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REVIEW

of the doctoral dissertation of MA Nguyet Luong Tran
entitled: “The Effect of Self-Pace Congruity and Individualism on Visit Intention.”
prepared under scientific supervision of Professor Wawrzyniec Rudolf Ph.D. University of
Łódź.

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Management, pp. 208 (and annexes)

The basis for preparing the review is:

1. The Act of 14th March 2003 *on academic degrees and academic title and degrees and title in art* (D.Z. [Journal of Law] of 2003, no 65 item 565) as amended.
Under the Act the reviewer’s task is to determine whether “*the doctoral dissertation constitutes an original solution to a scientific problem (...), and the Doctoral candidate presents general theoretical knowledge in a given scientific discipline (...) and the ability to conduct independent scientific work.*”
2. Regulation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of 19th January 2018 on specific procedures and conditions of execution of activities in the doctoral program, in post-doctoral procedures and procedures for granting the title of professor
3. Resolution of University of Łódź Commission for Academic Degrees in the Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences, on appointing me the dissertation reviewer –

a document of the Chairwoman of the University of Łódź Commission for Academic Degrees in the Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences, Professor Ewa Walińska, Ph.D. of 20th May 2024 (898100000.530.2.2024)

I have prepared the review while referring to the research issues, the subject of the research, goals and hypotheses, methodology of conducted studies, as well as content-related and formal value of the work. I completed the review with final evaluation.

1. Evaluation of research issues, goals, and hypotheses

Presented doctoral dissertation is located within the scientific discipline of Management and Quality, while referring to the problems associated with consumer behaviour in marketing context especially in tourism industry. In the work the Author discusses in an interesting and original way, the issues of the effect of the self-place congruity and individualism on the intention to visit a place. The main goal of the study is exploring the cause-effect relationship between the self-place congruity, individualism, and the intention of the tourist to visit a destination. While destination marketers and managers set the influencing intention of the visit as a primary strategic goal, making the decision to travel to a destination is a complex process from an academic point of view, which constitutes an important problem in terms of cognition, and certainly proves originality of the subject.

The issue of destination branding, and customers individualism constitute one of the most topical problems concerning marketing communication in the tourism industry. In dissertation it is underline that the congruity of the personality of a tourist and the personality of a destination explained the tourist behavior. In fact, it is necessary to emphasize the specific personality traits of the destination in the promotion campaigns, especially in the trend of internationalization. The subject area discussed by the Author is interesting, original, and topical as well as it fits in the paradigm of behavioural economics. The main area of interest of behavioural economics is the analysis of motives and principles of human actions in complex and uncertain conditions that can be frequently faced on contemporary market.

In my opinion understanding the effect of self-place congruity and individualism on visit intention is crucial for businesses to tailor marketing strategies that resonate with different cultural values, ultimately increasing customer attraction and retention. Exploring the relationship between self-place congruity and individualism on visit intention can provide

valuable insights into consumer behavior, helping businesses to predict and influence customer decisions more effectively. The study of self-pace congruity and individualism's effect on visit intention is important for science as it expands our understanding of how cultural and psychological factors influence consumer behavior, contributing to more precise behavioral models.

Investigating this topic allows scientists to develop more effective, culturally sensitive marketing strategies, bridging the gap between theoretical research and practical applications in business and social sciences.

Through research presented in the dissertation, the Author firstly identifies the research gap and secondly formulates valuable conclusions. Summing up, I believe that the chosen subject area, justification of its implementation and the title of the dissertation fulfil the requirements that doctoral dissertations should meet.

The Doctoral Candidate conducted a thorough and satisfactory analysis of the literature on the subject, as evidenced by the extensive list of publications presented in the bibliography.

Presented bibliography content is comprehensive, I appreciate it. The reviewed work comprises five chapters and the conclusion, as well as four annexes. Altogether the work has 203 pages. The structure of the work is appropriate. The balance in the length of the chapters is commendable.

Three first chapters of the dissertation are theoretical. In the fourth, the Author presents methodology of conducted research and its results. In the fifth chapter the Author presents conducted experimental research.

The individual chapters of the work are systematically and logically integrated; through their development, the Author implemented the goals assumed in the dissertation, answered the formulated research questions. The work includes twenty-eight tables and forty-nine figures, which significantly simplifies understanding of presented content. Most of the tables and figures presented have been prepared by the author herself, demonstrating her ability to synthesize research material.

In my opinion, the skill of graphically presenting complex content should be duly recognized.

The dissertation starts with the introduction. The introduction to the work (pp. 1-10) presents the subject area of the dissertation. It includes comprehensive explanation of reasons for implementation of the subject area of the work, contains the objectives, presents the

research questions and applied research methodology. It constitutes a part of the dissertation which is correct in substantive and formal terms.

Considering the objectives adopted for implementation, I state that the goals are correctly formulated.

The Author correctly formulated four research questions. In the introduction there is no precise indication of the objective and subjective scope as well as time and spatial range of the work.

