

REVIEW

By

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Specialty 4. Earth Sciences 4.4. Geography of Recreation and Tourism
on the scientific works of Dr. Sevjan Fikri Sabrieva
for participation in a competition for an academic position
"Associate Professor" in the professional field "3.9. "Tourism"
(Geography of Tourism, Regional Economy and Development),
published in State Gazette No 49/06.06.2023.

The review was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Implementation as well as the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff in the University of Shumen in the capacity of a member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order RD 16-101 of 28.08.2023 of the Rector of the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky". It consists of analyses and requirements for the research, teaching, lecturing, administrative and public activities of the candidate, recommendations and remarks on her activities and achievements.

On 17.09.2023, the Document Review Committee (appointed by Order No. RD-16-099/08.087.2023 of the Rector of the School of Economics) established the legality of the submitted documents and decided to admit Dr. Sevjan Fikri Sabrieva to the competition. No plagiarism in the submitted scientific works has been proven according to the legally established procedure.

I. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements

The candidate for associate professor meets the minimum requirements for the scientific, teaching and/or artistic-creative activity of candidates for academic positions in the professional fields, in accordance with the PPPADRB (groups of indicators A-E) and the corresponding number of points: A 50/50, B 100/100, D 214.98/200, E 80/50, or a total of 444.98 with the required 400 points.

Dr. Sevdzhan Sabrieva reports the performance of additional indicators applicable to the relevant field under Article 57a(2) of the PPPASB - teaching activity (25 courses taught in different specialties for the period 2006-2023, development of curricula, teaching plans and methods, digital courses developed for the School of Education platform - 16 in number, 2 textbooks published; work with students and graduates (supervisor and reviewer of theses, joint publications with students and PhD students - 2 in number), 2 participations in Erasmus+ exchanges - 2018 and 2022. ; membership in a number of bodies and organizations; organizational activity - course supervisor; participation in projects (1 national and 14 university – of 2 of them she was the leader); participation in scientific forums and conferences - 32 in number.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

For participation in the competition Dr. Sevdzhan Sabrieva has submitted
- 1 monograph (co-authored);

- 1 article published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information

- 34 articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes, of which 10 are independent, the rest - co-authored.

6 of the articles are in English. The total number of publications is 36 with a volume for the author of 341 pages.

All publications have been accepted for peer review.

1. Evaluation of the monographic work, including assessment of the scientific and applied contributions of the author

The monographic work "Tourism Infrastructure and Superstructure" is co-authored, and the contribution of the candidate for Associate Professor is clearly indicated - the whole of Chapter Five, sections 1.7, 2.7, 3.3.6, 3.3.7.3.3.8, 6.1 and the three appendices - 144 pages in total. Chapter Five, which is entirely the work of S. Sabrieva is devoted to the infrastructure and superstructure of Bulgarian tourism. It consists of 8 points.

Section 5.1 traces the emergence and development of tourism infrastructure and superstructure in Bulgaria from the time of the Roman Empire to the present day. Their uneven territorial location is highlighted as a major problem. Section 5.2 analyses the existing legal framework regulating modern tourism infrastructure and superstructure in Bulgaria. The different levels of tourism management are examined, the main normative document in the field of tourism is analysed, namely the Tourism Act, with its sub-regulatory documents concerning the tourism infrastructure and superstructure in the country. Four groups of normative documents are presented in tabular form - normative acts related to regional and spatial development of tourism, normative acts regulating management and financial reporting, including in tourism, normative acts related to tourism activities, etc. The author does not point out any weaknesses in terms of infrastructure and superstructure of tourism in Bulgaria in the existing and presented framework of normative documents. In the 6 paragraphs dealing with the infrastructure and superstructure of tourism in the different planning regions S. Sabrieva adheres to the following scheme: she considers in turn accommodation with the corresponding number of beds, catering and entertainment establishments, intermediary activities, transport infrastructure, tourist information centres, eco-trails, resorts, golf courses, marinas and aqua parks, etc.

The uneven territorial distribution of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure within the regions themselves and between them is highlighted. The category structure of beds and accommodations, as well as the seasonality of their use, were also analyzed. The occupancy rate of the accommodations has not been considered. With regard to food and entertainment establishments, their territorial location and the percentage of the various types of PPE are indicated. Travel agencies in the regions were also examined in the same way. Transport infrastructure is represented by road and rail networks and ports and airports (where available). The specialized tourist infrastructure and superstructure includes museums, immovable cultural values, tourist associations, TIC, eco-trails, lifts. For each individual region, the main problems and fields and prospects for improvement and development of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure are indicated. The text for all regions is illustrated with tables and figures with the same content, making comparison between them easy and accessible.

