

OPINION

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Petranka Ivanova Midova, PhD, Department of Commercial Business, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Author of the dissertation: Yoana Angelova Konstantinova, full-time PhD student at the Department of Tourism Economics and Management, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Topic of the dissertation: "Development of Cultural-Historical Tourism through the Implementation of Innovations"

I. General presentation of the dissertation.

The dissertation follows a classic structure, consisting of three logically connected chapters with a total length of 221 pages.

The main aim of the dissertation is to conduct a theoretical and practical study of the potential for the development of cultural-historical tourism in the municipalities of the Danube tourist region through the implementation of innovations, and to propose a model for its measurement. To achieve this aim, six research objectives have been formulated, each corresponding to the stated aim. I believe that the main aim has been achieved, and the stated objectives have been appropriately addressed. On this basis, it can be concluded that the research thesis has been substantiated, namely: "...that innovations play a key role in the sustainable development of cultural-historical tourism, and therefore, suitable models can be proposed for implementation concerning the municipalities within the Danube tourist region, with the aim of introducing innovations into this type of tourism". The object of the research encompasses the municipalities within the Danube tourist region that offer cultural-historical tourism products and the subject of the research is the measurement of the potential for the implementation of innovations in cultural-historical tourism in municipalities.

A variety of scientific methods have been used in the development of the dissertation, including induction, deduction, comparative analysis and synthesis, SWOT analysis, content analysis, statistical methods, the Likert scale, survey method and interviews, empirical research, historical method, methods of cognition and observation, among others. A large number of literary sources (151 in total) have been studied and critically analyzed, thereby achieving part of the educational objectives of the doctoral program. The information is illustrated in 14 figures and 7 tables.

The study of the issues related to cultural-historical tourism in Bulgaria and the opportunities for its development through the implementation of innovations can be defined as a relevant topic, suitable for a dissertation. It is evident that **the candidate possesses in-depth practical knowledge**—by interpreting the theoretical aspects of the researched issues, she adapts a model for measuring the potential for the implementation of innovations in cultural-historical tourism at the municipality level.

In summary, the dissertation meets the requirements of Art. 27, para. 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

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

The introduction to the dissertation contains all the necessary elements. In doing so, the relevance of the researched issues is comprehensively presented, the object, subject, aim and objectives of the work are correctly formulated, the doctoral thesis is stated and the limitations of the practical study are outlined.

The first chapter sets the theoretical foundations of the specificity and scope of cultural-historical tourism. It outlines the essential characteristics and classification of innovations as an opportunity for their implementation in this type of tourism. *The second chapter* of the work is methodological in nature. It includes studying the methods for analyzing cultural-historical tourism. A key part of this chapter is the construction of a Model for measuring the potential for the implementation of innovations in the studied type of tourism at the municipality level. *The third chapter* covers applied aspects of the proposed model. It concludes with the formulation of guidelines and specific measures for the development of the Danube tourist region.

Within the dissertation, the following are presented: Abbreviations, List of Tables, List of Figures, List of Appendices, and Bibliography.

The presented dissertation can be defined as an in-depth study of a practical and applied nature, supported by graphical, tabular and appropriately processed empirical material. The doctoral student demonstrates the ability to systematize, analyze and summarize theoretical and empirical data for the purposes of her research.

The structural presentation of the dissertation paper **meets the basic requirements for this type of work.**

The abstract of PhD student Yoana Angelova Konstantinova consists of 44 pages. Its scope includes the elements required for this type of work: a general overview, the structure of the dissertation, a brief presentation of the content and results of the research, a reference to the contributions, a list of publications by the PhD student on the topic of the dissertation, and a declaration of originality and authenticity.

The abstract corresponds entirely with the dissertation, correctly reflecting the author's views presented in the main work.

The publications related to the dissertation are 4 in total, consisting of 2 articles and 2 conference papers, all of which are independent. This shows that significant parts of the work are available to the general public and have received a positive assessment. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for obtaining the academic degree "Doctor".

The dissertation is distinguished by correct citation of the literary sources used, following APA style. *The authenticity and originality of the work is verified. The required rules of scientific ethics are observed and an acceptable percentage of compliance is reported.*

III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation.

The scientific merits of the dissertation can be outlined in two directions – theoretical-methodological and practical-applied. The first includes:

1. Theoretical study of the essential characteristics and scope of cultural-historical tourism, as well as the specifics of innovations in this type of tourism.

2. Critical examination of basic methods and models for analysis in tourism as a basis for deriving one's own model.

3. Development and structuring of two models – a Model for measuring the potential of innovations at the municipality level and a Model for the implementation innovations in the field of cultural-historical tourism.

Two contributions of a practical-applied nature are distinguished, namely:

1. Testing the proposed model for measuring the potential for the implementation of innovations in the Danube tourist region.

2. Deriving specific measures and guidelines for implementing innovations and, accordingly, increasing the competitiveness of the studied tourist region.

The achieved *contributions* contain scientific ideas and their significance is proven. In this regard, it can be concluded *that the dissertation meets the requirements of Art. 27, para. 1 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.*

IV. Questions on the dissertation.

During the discussion of the scientific work within the department, as an internal reviewer, critical remarks, questions, and recommendations were raised, which were taken into account and reflected by the doctoral student. I have no specific questions. I only recommend to the author to publish the results obtained from the research in a monographic work, in which the scope can be expanded to include other tourist regions in Bulgaria.

V. Summary evaluation of the dissertation and conclusion.

The dissertation represents an original theoretical and applied research in a relevant field of science. It *meets the requirements* of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. The candidate possesses theoretical knowledge and has the ability to conduct independent research, thereby contributing to the development of science on the researched issues. Based on everything said so far, I give **a positive assessment** of the dissertation and propose to the esteemed members of the scientific jury that Yoana Angelova Konstantinova be awarded the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” in the doctoral program “Economics and Management (Tourism)”.

30.04.2025, Svishtov

Prepared the opinion:

/Assoc. Prof. P. Midova, PhD./