

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

on a dissertation paperwork on the topic:
**„Potential for innovative tourism products,
based on the experience economy”**

Reviewer: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Kirilova Ianeva**

Author of the dissertation paperwork: **NevenaRumenova Lyaskova-Velikova**, PhDstudent at department “Tourism Economics and Management” at “D. A. Tsenov – Svishtov” Academy of Economics

About: **Defense** of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “PhD” in the professional field 3.8 Economics, PhDprogram Economics and Management (Tourism), at “D. A. Tsenov – Svishtov” Academy of Economics

I. General review of the dissertation work

The dissertation paperwork of NevenaRumenova Lyaskova-Velikova is a coherent, logical and in-depth study, which consists of **205 standard pages** of main text, supported by graphic, tabular and appropriately processed empirical material.

The dissertation is distinguished by a **balanced structure**, consisting of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, list of used literature and appendices. The study is clearly illustrated by means of tables and figures.

In connection with the development of the individual problems, the PhD student has studied a significant volume of scientific literature, the list of which includes **161 titles** in Bulgarian and English and online resources. This testifies to the author's in-depth awareness of the research on the specific problem under discussion by Bulgarian and foreign authors.

The **relevance and significance** of the researched issues are highlighted in a well-argued and convincing manner, related to the desire of consumers to discover unique experiences, opportunities for applying new technologies and ways of communication that allow the creation of similar types of tourist services, the promotion of sustainable tourism and cultural exchange, as well as the market potential for developing the experience economy.

The **main purpose** of the dissertation is appropriately formulated, based on a theoretical and empirical study of innovative tourism products of the experience

economy, in order to reveal their potential, with the proposed conceptual model for research, as well as to form recommendations for increasing the demand and supply of such products in modern conditions. To achieve this goal, **5 research tasks** have been formulated, which correspond to the purpose of the study. I believe that the PhD student achieves her main research purpose and solves the outlined research tasks. On this basis, she also proves her main research thesis, concerning the modern tourism market in Bulgaria, which has a high potential for offering innovative tourism products based on the experience economy – often preferred nowadays by tourists and by enterprises and organizations in the field of tourism. The **object** of study is correctly defined and innovative tourism products based on the experience economy are considered in the context of their demand and supply on the tourism market in Bulgaria. The **subject** of study is also correctly defined – this is the potential for the development of innovative tourist products that are related and correspond to the experience economy. In developing the dissertation work, a set of **research approaches and methods** was used, such as induction, deduction, comparative analysis and synthesis, statistical methods, survey method and interview, expert assessment and others.

The limitations set in the study are timely and territorial, related to the scope of the study, which is limited to seven destinations located in Bulgaria – Varna and Nessebar, Veliko Tarnovo, Dobrich, Troyan, Svishtov and Harmanli.

The literary sources are correctly used in the text and cited.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation paperwork

The **topic** of the dissertation is relevant and significant for diversifying the tourism offer in Bulgaria, through the formation of innovative products related to the experience economy. In the Bulgarian scientific literature, there is a lack of in-depth and systematic research dedicated to the experience economy. This direction in modern economic theory and practice is gaining increasing importance, especially in the context of the global transformation of consumer attitudes, in which experience occupies a leading place compared to the traditional commodity-service paradigm. In conditions of intense competition and the need for differentiation, especially in the tourism sector, the focus on experience becomes a strategic resource. This determines both the significance of the present study and its potential to contribute to expanding knowledge in the field, creating prerequisites for identifying new opportunities and directions for development in the tourism sector in Bulgaria. In this sense, the work reveals real opportunities for the development of innovative products and for sustainable positioning of tourist destinations in Bulgaria.

The *first chapter* /p. 7-80/ has a theoretical nature, which I consider correct. It is the basis of the research conducted in the following chapters of the dissertation.

This chapter is structured by four sectors, with several sub-points, in which the theoretical determinants of the experience economy are consistently clarified, the concept is distinguished from the "experience economy", a literature review of the theory on the topic under study and a connection with specific types of tourism. The relationship between innovations and tourism experiences is presented, as well as the types of innovative products in tourism (VR tours, AR guides, etc.).

The *second chapter* /p. 80-117/ is dedicated to the methodological framework for the study of innovative tourism products based on the experience economy. Structurally, the chapter is divided into three parts. The first part examines the potential for the development of innovative tourism products. The second is focused on methods for studying the potential for innovative tourist products, and the third presents a conceptual model.

The *third chapter* /p.117-176/ is composed of four parts. The first part presents an analysis of the natural and anthropogenic tourism resources of the studied destinations, selected by the author for the empirical study. The second part is a study and assessment of the preferences of tourists for the use of innovative tourism products. The third part is the preferences of tourists for the supply of tourism products, and the last part is related to making recommendations for increasing the demand and supply of innovative tourism products in the field of the experience economy.

At the end of the work, a *conclusion* is included, in which conclusions are drawn from the dissertation work and the set research tasks are proven.

III. Scientific and applied scientific contributions of the dissertation paperwork

The main contributions of the dissertation can be outlined in:

- Providing a theoretical overview and conceptual framework of the experience economy.
- Presenting research methods and approaches for analyzing the experience economy, which could serve as a basis for further research on the topic;
- Providing recommendations for increasing the demand and supply of innovative tourism products in the field of the experience economy.

IV. Critical notes and recommendations on the dissertation paperwork

I don't have any critical comments on the dissertation paperwork.

I recommend the PhD student to expand her research, with a future one, by research of the potential for the development of innovative tourism products at

the level of tourism regions, outlined in the Concept for Tourism Regionalization of Bulgaria.

V. Summary conclusion and opinion

The reviewed dissertation represents a conscientiously implemented, original and large-scale scientific and applied research in a current field of scientific research in tourism, in particular experienceeconomy. It meets the requirements of the Law on Tourism and the Regulations for its implementation. This gives me reason to give a positive assessment for awarding the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the professional field 3.8 Economics, doctoral program "Economics and Management (Tourism)" to Nevena Rumenova Lyaskova-Velikova.

15.08.2025

Sofia

Reviewer:

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Ianeva)