

OPINION

On behalf of Associate Professor Dr. Asya Pandzherova

University of National and World Economy – Sofia (UNWE)

Professional Field 3.8. "Economics"

Scientific Specialty "Economics and Management (Project Management in Tourism)"

Subject: dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree **"Doctor"** in professional field **"Economics"**, scientific specialty **"Economics and Management (Tourism)"** in Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics

Author of the dissertation:

Yoana Angelova Konstantinova

Topic of the dissertation:

**Development of Cultural and Historical Tourism
Through the Implementation of Innovations"**

Grounds for the presentation of the opinion: participation in the scientific jury on defense of the dissertation according to Order № 317 / 10.04.2025 of the Rector of Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics

I. General presentation of the dissertation work

The presented dissertation work on the topic: Development of cultural and historical tourism through the implementation of innovations has a total volume of 221 pages. It consists of an introduction (8 pages), main text (153 pages), conclusion (2 pages), used literary sources (32 pages), appendices (19 pages). The dissertation work includes 7 tables, 14 figures and 7 appendices. The structure of the dissertation work is characterized by very good consistency, coherence and logic in the presentation.

The literature that has been used includes a total of 151 contemporary and current titles in Cyrillic and Latin (53 in Bulgarian, 95 in English, 2 in Italian, 1 in Russian), 78 strategic documents, 18 normative sources and 44 internet sources. It supports the in-depth critical analysis of the researched issues, the clarification of the terminological specifications and the conceptual apparatus, especially in the first and second chapters of the dissertation. Throughout the scientific work, the literary sources have been used conscientiously and correctly by the doctoral student, which allows the personal contribution of the doctoral student to be highlighted.

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

The choice of the specific topic and the individual motives for the development of the dissertation work are very well justified. Undoubtedly, the topic is relevant and significant, with an emphasis on the development of cultural and historical tourism in tourist regions through innovations. The object and subject of the study are correctly defined. The object of

the scientific research are the municipalities of the Danube tourist region, which offer cultural and historical tourism products. The subject of the study is the potential for implementing innovations in cultural and historical tourism in the municipalities. Within the framework of the dissertation work, through detailed theoretical-methodological and practical-applied research, the goal of the dissertation has been achieved, which is aimed at studying the potential for development of cultural and historical tourism in municipalities of the Danube tourist region through the implementation of innovations. To achieve the goal, the doctoral student defines six research tasks, which he fully achieves in the individual chapters of the presented doctoral thesis. The thesis is formulated in the dissertation that innovations have a key role in the sustainable development of cultural and historical tourism, as a result of which appropriate models can be proposed to be implemented in the municipalities of the Danube tourist region, in order to implement innovations in this type of tourism. To achieve the goals of the development, a methodological toolkit was used, including the application of induction, deduction, comparative analysis and synthesis, SWOT analysis, content analysis, statistical methods, Likert scale, survey method and interview, empirical research, historical method, methods of knowledge and observation, etc. The main limitations of the study are set. The sources of information provision are mentioned.

The abstract of the dissertation is 44 pages long. It has been prepared in accordance with the established requirements for the volume and content of abstracts. The abstract provides an accurate and complete picture of the content, structure and main conclusions of the dissertation. It also includes a declaration of originality and reliability of the dissertation.

III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work

The content of the work gives reason to point out that the structure on which it is built allows for the application of a completely consistent and logically justified research approach. In terms of composition, each of the parts of the dissertation is completely complete and independent, which makes it possible to trace the overall issues of the study. The obtained scientific and applied results in the dissertation work are contained in the introduction and three chapters of the work.

The first chapter of the dissertation work presents the specifics of cultural and historical tourism. The scope of the product of cultural and historical tourism is studied. The importance of innovations in the context of cultural and historical tourism is discussed. The opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of innovations in cultural and historical tourism are highlighted.

The second chapter of the dissertation work treats the approaches to analyzing the development of cultural and historical tourism with the aim of implementing innovations. Attention is focused on the methods for analyzing cultural and historical tourism. A model has been developed for measuring the potential for implementing innovations in cultural and historical tourism at the municipal level and for implementing innovations in this specialized form of tourism.

The practical applicability of the theoretical and methodological statements considered in the first and second chapters are illustrated in the third chapter of the dissertation. It presents the possibilities for measuring the potential for developing cultural and historical tourism through innovations in municipalities in the Danube region. Attention is focused on analyzing

the macro- and microenvironment and the critical points in the development of cultural and historical tourism in the Danube tourist region, as well as on assessing its condition. Emphasis is placed on specific measures for developing cultural and historical tourism in the Danube tourist region through the implementation of innovations. The author has identified guidelines and recommendations for implementing innovations.

In our opinion, the following scientific and scientific-applied contributions stand out in the dissertation:

- Based on the literary sources used by established scientific researchers, the existing interpretation of cultural and historical tourism has been enriched.
- A critical analysis of basic theoretical and applied models and methods of analysis in tourism has been carried out.
- A model for measuring the potential for implementing innovations at the municipal level and a model for implementing innovations in cultural and historical tourism have been developed.
- Testing of the model for measuring the potential for implementing innovations in municipalities of the Danube tourist region has been proposed.
- Specific measures and guidelines for implementing innovations for the development of cultural and historical tourism in the Danube tourist region have been formulated.

IV. Questions on the dissertation

Considering the undeniable merits of the presented dissertation, I have no significant critical remarks towards doctoral student Ioana Konstantinova. I would recommend that, in her future research work, the doctoral student continue to explore other types of tourism characteristic of the largest tourist region in terms of area, the Danube, and the influence of innovations on their development.

For the purpose of a worthy defense, I offer the following question to the doctoral student: In what way does the application of innovations create conditions for the development of the so-called sustainable cultural and historical tourism?

V. General assessment of the dissertation work and conclusion

In conclusion, my overall assessment of the dissertation work of doctoral student Yoana Angelova Konstantinova is positive. The dissertation work "Development of cultural and historical tourism through the implementation of innovations" submitted for an opinion is a comprehensive, original scientific and applied research. It critically presents and analyzes important issues about the theory and practice of culinary tourism and the role of innovations in its development. The overall content, conclusions and scientific contributions contained in the study give me reason to recommend to the members of the Honorable Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree Ph.D. to Yoana Angelova Konstantinova - a full-time doctoral student at the Department of "Economics and Tourism Management" at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

Date: 05.05.2025

Prepared the opinion:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Asya Pandzherova)