As a continuation of the Fifth Chapter is point 6.1. from the next chapter. In it, a comparative analysis of the individual indicators in the considered 6 planning regions in the country was made, highlighting the advantages and weaknesses of each of them. Many valuable and correct guidelines and suggestions are given for the future development of the

tourist infrastructure and superstructure in the country, as the author rightly points out that "Only through the creation of diverse and relatively evenly distributed new and innovative tourist facilities and attractions can it be expected that the attractiveness and competitiveness of Bulgaria as a tourist destination will be improved" – p. 378.

In point 1.7. the associate professor candidate examines the economic aspects of the material base in tourism and, in particular, pays attention to such indicators as financial activity, income, expenses, profit, prices and pricing, profitability, economic efficiency, etc. To some extent, the text has a didactic character.

In point 2.7, attention is paid to commercial establishments as units serving tourism and tourists. Malls are considered as specific objects that are often the goal of a given tourist trip. It is emphasized that in the resorts and other places that attract tourists, the activity of the commercial establishments is oriented towards meeting the needs of tourists primarily.

In the last three points of the Sixth Chapter, the Associate Professor candidate analyzes the role and importance of the superstructure for different types of tourism – entertainment, cultural and business tourism.

It is indicated that the most large-scale concentrations of large entertainment sites and facilities are built near large resort complexes, in the megacities of the world, large shopping centers with a significant concentration of tourists and local visitors. Preferred places for business tourism are large cities and resorts with good transport accessibility and appropriate infrastructure.

I cannot fail to note the fact that the monograph and the peer-reviewed part of it are richly illustrated and include many interesting facts under the heading "Something interesting", which makes its content even more interesting, easy to digest and attractive.

The assessment of the main habilitation work highlights a number of scientific and practical contributions contributing to the expansion and deepening of knowledge about the role of infrastructure and superstructure in the field of tourism:

1. An overview of a large volume of scientific literature outlining the theoretical framework for the researched issues was made. The peculiarities of the infra- and superstructure in the Tourism sector have been studied, taking into account modern trends, and in this context the terminological apparatus in this area has been refined and further developed .

2. The tourism sector has been analyzed and emphasis has been placed on emerging elements of the infra and superstructure in tourism, and their general and specific dimensions have been distinguished in the individual planning regions of the country.

3. The problems regarding the infra- and superstructure in tourism have been researched and further developed, both in general for Bulgaria and in individual planning regions

4. Perspectives and fields for future improvement and development of the infra- and superstructure of tourism in the country are outlined. For each planning area, a generalized analysis of both the identified problems and the opportunities, prospects and fields for their elimination is presented.

2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications

The content analysis of the publications presented by Dr. Sevjan Sabrieva for the current competition finds expression in the differentiation of the scientific knowledge presented in them and the identification of several thematic areas. They can generally be distinguished into four main groups:

1. Infrastructure and superstructure of tourism
2. Recreational-tourism resources and types of tourism

3. Education in Tourism specialty

4. Geography of tourism and regional development

In the **first field**, in addition to the habilitation work, we should note the 5 publications that are directly related to it (numbers 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 in the presented list of publications). In most of them, the associate professor candidate considers only the specialized infrastructure.

This is a problem that is poorly addressed in the Bulgarian scientific literature. For the first time, such a comprehensive characterization of the Bulgarian tourist infrastructure and superstructure is made, as well as for the first time it is examined at different spatial levels, presenting a complete regional overview of our country.

A significant contribution of the author is the personal research done and presented on the state of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure in the individual planning regions in Bulgaria. It should also be noted the recommendations and guidelines for their future development, which are also the author's personal work and can be used in the formation of tourism policy in Bulgaria.

In three other publications that can be assigned to this group (numbers 4, 26, 27 of the list of publications) the author examines some additional elements of the tourism economy (human resources) and of the tourism superstructure (hotel industry). The publications are based on the personal research of the associate professor candidate, and in addition to their comprehensive regional analysis, proposals for their improvement have been made again in order to increase the competitiveness of the territories and increase the income from tourism.

