



REVIEW

of Dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.8 Economics, Doctoral Programme "Economics and Management (Tourism)" at the AE "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov

Reviewer: Prof. Dr Stoyan Petkov Marinov

Author of Dissertation: Siana Plamenova Spasova

Dissertation topic: "Diversification of the Tourism Product through the Organization of Events".

Grounds for drafting the review: participation in the scientific examining jury on the defense of the Dissertation pursuant to Order No РД 587 of 04.07.2025 by the Rector of AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov and the decision of the scientific examining jury of its first meeting on 08.07.2025.

1. Information about the Dissertation defender

In 2014 Siana Spasova obtains the EQD "Bachelor", and in 2015 the EQD "Master" in the Programme "Economics" at the AE "Dimitar A. Tsenov", Svishtov. From 2016 to 2025 Siana Spasova is a teacher in vocational training at the Vocational High School of Business Management, Administration and Services "Atanas Burov", the town of Silistra. Since March 2025 she has held the position "Senior Expert" in vocational education and training at the Regional Education Directorate in the town of Plovdiv. On 01.09.2020 she is enrolled in the doctoral programme "Economics and Management (Tourism)" at the AE "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov.

2. General description of the Dissertation

The submitted Dissertation of doctoral student Siana Spasova is the result of independent scientific research.

The Introduction highlights, in a well-grounded manner, the relevance and importance of the issues under study, connected with the sustainable development of the tourist destination through event tourism.

The subject of study: "*opportunities for diversifying the tourism product through the organization of events*" and the object of study: "*the enterprises organizing events for the purpose of diversifying the tourism product on the territory of the Municipality of Svishtov*" are properly differentiated. The work is subordinate to a clearly formulated research goal: "*to analyze the effect of the organized events on the development of the tourist destination*". The set goal is specified in 4 research objectives: (1) conducting a theoretical analysis of the connection between the tourism product, event tourism and the diversification of the offering of the tourist destination through the organization of events of high added value; (2) development and approbation of a model for the diversification of the tourism product through events; (3) analysis and evaluation of the tourism resources which have potential for event tourism in the Municipality of



Svishtov; (4) evaluation of the effectiveness of the organized events for the development of the Municipality of Svishtov as a tourist destination and formulation of recommendations for the use of event tourism as a tool for diversifying the tourism product at the Municipality level.

The research work upholds the proposition that *"the organization of events is an effective tool for the diversification of the tourism product, which also contributes to the economic development, social involvement and cultural sustainability of destinations"*.

The appropriate research tools, which include induction, deduction, comparative analysis and synthesis as well as content analysis, are used. The following methods are applied: observation, survey and interview for the collection of primary data, as well as statistical methods for its processing. The methodology of the research is based on an interdisciplinary foundation, integrating concepts and methods from tourism, marketing, economics and management at micro- and macrolevel. The doctoral student successfully uses qualitative and quantitative methods for the comparative evaluation of events by means of an adequate system of Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

The Dissertation complies with the requirements of Art 27, Para. 2 of the Implementing Regulation of The Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria.

3. Assessment of the form and the content of the Dissertation.

The Dissertation is 203 pages long. The structure of the former is well balanced, presented in the spirit of well substantiated logic, consistency and connection between the issues considered. It consists of an Introduction (5 pgs), Body of three chapters (164 pgs), Conclusion (7 pgs), Bibliography (9 pgs), 4 Appendices (17 pgs). A wealth of illustrations is also used: 11 tables and 13 figures.

The bibliographic material includes 123 sources, 52 of which are in Cyrillic and 71 in Latin.

The style of the Dissertation is concise and accurate. The text is written using scholarly language. The contents of the Dissertation testify to the fact that doctoral student Siana Spasova has done a piece of research work, the results of which are presented in a structured and logically sequential manner.

4. Scientific and applied research contributions in the Dissertation

The Dissertation of doctoral student Siana Spasova contains the following contributions:

First, an upgrade over the theoretical knowledge of the tourism product and the possibilities for its diversification at the level of tourist destination, through the realization of events, is achieved.

Second, the author's conceptual model for the diversification of the tourism product through the organization of events is synthesized. The model is operationalized by means of a system of key indicators for evaluating the effect of events on the differentiation of the tourism product (KPI) - 5 economic, 3 tourism, 4 socio-cultural and 3 marketing indicators are proposed.



Third, an empirical approbation of the developed model at the destination level, using the example of the Municipality of Svishtov, is accomplished. A detailed situational analysis of event tourism in the Municipality is performed. An identification and classification of tourism resources and events with the potential to generate tourist demand with regard to the destination, is also done.

Fourth, the author's system for measuring the effectiveness of event tourism at the level of tourist destination, using the example of the Municipality of Svishtov, by means of a KPI analysis, is approbated - the effect of the organized events on the diversification of the tourism product in the municipality is evaluated.

Fifth, practical guidelines for the sustainable development of destinations through properly planned, organized and evaluated event tourism, using the example of the Municipality of Svishtov, are formulated.

5. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Siana Spasova presents 7 publications on the topic of the Dissertation, including participation in a chapter of a monograph, indexed in Scopus, one independently written article in the press and one jointly written article, 4 papers, one of which is independently written and three as a co-author. The papers are in the proceedings volumes of scientific forums in Bulgaria. The presented publications reflect substantial results of the Dissertation and provide the latter with sufficient publicity.

The Dissertation defender meets the minimum national requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", as per Art. 2b, Para. 2 and Para. 3 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

6. Evaluation of the summary

The presented summary sums up the contents of the main structural parts of the Dissertation and complies with the normative requirements.

7. Has there or hasn't there been found any evidence of plagiarism in the Dissertation or the summary

There is no lawfully proven plagiarism in the Dissertation.

8. Notes and recommendations

The research work would benefit if, in the part on the situational analysis of the prerequisites for the development of tourism in the Municipality of Svishtov, the specialized facilities and equipment for MICE tourism - conference, sports, etc., public event halls, are also analyzed.

9. Questions to the Dissertation defender

First, is there a need for a new multifunctional hall for MICE tourism in the town of Svishtov and would investing in its construction be profitable?

Second, should the rate of tourist tax in the Municipality of Svishtov be increased in order to raise more funds to finance the cultural calendar in the Municipality?

10. Conclusion



The Dissertation constitutes *an applied research solution* of a real practical problem of public significance, concerning the use of events for the development of sustainable tourism. The doctoral student possesses theoretical knowledge in the programme "Economics and Management (Tourism)" and the ability to conduct independent research.

The research work entitled "*Diversification of the Tourism Product through the Organization of Events*" conforms to the requirements of the LDAS in Republic of Bulgaria and its Implementing Regulation.

I give it a positive evaluation and vote in favour of awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the programme "Economics and Management (Tourism)", professional field 3.8 Economics, to Siana Spasova.

Varna,

13.07.2025

Review drawn up by:

(Prof. Dr Stoyan Marinov)