined at the end of the conclusion.

A large number of literary sources – 123 (one hundred and twenty-three) in total – have been critically reviewed and utilized, of which 52 (fifty-two) are in Cyrillic and 71 (seventy-one) are in foreign languages. This contributes to fulfilling part of the educational objectives of the doctoral program. The research findings and analysis are illustrated with 13 (thirteen) figures and 11 (eleven) tables.

In conclusion, the dissertation meets the requirements set forth in Article 27, Paragraph 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

II. Evaluation of the Format and Content of the Dissertation.

The topic under consideration – the importance of event tourism for the development of a destination in Bulgaria (specifically, Svishtov Municipality) – *is both timely and suitable for a research study of this nature*. Its presentation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate possesses the necessary knowledge and is capable of interpreting theoretical concepts related to the organization of events within the tourism sector.

The scientific study is distinguished by its original approach to the subject matter and by the application of appropriate methodological tools to achieve the research objectives. Regarding structure, it can be noted that the work is well-balanced.

Chapter One, consisting of 55 pages, is theoretical in nature. It logically outlines the fundamental concepts such as tourism product, destination, event, diversification, and event tourism, and includes an author-defined interpretation of the term “tourism product.”

The chapter explores the potential for diversifying the tourism product through the organization of events.

Chapter Two of the dissertation comprises 50 pages. In terms of content, it covers the methodological foundations of the study, identifying the resources necessary for organizing events and examining their impact on destination development. As a result, a Model for Diversifying the Tourism Product by Organizing Events is proposed.

Chapter Three, consisting of 54 pages, provides the empirical testing of the proposed model. It begins with an analysis of the preconditions, followed by an assessment of tourism resources and organized events in the chosen destination – Svishtov Municipality. It includes testing of the model and concludes with the formulation of measures and recommendations for diversifying the tourism product by organizing events at the municipal level.

The dissertation includes: a List of Figures, a List of Tables, a List of References, a Declaration of Originality and Authenticity, and four (4) Appendices.

The submitted dissertation can be characterized as an in-depth study supported by graphical, tabular, and appropriately processed empirical material. The doctoral candidate demonstrates the ability to systematize, analyze, and synthesize theoretical and empirical data in support of the study's aims.

The structural composition of the dissertation **meets the fundamental criteria for academic evaluation.**

The abstract (author's summary) of the doctoral candidate Siana Plamenova Spasova comprises 43 (forty-three) pages and includes all the required elements for this type of academic work: general characteristics, structure, a brief presentation of the dissertation, a report on scientific and applied contributions, a list of publications on the topic, and a declaration of originality and authenticity.

The abstract accurately reflects the author's views as presented in the main dissertation and meets the formal and content requirements for such academic summaries.

The publications related to the dissertation are sufficient in number and include: one (1) monograph and one (1) co-authored study, two (2) articles (one of which is sole-authored), and five (5) conference papers (including one sole-authored). This indicates that significant parts of the dissertation have been made publicly available and have received

positive recognition. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor.”

The dissertation is distinguished by proper citation of all literary sources, using APA style. The authenticity and originality of the research are verified. *The required standards of academic ethics are met, and the similarity index is within acceptable limits.*

III. Scientific and Applied Contributions of the Dissertation

The scientific contributions of the dissertation can be outlined as follows:

First, the enrichment of theoretical knowledge regarding the tourism product and event tourism through conceptual systematization and critical analysis of leading academic perspectives, refinement of key concepts, and formulation of the author’s own definition.

Second, based on a well-developed methodological framework, a Model for Diversification of the Tourism Product by Organizing Events has been developed. This model is complemented by a "resources–events" matrix, a portfolio approach, and a system of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Third, through the empirical testing of the proposed model in a real destination environment – Svishtov Municipality – an assessment has been conducted of tourism resources and events, as well as their impact on destination development.

Fourth, the dissertation substantiates the necessity of implementing a KPI-based performance measurement system as a tool for evaluating the impact of organized events on the diversification of the tourism product within the destination.

Fifth, the study proposes specific guidelines for the sustainable development of destinations through event-based diversification, improvement of event management, and enhanced destination positioning. These findings have practical applicability in Svishtov Municipality and other destinations with similar profiles.

The contributions achieved contain original scientific ideas whose significance is substantiated both theoretically and practically. In this regard, it can be concluded that the dissertation complies with the requirements set forth in Article 27, Paragraph 1 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

IV. Critical Remarks, Questions, and Recommendations Regarding the Dissertation.

During the discussion of the dissertation within the department, in my capacity as internal reviewer, I provided comments and recommendations, all of which have been addressed by the doctoral candidate. The interesting and relevant topic explored in the dissertation raises the following question:

1. If doctoral candidate Spasova were assigned the task of developing an advertising campaign to promote Svishtov Municipality as an attractive destination for event tourism, what advertising tools would she use?

V. Overall Conclusion and Assessment.

The reviewed dissertation is regarded as a significant scientific and applied research work in a highly relevant field. *It meets the requirements* of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the corresponding Implementation Regulations, and the internal regulations of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. The candidate demonstrates the necessary theoretical knowledge and the ability to conduct independent research, thereby contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the studied area. In light of the above, I give a **positive assessment** of the dissertation and recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury that **Siana Plamenova Spasova** be awarded the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Tourism)."

21.07.2025 r.

Svishtov

Reviewer:

(Assoc. Prof. P. Midova, PhD)