In the **second field**, the publications are oriented towards:

a) anthropogenic and natural recreational-tourism resources, their use for the needs of tourism and related management and protection to achieve sustainable tourism development (number 0 - the report published in a scientific publication, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases, 1, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 20 from the list of publications). In addition to the publications at the national level, a detailed regional review was also made in various territories - Stara Planina (protected territories), Varna Black Sea, Rhodopes, Rila and Pirin, South Central Region, Southwest Region, etc. A significant contribution of the author is the study of the recreational and tourist resources in the country in a regional and local aspect, offering guidelines for their better utilization and use in the future for the development of various types of tourism.

b) types of tourism, their development and management (numbers 3, 10, 21, 22, 24, 31 from the list of publications). Mainly specialized types of tourism at the regional and local level have been studied - cultural and hunting tourism in the Rhodopes, South Central region, North Central region, Dobrich and Montana regions, Balchik and Dolen Chiflik municipalities. Knowledge of the types of tourism has been enriched with specific studies on their condition and degree of development in different territories in order to sustainably develop tourism in the country and improve the development and state of specialized forms of tourism at the regional level.

In the **third field**, Dr. Sabrieva also paid attention to certain aspects of the education of students in Tourism majors (numbers 15, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34 from the list of publications) - in particular, the content of the websites of various higher education institutions regarding the provision of educational and scientific information, greater awareness and educational mobility of students.

Many of the already listed publications fall into the **fourth field**, which is the most voluminous and most indicative of the scientific interests of the associate professor candidate, namely the territorial aspect. Almost all works of Dr. Sevjan Sabrieva are about specific administrative units or tourist destinations in the country or abroad (26 in total). The studies

made are a contribution to knowledge for the regional development of tourism and the formation of a regional tourism policy in the country.

The number of publications listed is more than 36, as some of them fall into more than one field.

The indicated thematic fields outline the contours of the development of scientific knowledge in the professional field 3.9 Tourism.

The evaluation of the publications highlights a number of scientific and practical-applied contributions. In summary, they can be presented as follows:

1. The diversity and specific features of the recreational and touristic resource potential of Bulgaria are revealed, the possibilities for the development of various specialized types of tourism are indicated and innovative ideas are proposed for the future development of tourism and some of its specific forms at the level of planning regions and tourist destinations.

2. The trends in the development, demand and supply of tourist infrastructure and superstructure in the country and the planning regions are analyzed, the main problems in the sector are outlined and the possible perspectives and fields for development are indicated.

3. There is an enrichment of science and knowledge about tourism.

4. Study and support materials have been developed for the students of the Tourism major.

5. A practical-applied contribution is represented by the guidelines and recommendations in the publications, which can serve in the formation of the regional tourism policy and for the development of various types of tourism in Bulgaria.

3. Quoting by other authors

According to a reference submitted by the candidate for associate professor, it is clear that 8 separate references to publications by the author have been established.

II. Learning and teaching activity

The candidate for associate professor delivered 15 different lecture courses to students from the professional field 3.9 Tourism in OKS "Bachelor". Thus, in practice, it covers a rather large segment of the disciplines in the curriculum under field 3.9 Tourism.

III. Administrative and public activity

1. Participation in collective management bodies and public activity

Dr. Sevjan Sabrieva was a member of the General Assembly of various institutions where she worked - FPN, College-Dobrich and until now of "Episkop K. Preslavski" University and DIKPO. She has participated in various teams to develop and update administrative and training documentation. The public activity of the candidate is expressed in his membership in the Bulgarian Geographical Society.

IV. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I recommend Dr. Sevjan Sabrieva to continue her work in the areas of her interests in the future, paying more attention to the theoretical and methodological aspects of tourism research. I also believe that in her future research activity, the candidate should expand both the territorial scope and the thematic circle of his scientific research. Another

recommendation is related to wider popularization of the candidate's scientific output abroad, as well as more independent publications, monographs and studies.

Conclusion

From the inspection of the submitted materials for the competition, no violations in the procedure were found. All requirements regulated by Art. 24 (1), 27(4) item 1 and item 2 of the ZRASRB and of Art. 53 (1) (2) and Art. 57 a (2) item 1 and item 2 of PPZRASRB.

In their totality, the peer-reviewed publications of Dr. Sevjan Fikri Sabrieva contain indisputable scientific and practical-applied contributions, which further develop theoretical knowledge and improve the methodological toolkit for solving significant problems of tourism. My overall assessment of the criteria and indicators for research, study, teaching, administrative and public activities show that Dr. Sevjan Fikri Sabrieva meets the requirements of Art. 24 and Art. 27 of ZRASRB and art. 53 and art. 57 a of PPZRASRB for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.9 "Tourism" (Geography of tourism, regional economy and development) and gives me reason to express a **positive** attitude and propose to the respected members of the scientific jury to also vote positively on her candidacy.

16.10.2023

Reviewer:



(Prof. Dr. Maria vouenska)