ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ - ВАРНА

СЕРТИФИЦИРАНА СИСТЕМА ЗА УПРАВЛЕНИЕ НА КАЧЕСТВОТО ISO 9001:2015

9002 Варна бул. "Княз Борис I" 77 Телефон 052 643 360 Телефакс 052 643 365 www.ue-varna.bg

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА

Вх. № РД20-1869/15.10.2026

OPINION

by Prof. Stoyan Petkov Marinov, PhD
University of Economics – Varna

Regarding: Award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.8. Economics, doctoral programme "Marketing"

Dissertation author: Plamen Yankov Yankov
Title: "Marketing Effects of the Application of Information Technologies"
Academic supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Maria Kehayova-Stoycheva, PhD

This opinion has been prepared in my capacity as a member of the scientific jury appointed by Order No. RD-06-157/21.09.2026 of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna, and in accordance with the allocation of responsibilities at the jury's first meeting on 30.09.2026. The assessment is based on the dissertation, the dissertation abstract, the curriculum vitae and the procedural documents.

1. Brief information about the doctoral candidate

Plamen Yankov Yankov holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance from the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov and a Master's degree in Corporate Business and Management from the University of Economics – Varna. He was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the Department of Marketing effective 03.09.2018 under Order No. RD-17-3347/10.10.2018. He completed his doctoral studies with the right to defend his dissertation effective 03.09.2021 under Order No. RD-17-907/21.09.2021.

The submitted records certify that he successfully passed examinations in English, Enterprise Economics, Marketing Management and Marketing Analysis. Since 2020, the doctoral candidate has been a lecturer in the Department of Marketing at the University of Economics – Varna. His professional experience includes managerial positions in hotels, providing a practical foundation for the selected research topic. His training in economics, marketing and data analysis is consistent with the nature of the dissertation research.

2. General assessment of the dissertation

The topic is relevant to the management of accommodation establishments, where digital visibility, intermediary platforms and online reputation influence the selection and booking process. The research problem is specified through the relationship between online presence and customer loyalty. The study has practical significance for hotel businesses, which must combine guest acquisition with the maintenance of lasting relationships with guests in the online environment.

The dissertation comprises an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a statement of contributions, references and appendices, total 168 pages. The bibliography contains 203 numbered sources. The structure follows a logical progression from theoretical clarification of marketing effects to their methodological investigation and empirical testing in the urban tourism hotel sector.

The object of research is the marketing activities of accommodation businesses operating in an urban tourism environment through digital channels and platforms. **The subject** is the influence of online presence on customer loyalty. **The aim** is to quantitatively establish and substantiate the role of information technologies in the marketing activities of urban hotels, focusing on online presence and customer loyalty. This aim is specified through **tasks** involving theoretical systematization,

operationalization of the main concepts, development and testing of a research model, and formulation of practical recommendations.

The main thesis links online presence to the formation and maintenance of customer loyalty. The distinction between the managerial and consumer perspectives is methodologically valuable. In the managerial model, loyalty is represented through practices intended to encourage it, while the consumer survey examines booking channels, information search and intentions to choose the establishment again. The two datasets are compared analytically without being combined into a single statistical model.

The methods employed include systemic and comparative approaches, analysis of the literature and publication activity, surveys and examination of online presence. Quantitative analysis combines descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling, χ^2 tests and association coefficients. The choice of methods is appropriate to the differing nature of the variables studied.

Chapter One examines the concepts of "marketing effect" and "information technologies", the development of technologies in marketing activities, and possibilities for classifying their effects. I positively assess the effort to distinguish among effects, efficiency and performance indicators. The classification framework provides a basis for a more precise discussion of measurability, timing and the time horizon of digital marketing effects.

Chapter Two develops a methodological framework for assessing the marketing effects of online presence in the urban tourism hotel sector. It clarifies the characteristics of the tourism product, the research constructs and the algorithm for data collection and analysis. The conceptual model links online presence, service quality and managerial loyalty practices, supplementing them with the tourist consumer perspective. The formulated hypotheses make it possible to trace the relationship between the theoretical propositions and their empirical testing.