I have some critical remarks on the introduction:

- The introduction does not clearly articulate the research gap that the study intends to address. While it provides a broad overview of the topic, it fails to specify what existing research has not covered or where there is a need for further exploration. Identifying a clear gap in the literature is crucial to justify the necessity of the study.
- The scope of the research is not well-defined. Although several objectives and research questions are listed, the text does not provide a concise statement about the specific boundaries and limitations of the study. Without this, it is difficult to understand the extent of the research and what will be covered in detail.
- The introduction spends a significant amount of space discussing the general context of tourism and destination branding without linking it directly to the specific focus of the study. This makes it harder to see how the broader context connects to the specific research problem.
- While various concepts like self-place congruity and individualism are mentioned, the text does not sufficiently elaborate on how these theories are integrated into the research. A stronger theoretical framework is needed to guide the study and provide a foundation for the hypotheses and research design.

Despite these remarks, I consider the introduction to be valuable and well-written. The author effectively presents the context of the study and emphasizes the importance of the topic. The structure of the introduction is logical, and the research objectives are clearly articulated, allowing for a good understanding of the overall direction of the work.

2. Content-related evaluation of the dissertation

Submitted doctoral dissertation proves the Author's knowledge in the discipline of management and quality and shows her skill in conducting scientific research. Evaluating the deliberations included in the dissertation. I state that the Author presents good knowledge

about the latest trends and phenomena associated with tourism industry, especially the marketing aspects related to the effect of self-place congruity, individualism, and customers intentions. The content structure adopted in the dissertation proves that it is a complex and comprehensive study. The work of MA Nguyet Luong Tran is interesting and original. The Author presents her deliberations in five logically connected chapters.

The first chapter presented a theoretical overview of place branding, with a specific focus on tourism. The various definitions of place branding have been organized, along with an exploration of the dynamic development of this concept. Place branding was analyzed from multiple perspectives. Additionally, the application of place branding within the tourism sector, referred to as destination branding, is discussed in the second part of the first chapter. The literature review on destination branding offered a range of definitions and highlighted emerging research trends in this area.

This chapter effectively reviewed the relevant literature to conceptualize the idea of destination branding. The first section provides a clear and thorough overview of place branding, focusing on its definitions, evolution, and various perspectives, which are well-articulated and informative. The subsequent discussion on destination branding is both insightful and well-structured, offering a solid explanation of how place branding principles are applied in tourism to attract visitors and boost revenue. Additionally, the chapter does an excellent job of synthesizing several literature review papers on destination branding, giving readers a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research, including key theories and emerging trends for future studies.

However, the chapter could have benefited from a more in-depth analysis of the gaps in the existing literature, which would have further strengthened the rationale for this study.

In the second chapter the analysis of literature discussed various theoretical perspectives on the personality of tourists and places. It began with an overview of the concept of 'personality,' including its origins, definitions, and theories. Personality was defined as the inner psychological traits that lead to consistent patterns of feelings, thoughts, motivations, and behaviors.

The chapter then focused on the adoption of personality traits and conducted a bibliometric analysis of “brand personality” and “destination personality”. Trends showed an overall increase in publications, although recent years have seen some declines. “Brand personality” is more common in business contexts, while 'destination personality' is prevalent in hospitality, leisure, and tourism. This approach not only adds depth to the research but also ensures that the findings are relevant to tourism industry.

The chapter provides a thorough examination of the theoretical perspectives on personality, including its origins, definitions, and theories, offering a solid foundation for understanding the concept. In my opinion the chapter could benefit from a deeper critical analysis of the existing literature, including a discussion of gaps and limitations in current research. The chapter could also expand on practical applications and implications of “destination personality” in the tourism sector, beyond its definition and theoretical framework.

The third chapter offers a detailed explanation of the variables considered in this dissertation, such as self-place congruity, individualism, and visit intention. The chapter began with a thorough exploration of self-congruity theory, followed by a systematic review of self-place congruity, which effectively set the stage for the research. The examination of individualism within the tourism sector added valuable insights, highlighting an important cultural factor. The presentation of key information relevant to researching visit intention, along with the organization of its antecedents, was well-structured and informative. However, while the chapter successfully linked self-place congruity, individualism, and tourists’ intentions to visit a destination, it could have benefited from a deeper analysis of the potential moderating variables that might influence these relationships.

The summary at the end provided a concise recap of the points discussed, though it might have been strengthened by a more critical reflection on the limitations of the findings.

The fourth chapter details the research methodology with a clear outline of the approaches employed, particularly the systematic and bibliometric reviews. The rationale for conducting experimental research was well-articulated, which helped justify the chosen methods. However, a more detailed discussion on the potential biases and challenges associated with these methodologies could have enhanced the chapter’s depth.

