

Review

of the Chair 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 economic sciences (candidate of sciences in economics) in scientific specialty 5.2.6. Management

The dissertation by Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb Saleh focuses on the shift in tourists' attributions and their relationship with tourism resort management. It considers destination social responsibility and information adequacy as factors that directly and indirectly influence tourists' expectations and reflections. The research also examines the moderating effects of information adequacy and social responsibility perception. This study aims to enhance the understanding of the interaction between tourists' attributions and destinations' events.

The **relevance** of the dissertation is justified by the increasing number of tourists, which is becoming a significant economic driver for many economies. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and global instability, the tourism landscape is evolving. The factors are growing selectivity, emergence of new destinations (for example, rise of interest of internal tourism in Russia became a starting point for opening new tourist destination in Dagestan, or new touristic routs in Siberia), and digitalization leading to the growth of self-organized tourism through online platforms. The study of tourists' attribution is essential in the context of these changes to gain insights into their behavior and decision-making processes, which can have significant implications for the tourism industry and related policies.

The dissertation consists of an Introduction, five chapters, a Conclusion, and appendices. The Introduction section justifies the research problem and identifies research gaps to be addressed. It is followed by the literature review and hypotheses development in the first chapter, description of the research approach in the second chapter, interpretation of the empirical results, their discussion of and elaboration of theoretical and practical implications in following chapters. The structure of the dissertation is logical, and all conclusions are based on existing knowledge as well as the author's own empirical analysis. By following this structure, the dissertation ensures a **coherent and well-organized presentation of the research**, demonstrating a deep understanding of the literature and the ability to contribute new knowledge to the field.

The scientific **novelty** of the results obtained by the author is justified by following aspects:

1. Integration of attribution theory in combination with destination corporate social responsibility and destination information adequacy) into tourism resort management.

2. Justification of information adequacy as an attribution shifting mechanism that could eliminate information transaction costs of destination management and to increase the results of management efforts in attracting, predicting, and enhancing tourists' experiences.

3. Integration of demographic features in the framework of tourists' attribution. The study investigates how attribution shifting mechanisms could be perceived differently depending on the different experience effort valence (e.g., type of experience, leisure, adventure, and cultural). This is important for managers to focus their marketing and management efforts on the right target audience.

4. The study presents a novel contribution by providing another attribution theory dimension (stability and controllability) to strengthen the attribution shifting mechanism as managerial tools to maintain positive outcomes of tourists' attribution toward events.

5. The study contributes by incorporating tourism demographics (e.g., tourist gender, vacation period, etc.) into the attribution shifting mechanism and attribution theory to enhance management strategies of resorts' managers when targeting tourism personas.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative **methods** used by the author to test ten hypotheses developed in the dissertation is a suitable approach to obtain empirical evidence for the major results of the study. The author developed a survey and ran a statistical analysis based on the results of the survey. Correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and structured equation model were used to test the hypotheses. These methods are commonly used in research and have been shown to be effective in identifying relationships between variables and predicting outcomes.

The results obtained by the author were discussed at international conferences and published in international top-ranked journals in marketing, tourism and hospitality. The author published ten papers that contributed to the development of the dissertation.

The general impression of the dissertation is highly positive. The author made a comprehensive, very extensive analysis. The existing literature is studied thoroughly, and the overall feeling is that the author really made a lot of efforts and succeeded in analyzing the scientific context. The area of study has evident gaps, and this dissertation proposes a certain contribution to the existing knowledge, both theoretical and empirical.

However, there are some **critical remarks** that I would like to be addressed by Mr. Mahmoud Ibraheam Kotb Saleh.

1. The absence of an analysis of the tourism sector is a notable deficiency. However, integrating such an analysis, encompassing various aspects such as numbers, flows, and dynamic regions, could enhance the comprehension of the dissertation's significance.

2. In the Introduction section, the author defines resorts as tourism cities and discusses different stakeholders, excluding tourists themselves (managers, cities' authorities). Furthermore, in the Implications, recommendations for authorities are lacking. It would be beneficial to categorize managers and provide tailored recommendations for various categories of managers, including regional authorities. For instance, addressing how they should enhance the external perception of events, such as festivals, and delineating responsibilities for activities that promote destination social responsibilities.

3. There is uncertainty regarding the empirical testing and the conclusion on the support of the second hypothesis, as the results lack statistical significance, leading to a merely conventional confirmation.

4. The clarity of "Hypothesis 10" is questionable, and the implications are also dubious, it is ill-formulated literally (long term... than long-term). Following it, the focus of attention in destinations should be shifted from long-term tourists to those who prefer short-term visits, however, long-term tourists are often better for repeat visits and generate more income. Additionally, the conclusions, including those related to other hypotheses, suffer from the absence of even primary economic analysis.

5. The methodology description in Chapter 2 is unsatisfactory, as it solely focuses on the description of construct measurement and survey creation, lacking an explanation of the applied quantitative study methodology. A more comprehensive presentation of the methodology is necessary, and if the current chapter only provides a partial overview, it may not warrant a separate chapter.

It should be noted that these imperfections do not affect the overall positive impression of the dissertation and the research qualities of the 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 an original scientific qualification work that resolves a scientific problem important for the development of the relevant field of science – development of tourism and improvement the efficiency of management in tourism.

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.

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