

## Review

of the *member* of the dissertation council for the dissertation of Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb Saleh on the topic: «Managing tourism resorts through destination social responsibility and information adequacy lenses: Attribution theory perspective», submitted for the degree of candidate of sciences (candidate of sciences in Economics) in scientific speciality 5.2.6. Management.

### 1. Novelty and topicality of the research work

Currently, the tourism industry in the world is one of the most dynamically developing areas. Globalization opens borders and stimulates touristic flows all over the world. Despite the ongoing economic instability, tourism is showing a steady growth trend. New countries and regions, which are developing at a faster pace, are increasingly involved in the sphere of tourism activities. There is an emergence of new tourist centers and countries that are quite competitive with the traditional tourist leaders of the world. At the same time, the dynamics of international tourist flows are extremely uneven, which is primarily explained by different levels of socio-economic development of countries and regions of the world. The tourism market, covering most countries and regions of the world, continues to grow successfully in the face of intensifying competition and intensifying economic rivalry between its participants. First of all, this is indicated by increasingly broader, often aggressive advertising measures when promoting their tourism product in foreign markets. In addition, tourism demand and tourism supply depend on a number of changing factors such as economic and financial development, the influence of government policies, demographic and social changes, and the development of innovative technologies. Thus, increasing competition between countries and regions both in the tourism demand market and in the tourism supply market is one of the significant trends in the development of world tourism.

Growth in industries involved in tourism and necessities to overcome the influence of negative factors (e.g. losses in the tourism industry due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic were estimated at \$1 trillion at the end of 2020) pushes firms and managers to find effective ways for tourists' attraction and their satisfaction whereas managerial mechanisms have a very important place. Tourists experience a variety of attitudes and emotions (negative and/or positive) toward destinations, infrastructures, firms' activities and managerial initiatives, thus creating a new agenda for companies to find proper management strategies. Recent papers discuss the interaction between destination management intervention and tourists' attribution

however we still need to understand how managerial actions and practices may configure tourists' preferences and attitudes.

## **2. The novelty of the results presented in the dissertation**

The presented dissertation contains significant scientific aspects of the research work, characterized by their novelty. The work identifies theoretical approaches to explore the locus of causality theory as one of the attribution theory dimensions with its involvement in the tourism management context. The author studies the relationship between the locus of causality theory and other attribution theory dimensions (stability and controllability) and its involvement in the tourism management context. The paper presents key tools to reveal and justify the attribution shifting mechanisms in tourism management to help managers bring favorable tourist behavioral responses toward their resorts.

Thus, the main results that determine the scientific novelty of the dissertation research are:

1. The implication of attribution shifting mechanisms (e.g., tourists' perception of destination corporate social responsibility and destination information adequacy) to manage tourism resorts.
2. The factors that affect tourists' attribution as shifting mechanisms toward events, mainly corporate social responsibility theory and information adequacy of tourism event management.
3. The new perspective of attribution shifting mechanisms in the way how they are acting differently depending on the different experience effort valence (e.g., type of experience, leisure, adventure, and cultural).
4. The new attribution theory dimension (stability and controllability) to strengthen the attribution shifting mechanism as managerial tools to maintain the positive outcome of tourists' attribution toward events.
5. Additional factors such as tourism demographics (e.g., tourist gender, vacation period, etc.) were employed by the author into the attribution shifting mechanism and attribution theory to enhance the management strategies of resorts' managers.

The dissertation is an original author's scientific work and provides important theoretical contribution. The study also has practical significance. The solutions proposed by the author will allow touristic managers to strengthen their position in the tourism industry. The results of the dissertation research of Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb Saleh were tested at leading scientific conferences and were published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, including those recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia.

### **3. The validity of the scientific findings and conclusion formulated in the dissertation.**

The reliability and scientific novelty of findings formulated in the dissertation are determined by the results presented in the study. The dissertation consists of five chapters, introduction, conclusion, list of sources used and two main appendices.

The conclusion about the validity and reliability of the scientific findings, conclusions and recommendations of the dissertation of Saleh Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb can be made on the basis of the following:

1. The objectives of the dissertation research are correctly formulated, reflecting the logic of the dissertation and making it possible to realize the set goal and sub goals of the work related to conducting empirical research. The author logically and consistently solves the problems formulated in the study aimed at achieving the goal.

2. The validity of the findings formulated in the dissertation is determined by a detailed study of a large number of works by leading scientists and specialists on the problems under study. The conclusions of the dissertation work are based on an analysis of scientific works of leading scientists (pp. 18-48).

3. The results obtained are determined by an integrated approach to the formation of strategic responses in the touristic industry in order to attract and manager tourists (pp. 49-52, 54-76).

4. The conclusion and results of the study were obtained using various data processing methods that correspond to the objectives of the research and are relevant and justified (pp. 49-52).

5. It should be noted that the author conducted a large-scale study, which formed the basis for the conclusions and proposals formulated, which, of course, is an advantage of the work.

6. Published works of Saleh Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb indicate the importance of the scientific topic of the dissertation work and the significance of the results obtained by the author.

### **4. Critical remarks**

Highlighting the good level of theoretical analysis and empirical research conducted in the dissertation, I would like to formulate several critical remarks, all of them have to be used rather for discussion then to decrease the value of the academic findings presented in the study:

1. Theory part mostly summarizes the existing works that seems to be very relevant for the research and serves as a solid background for the empirical study. However it is not so clear what theoretical results are achieved by the author?

2. The dissertation focuses on analysis of the role of CRS, why CSR was chosen by the author? For example, human resource management may also shape managerial responses – the way how companies select, train and retain their managers, systematic approach to training and development of managers, selective approach for attraction, employees' involvement and satisfaction may influence on customer service increasing positive client attitudes. Attention to clients may impact and change their attribution as well. Information adequacy is also very much depended on employees' loyalty and involvement.
3. It seems that the work doesn't discuss individual characteristics of tourists as humans. Internal LOC and ELOC are somehow individual characteristic, people with internal LOC and ELOC have predicted attitudes that might be inherited but not externally developed, thus not externally influenced. Following this, we can doubt that managerial initiatives have a strong pressure on both internal LOC and ELOC performing as shifting mechanisms.
4. In the table 1 (p. 54) where socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents are presented, we see that almost half of them are students. Do students have the same awareness of, e.g. CRS initiatives comparing to other groups of respondents? Another question is how the level of income may impact the findings as those both respondents characteristics seem to be specific and impact how people perceive vacations and other types of travelling, select resorts, touristic services providers, etc. Are internal LOC and ELOC influenced by social and economic characteristics of individuals, and how those differences may modify the empirical findings?

These remarks and comments do not reduce the significance of the findings, the scientific novelty of the results and the author's contribution to theoretical development. The quality of the dissertation is the high, which confirms the scientific qualification of its author.

Considering the above, I believe that

*Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb Saleh's* dissertation on the topic: «Managing tourism resorts through destination social responsibility and information adequacy lenses: Attribution theory perspective» meets the requirements of speciality 5.2.6. Management;

The dissertation is a scientific qualification work that resolves a scientific problem important for the development of the relevant field of science *or* provides new science-based technical, technological or other solutions and developments vital for the national development.

No violations of paragraphs 9 and 11 of the Order No.11181/1 as of November 19, 2021 "On the Procedure for Awarding Academic Degrees at St. Petersburg State University" have been detected.

The dissertation meets the criteria of dissertations for the academic degree of candidate of sciences, established by the specified Order. The dissertation is recommended for the defense at St. Petersburg State University.

Member of the dissertation council

Doctor of Economics, Associate Professor, Professor



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09.01.2024