The Author’s choice of Experimental Research as the methodological approach in the dissertation is commendable and well-justified. The Author has effectively articulated the rationale behind using this method, demonstrating a clear understanding of its strengths in establishing causal relationships and controlling for variables. By opting for an experimental design, the Author has ensured a rigorous framework for addressing the research questions, which adds significant credibility and reliability to the research findings. This approach is particularly suitable for the research objectives outlined, making it a strong and appropriate choice for the study.

The final chapter provides a comprehensive account of two experimental studies, effectively discussing the cause-effect relationships between self-place congruity,

individualism, and visit intention. The detailed presentation of the study objectives, sample size, measurement tools, data collection, data analysis, and research findings were commendable for its clarity and thoroughness. On the other hand, while the chapter was comprehensive, the interpretation of the findings could have been more critically examined to address any inconsistencies or unexpected results.

The author employs the Experimental Research method in her methodological approach, which is a valid choice. However, I believe that the study lacks case study research. In the context of the topic "The Effect of Self-Pace Congruity and Individualism on Visit Intention" employing the case study method would be particularly valuable due to its applicability in management sciences.

Case studies allow for an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within real-world settings, providing rich qualitative data that can offer nuanced insights into the behaviors and decision-making processes of individuals and organizations. This method is especially useful in management research, where the dynamics of individualism and self-paced congruity may vary significantly across different contexts, making it essential to examine these factors in detail.

I also believe it would be worthwhile to expand the research in the future to include quantitative studies, which would allow for the formulation of research hypotheses and their subsequent verification.

The conclusion offered a well-rounded general discussion that included both theoretical and practical implications. The acknowledgment of the study's limitations and the suggestions for future research were appropriate, though a more in-depth exploration of the implications for industry practitioners might have provided additional value. Overall, the dissertation was well-structured and insightful, though there are areas where a more critical approach could have further strengthened the research.

Since I did not find direct information in the text, I have a few concerns. At this point, I would like to ask the doctoral candidate the following questions:

1. Were the questionnaires used in the experimental research original, or were they based on previously used ones?
2. How can the conducted experimental research be classified: as qualitative or quantitative?
3. Does the doctoral Candidate plan to conduct further qualitative research in the future?

4. What future research directions does the doctoral Candidate consider in relation to the topic they have begun?

Conclusions

Evaluating the doctoral dissertation of MA Nguyet Luong Tran in terms of the article 13 item 1 of the Act of 14th March 2003 (D.Z. [*Journal of Law*] no 65, item 595 as amended) and thus answering the question whether the dissertation represents an original solution to the scientific problem, whether the doctoral candidate shows general theoretical knowledge in a given scientific discipline or whether he has the ability to conduct independent scientific work, I state as follows:

1. The doctoral dissertation of MA Nguyet Luong Tran constitutes an original solution to a scientific problem and contributes to economic sciences, especially the discipline of management and quality. The discussed subject area is topical and interesting, especially in the context of changes in consumer behaviours.
2. The subject area is topical and cognitively interesting from the scientific point of view. The topic bridges consumer's behavior with management practice, offering both theoretical advancements and practical applications that can significantly benefit the fields of marketing, tourism, and hospitality management.
3. While evaluating content-related side of the dissertation, its advantages must be emphasised. I perceive the assumed goals and formulated research questions to be valuable and ambitious on scientific and cognitive level. I justify such an evaluation formulated by me by several reasons and arguments. Firstly, the subject area related to consumer behaviours in tourism industry has an immense potential. The next argument that arises here is associated with the open character of the scientific problem formulated in the introduction to the dissertation which the dissertation attempts to solve. I perceive the open character of the issue and at the same time the attempt to formulate the answer which is appropriate in scientific terms (theory and methodology) and related to the impact of marketing communication associated with emotions on consumer behaviours as a value of the reviewed dissertation.
4. The literature review conducted by the doctoral Candidate, along with their own empirical research, underscores their capability to perform rigorous scientific investigations

In summary, the contribution of the presented dissertation to the scientific field of Management and Quality is substantiated through its impact across three dimensions: cognitive, methodological, and practical:

1. The dissertation addresses a cognitive gap by establishing the theoretical foundations for understanding how self-place congruity and individualism influence visit intentions.
2. It proposes original methodology for studying the effects of self-place congruity and individualism on visit intention.
3. It demonstrates the practical application of emotional communication strategies in influencing visit intentions, providing significant value for marketing and tourism management. However, the ethical implications of these strategies should also be considered.

The analysis of adopted structure of the dissertation, its objectives and scopes allow to state that despite indicated deficiencies, it meets the formal as well as content-related requirements that scientific works of promotional character must meet.

My final conclusion as the reviewer of the dissertation of MA Nguyet Luong Tran entitled “The Effect of Self-Pace Congruity and Individualism on Visit Intention” is the confirmation that the dissertation meets the formal requirements determined for doctoral dissertations included in regulations of law and can be publicly defended at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, Management and Quality Sciences, Faculty of Management at the Łódź University in Łódź.

poświadczenie złożenia podpisów i pieczęci elektronicznych

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