Chapter Three presents the testing of the model among urban accommodation establishments in the regions of Varna, Burgas and Dobrich. The sectoral analysis and examination of digital presence provide context for the survey results. Differences are identified in the use of proprietary websites, social networks and booking platforms, which are relevant to the organization of marketing communications.

The survey of hotel managers was conducted between 15 July and 15 September 2024. Of 3,673 registered establishments, 1,150 with publicly available contact details were identified and sent the questionnaire. A total of 235 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 20.4%. The consumer survey included 158 guests.

I positively assess the reliability and validity tests of the measurement model. The reported Cronbach's α values are 0.91 for online presence, 0.92 for service quality and 0.83 for loyalty. Average variance extracted ranges from 0.57 to 0.67. McDonald's coefficient and discriminant validity tests were also employed. The author thus substantiates the statistical analysis through a preliminary assessment of the measures.

A principal finding is the positive, statistically significant relationship between managers' assessment of online presence and practices for building and maintaining loyalty ($\beta = 0.612$; $p < 0.05$). I regard this result as empirical support for the association between the two constructs in the sample studied. On its own, it should not be interpreted as proof of a causal effect on actual repeat visits.

The consumer data complement the managerial analysis. Of 158 guests, 117 (74.05%) booked through online intermediary platforms, while 102 (64.56%) rated a repeat booking as "very likely". The results highlight the role of platforms in the initial choice of an urban accommodation establishment and the potential for subsequent communication with it. Intention to choose an establishment again is a useful attitudinal indicator that must be distinguished from actual behavioral loyalty.

The practical recommendations for urban hotels cover the development of their own booking channels, up-to-date content, feedback management, personalized communication and loyalty programs. They correspond to the identified dependence on digital intermediaries and the need to maintain contact with guests before, during and after their stay. The study demonstrates good consistency between its aim, methodology, findings and practical guidelines.

3. Assessment of scientific and applied scientific contributions

I accept the substance of the three stated contributions. Their value lies in the systematization of concepts, the development of methodological tools and the production of empirical findings for a specific tourism context.

First, the content of the concept of marketing effect is clarified, and a classification of the effects of applying information technologies is proposed according to measurability, timing and duration of impact. The types and forms of urban tourism are also classified. The theoretical contribution consists in relating the classification framework to the specific characteristics of tourism activities.

Second, a methodology combining managerial and consumer perspectives on online presence, service quality and loyalty has been developed and tested. The contribution lies in the operationalization of the constructs and the consistent use of different methods for the two datasets. The toolkit enables subsequent comparative research involving other categories of accommodation establishments.

Third, empirical support has been obtained for a positive relationship between online presence and managerial loyalty practices among the hotel businesses studied. The findings are supplemented by data on consumer choice and intentions to book again. The applied scientific value lies in developing guidelines for digital communication, direct bookings and maintaining guest relationships.

4. Assessment of publications related to the dissertation

Four sole-authored publications are listed: one journal article, two conference papers and a chapter in a collective monograph. The article "The Impact of Online Presence on Loyalty: A Quantitative Study in the Context of Urban Tourism" was published in Business & Management Compass, 2025, 69(2), pp. 24–36, DOI: 10.56065/vyt7y117. It directly addresses the central subject of the dissertation.

The conference papers "Analysis of Consumer Comments in the Urban Tourism Sector for the City of Varna" and "A Unified Classification of Marketing Effects" appear in the proceedings "Remarketing Reality", University of Economics – Varna, 2023, pp. 281–290 and pp. 795–805, respectively. The chapter "Accompanying Effects of the Digitalization Process" was published in the collective monograph "Digitalization of Business Processes in Construction and Logistics", Varna: Knowledge and Business, 2020, pp. 207–251.

The publications reflect theoretical and empirical aspects of the dissertation and make its principal findings publicly available. The submitted declaration reports a total of 70 points under indicator group "G", against a required minimum of 30 points. The minutes of the jury's first meeting confirm compliance with the minimum national requirements.

