

Review

on the dissertation work for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional strand 3.8. Economics, Doctoral Program "Economics and Management (Agriculture)"

Author of the dissertation work: Violetka Lyubenova Zheleva

PhD student at the Department of Regional Development at the Trakia University, Bulgaria, Stara Zagora

Theme of the dissertation work: "Assessments of opportunities for development of alternative forms of tourism in Stara Zagora region"

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Atanasov Momchilov, appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No 49/29 .10. 2020 from the Rector of the Trakia University, Stara Zagora.

1. Brief presentation of the applicant.

Violetka Lyubenova Jeleva was born in Sofia on November 10, 1988. She studied at the Commercial High School "Knyaz Simeon Tarnovski", Stara Zagora. Master's degree at the Thracian University, specialty "Economics of Alternative Tourism" in 2014.

2. Topicality of the problem.

Tourism, as a means of development of the Stara Zagora region, is closely related to the development of the local economy. Stara Zagora region has numerous natural and anthropogenic tourist resources that can generate interest among tourists and become a leading motive for their journey. The area has an important geographical position for the country. There is a good infrastructure network and a good accommodation base. The current situation offers increased interest in alternative forms of tourism.

3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of examination.

The purpose of the dissertation is clearly formulated: to analyze and evaluate the tourist resource potential of some municipalities in Stara Zagora region, as well as the development of region-specific forms of alternative tourism, to analyze the development of these forms of tourism, to assess the results and assess the possibilities. The research thesis is logically supported. The survey is limited in scope on the territory of Stara Zagora region. The opening of appropriate events and destinations is at administrative level, surveying 5 municipalities (Gurkovo Municipality; Kazanlak Municipality; Maglzh Municipality; Stara Zagora Municipality; Chirpan Municipality) on the territory of the region, in accordance with the municipal development plans of each municipality, their cultural calendars and development strategy of Stara Zagora region. The selection for analysis of the specific types of alternative tourism is based on preliminary monitoring of the state of tourism and the availability of natural and anthropogenic resources on the territory of the region, referring to the existing classifications for this type of tourism.

In the dissertation development, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. The quantitative ones include statistical and economic and statistical and mathematical indicators, which are related to both the preliminary and the current and ex-post evaluations. The qualitative methods applicable to this survey are directed at the ongoing evaluation, looking for the assessment of the respondents who participated in the survey. In order to achieve the objectives set and to carry out the research tasks, the following specific methods shall be used: the method of the monitoring involved; the method of field studies; the method of the survey; graphical method for qualitative evaluation of the results obtained; - methods of descriptive (descriptive) statistics; interfering statistical methods.

4. Visuality and presentation of the results obtained

The dissertation work consists of an introduction, a statement in three chapters, conclusion, literature with a volume of 180 standard text pages basic text. The text includes 41 figures and 14 tables. To the dissertation

work there are 4 applications, with a volume of 71 pages containing 240 figures and 15 tables.

5. Discussion of results and literature used

Chapter One summarises the basic definitions of alternative forms of tourism. tourism, which occupies an important place in the process of dealing with the negative effect on the main destinations suitable for mass tourism. Tourism, in particular the alternative, is of great importance for the economic growth of Bulgaria. It is an extremely competitive sector. In order to achieve its sustainable development, it is necessary to build and strictly comply with a clear social and environmentally responsible policy aimed at all aspects of its development. According to the objectives and tasks of this study, several alternative forms of tourism have been selected following a comprehensive review of the available literary sources. They have been used in the development of this study and are tailored to the specificity of the destination, the quantity and quality of the natural and anthropogenic resources on the territory of the area concerned.

Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the survey, as well as the socio-economic characteristics of the regions surveyed. from each particular situation and imposed status quo in each particular society, influenced, of course, by additional factors such as geographical location, economic stability or instability, sometimes ideological views and ideas. In the development of an author's methodology for assessing the possibilities for the development of alternative tourism on the territory of Stara Zagora region, the main aspects are in the direction of: assessment of the development of region-specific forms of alternative tourism, analysis of the development of these forms of tourism, evaluation of development results, impact assessment.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis and assessment of the state and opportunities for development of various forms of alternative tourism on the territory of Stara Zagora region. For this purpose, an ongoing evaluation was made, realized by examining the opinion of the participants in the purchase and sale of the alternative tourist product in its various forms. Here you look for the point of view and the assessment of tourists as end users with their subjective expectations and attitudes. The relationship between the different groups of participants in the tourist events or in the purchase and sale of specific tourist goods and services provides some objectification of the assessment. It is difficult

to find the intersection of the views of the different participants, but their comparison and measurement would make it possible to identify strengths and weaknesses of the proposed tourist product. The first section of Chapter 3 presents the parameters of the study. The data are obtained from primary sources by an inquiry of the following events and settlements presented in Chapter II. The second section of the chapter examines the analysis of the results of the survey cards. A SWOT analysis presented the state of the alternative forms of tourism in question for stara Zagora region has been drawn up. The SWOT analysis will serve to determine future policies in the field of regional tourism development in Stara Zagora region.

Conclusions and recommendations have been drawn, which are well formulated.

The PhD student works with a wide range of literary sources – 187 pieces, which he interprets well.

6. Contributions of the dissertation work.

They objectively reflect the results of the study.

7. Critical notes and questions.

1. The presentation of the conclusions and recommendations in the dissertation work could be precise.
2. The annexes to the dissertation work could be presented in a more concentrated form.

I have the following question to the PhD student: Does Stara Zagora region have the potential to enter the tourist market through forms of alternative tourism and to compete successfully with traditional tourist destinations in Bulgaria in the face of a pandemic of COVID-19?

8. Published articles and citations.

1. Zheleva, V., State, trends and perspectives for the development of extreme tourism in Bulgaria (presenting the case of the off-road "Bulgaria Trophy Challenge 2017"), Trakia Journal of Science, Vol. 15, 2017, pp 446-451
2. Zheleva, V., A study on the development of festival tourism in Kazanlak Municipality: the case of the Rose festival 2019, Trakia Journal of Science, Vol. 17, 2019, pp 86-93
3. Zheleva, V., Development of festival tourism in Stara Zagora /on the example of the national Thracian Folklore Festival "Our Virgin Step"/, Monograph under project 11/2017 "Identification of interconnections and processes for developing a model for sustainable regional tourism", 2019, p. 119-139
4. Zheleva, V., Stoykova, B., Condition and development trends of wine tourism in Bulgaria (the example of festivals of wine and folklore heritage), Trakia Journal of Science, under seal

Quotes noted:

Zheleva, V., State, trends and perspectives for the development of extreme tourism in Bulgaria (presenting the case of the off-road "Bulgaria Trophy Challenge 2017"), Trakia Journal of Science, Vol. 15, 2017, pp 446-451

Quoted by:

100 national tourist sites, Selected bibliography, NEW BULGARIAN UNIVERSITY

Conclusion

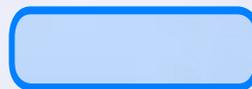
On the basis of the quality of the work, the different methods of research learned and applied by the PhD student and the summaries made, I believe that the dissertation work meets the requirements of the ZRASRB and the rules of the Trakia University for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it **POSITIVELY**.

I allow myself to propose to the honorable scientific jury also to vote positively and to award Violetka Lyubenova Zheleva the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management".

15.01.2021

Stara Zagora

Reviewer:.....



(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Momchilov)