5. Assessment of the dissertation abstract

The dissertation abstract has been prepared in Bulgarian and English and accurately presents the aim, thesis, methodology, chapter contents, results and contributions of the dissertation, as well as the candidate's publications.

6. Critical comments, recommendations and questions

I recommend consistently distinguishing online presence as an activity actually carried out from managerial assessments of its significance, and loyalty practices from consumer intentions and

observed repeat bookings. This distinction is made in the conceptual framework but should also be maintained when interpreting all findings.

In further developing the research model, I recommend including data on actual repeat visits, the share of direct bookings, guest acquisition costs and revenue from returning customers. Longitudinal observation would allow a better assessment of the sequence linking digital activities to outcomes.

I would put the following question to the doctoral candidate: If you were managing an urban hotel with a limited marketing budget and a high dependence on Booking.com, which digital area would you prioritize for initial investment: your own website with direct booking functionality, or a personalized communication and loyalty system for guests already acquired? Which dissertation findings would you use to justify your choice, and which indicators would you use to assess its effect after one year?

These comments are intended to refine the interpretation of the findings and guide further research. They do not alter my positive assessment of the results and contributions.

7. Conclusion

The dissertation demonstrates that Plamen Yankov Yankov possesses the theoretical preparation and skills required for independent scientific research in marketing. The author formulates a research problem, develops methodological tools, analyses empirical data and derives applicable managerial guidelines. The documents certify successful completion of examinations, completion of doctoral studies with the right to defend, and the opening of a procedure before a scientific jury.

No plagiarism has been identified in the dissertation or its abstract. The doctoral candidate meets the requirements of Article 57, items 1–4, of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna and the minimum national requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", pursuant to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

I give a positive assessment of the dissertation "Marketing Effects of the Application of Information Technologies" and the scientific and applied scientific results presented therein. I vote in favor of awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Plamen Yankov Yankov in professional field 3.8. Economics, doctoral program "Marketing", at the University of Economics – Varna.

13 October 2026
Varna

Opinion prepared by: ...
(Prof. Stoyan Petkov M[redacted]

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА
Вх. № РД20-1925/23.10.2026г.

OPINION
by Assoc. Prof. Ivan Marchevski, PhD
on a dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", at the University of Economics – Varna

GENERAL INFORMATION

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Ivan Marchevski, PhD, Department of Marketing, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. Member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order No. RD 06-157/21 September 2026 of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna. This opinion has been prepared pursuant to Article 9 of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, Article 32(1) of its Implementing Regulations, and Article 59(3) of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna, and in implementation of the decision adopted at the first meeting of the Scientific Jury held on 30 September 2026.

Author of the dissertation: Plamen Yankov Yankov, doctoral candidate at the Department of Marketing, University of Economics – Varna.

Dissertation title: MARKETING EFFECTS OF THE APPLICATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

The materials submitted for review comprise the dissertation entitled "Marketing Effects of the Application of Information Technologies", an abstract, a statement of the research contributions, and a list of Plamen Yankov's publications relevant to the dissertation topic.

The object of the dissertation is "...the marketing activities of tourist accommodation establishments operating in an urban tourism environment and conducted through digital channels and platforms." **The subject** of the dissertation is "..the influence of online presence on customer loyalty in the context of the digital marketing activities of accommodation establishments in urban tourism." In my opinion, the object and subject as defined are consistent with the aim and content of the study. **The research thesis** advanced by the author is that "the online presence of accommodation establishments is of considerable importance for building customer loyalty in urban tourism." As formulated, the thesis addresses only some of the possible effects of digitalisation; however, the author provides an appropriate justification for this in outlining the study's limitations. **The goal** of the research is "…to identify and substantiate, through quantitative analysis, the role of information technologies in the marketing activities of accommodation establishments, focusing on the influence of online presence on customer loyalty in the context of urban tourism." To achieve this aim, the author has formulated **4 research tasks**.

The dissertation submitted for review comprises 159 non-standard pages of main text and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography (203 entries in total). It also contains four appendices. *Chapter One* is theoretical and methodological in nature. It addresses: (1) the substantive aspects of business and marketing effects, their specific characteristics, and possible classification approaches; (2) the development of information technologies as a factor in marketing activities; and (3) the influence of selected technologies on the manifestation of marketing effects. A scient metric analysis of publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science is employed, supplemented by visualisations produced using VOSviewer (pp. 21–27). This chapter merits a

positive assessment for its systematisation of the different manifestations of marketing effects and the author's attempt to link them to measurable outcomes of digital marketing activities. *Chapter Two* establishes the methodological framework for the research. It has four main components: first, a presentation of the specific characteristics of urban tourism and the importance of accommodation establishments as an element of the service; second, an examination of the measurement and operationalisation of key digital marketing effects; third, the development of an algorithm for assessing these effects; and fourth, the presentation of the author's conceptual model for investigating the influence of information technologies on marketing outcomes in the sector. *Chapter Three* is practice-oriented. It successively: (1) analyses the state and trends of urban tourism in the three regions of Dobrich, Varna and Burgas, using official statistical data; (2) presents the findings of surveys conducted with management representatives and, separately, guests of accommodation establishments. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling are applied to analyse the management perspective, while the consumer perspective is examined using standard statistical tests of associations; and (3) formulates recommendations for improving digital presence, online reputation management, and customer relations. The conclusion summarises the main research findings and opportunities for their practical application.

In summary, the dissertation combines theoretical analysis, the development of a methodological framework, and an empirical investigation of a specific marketing problem within a distinct economic sector – tourism, thereby meeting the requirements for this type of academic work.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation **is structured** in accordance with the principal requirements for a thesis submitted for the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor". It includes a theoretical section, a methodological framework, empirical research, a synthesis of the findings, and stated contributions. **The relevance** of the research problem **is beyond doubt**. There are at least three reasons for this assessment. *First,* urban tourism is an important and rapidly developing sector of the Bulgarian economy, which means that this research is relevant to a broad audience. *Second,* the influence of digital technologies on marketing outcomes has not yet been sufficiently investigated in Bulgaria, and this study may help fill part of the existing gap. *Third,* the research has practical significance for the Bulgarian tourism industry, particularly for small and medium-sized accommodation establishments, which often rely heavily on external online travel agencies.

The approach adopted to address the research problem is appropriate for achieving the study's objectives. The author combines qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with quantitative surveys of accommodation managers and guests. This makes it possible to examine the issue both from the perspective of organisations managing their online presence and from that of consumers using digital channels to select and book tourism services. However, this approach requires a careful distinction between an established statistical association and a demonstrated causal effect. The reported findings support the conclusion that certain associations exist, but they do not justify interpreting all observed relationships as unidirectional cause-and-effect relationships.

The research toolkit is varied and consistent with the study's objectives. Scientometric analysis helps systematise the relevant research literature; in-depth interviews provide information on the practices and perceptions of tourism-industry representatives; and questionnaire surveys enable quantitative examination of relationships between the principal variables. The use of confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling deserves particular recognition. The main conclusions are linked to the stated objective and are largely supported by the empirical findings. The

practical recommendations arise from identified problems, including accommodation establishments' dependence on external platforms, limited use of their own channels, and the need for more active online reputation management.

Overall, the structure and content of the dissertation are appropriate to the research objective, the approach adopted is suitable, and the methods applied make it possible to obtain the required results.

The **language and writing style** used by doctoral candidate Yankov are clear, without unnecessary complexity, and meet the standards expected of academic work—a quality that is increasingly uncommon in studies of this kind.

Despite certain discrepancies concerning the information provided on the length of the dissertation and the number and type of cited sources**, the abstract** accurately reflects the dissertation's content and provides the necessary clarity regarding the research tasks and the scientific results achieved by the author.

The references included in the bibliography are varied and have been used appropriately. **I found no evidence in the dissertation of the use of others' texts beyond normal scholarly citation.**

SCIENTIFIC AND APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS

On page 146, the author identifies three groups of contributions. In my opinion, these **contributions are genuine and objectively present** in the research under assessment.

CRITICAL REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comments below do not detract from the results achieved; rather, they identify aspects whose further development could enhance the scientific precision and applicability of the research.

1. *Greater consistency could be required between the scope implied by the title and the empirical part of the study*. The title suggests an investigation of a broad range of effects, which are, moreover, well systematised in the methodological section. The empirical section, however, focuses primarily on online presence, service quality, and customer loyalty at accommodation establishments in urban tourism—only a small subset of the possible effects.

2. *The research gap addressed by the dissertation is not sufficiently clearly substantiated, although this would normally provide the basis for defining the research objectives*. The scient metric analysis in Chapter One demonstrates trends in scientific publications and thematic links within the field, but a clearer explanation could be required of what remains insufficiently researched in existing studies and how the proposed classification or conceptual model would contribute to existing knowledge.

3. Discrepancies in the statistical data presented. In the analyses of accommodation capacity utilisation in the three regions under study, figures relating to the same indicators (establishments, beds, and overnight stays) differ when cited in different parts of the dissertation.

4. As noted above, the research toolkit is appropriate, but *a more detailed discussion of the limitations of the empirical model would be desirable*. Chapter Three presents indicators of the model's reliability, validity, and fit, which is a positive feature. Nevertheless, some fit-index values are practically ideal, while the conclusions sometimes move from statistical association to broader interpretations of the influence of online presence. This calls for a more careful discussion of model specification and the limits of the interpretations that can reasonably be drawn.

5. *There is a difference between the measurement of customer loyalty from the management and consumer perspectives.* In the management survey, loyalty is operationalised through practices intended to encourage repeat choice, recommendations, and the maintenance of customer relationships. Among guests, the emphasis is on intention to book again and behaviour in choosing a booking channel. The two approaches are complementary, but they do not measure precisely the same phenomenon. Their comparison therefore requires a clearer conceptual distinction.

6. *Greater precision could be sought in formulating recommendations for businesses.* The recommendations in Section 3.3 are relevant to the tourism industry, particularly those concerning online reputation management, the quality of digital content, and the development of direct booking channels. Nevertheless, some are presented as universally applicable recommendations, without sufficient differentiation according to the type, size, and resources of accommodation establishments.

QUESTIONS

1. 1. The dissertation addresses the marketing effects of digital technologies. Does the candidate distinguish between results and effects and, if so, how does he define this distinction?

2. 2. In Section 3.3, you recommend developing accommodation establishments' own digital channels without abandoning online travel agencies. How would you differentiate this recommendation for different types of accommodation establishments, and which specific indicators would you use to assess the economic efficiency of the proposed actions?

FULFILMENT OF THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE OF "DOCTOR"

The information provided indicates that, during his doctoral studies, Plamen Yankov has published one article, two conference papers, and one chapter in an edited volume. These quantitative indicators **exceed the minimum national requirements** for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in professional field 3.8, "Economics", as well as the specific requirements of the University of Economics – Varna.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation explores a problem that is relevant to the contemporary theory and practice. The research goals and objectives set by the author have been met. Guided by these findings, I could summarize that: the presented dissertation meets the requirements for such a type of development and meets the established standards. The scientific output of the doctoral student meets the national minimum requirements for acquiring PhD in the Professional field 3.8. "Economics". These facts give me reason to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Plamen Yankov Yankov.

19 October 2026

Prepared by: [redacted]

(Assoc. Prof. Ivan Marchevski, PhD)

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ – ВАРНА
СЕРТИФИЦИРАНА СИСТЕМА ЗА УПРАВЛЕНИЕ НА КАЧЕСТВОТО ISO 9001:2015
9002 Варна • бул. "Княз Борис I" 77 • Телефон 052 643 500 • e-mail: [illegible]

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА
Вх. № 2220-1993/30.10.2026

STATEMENT

1. General information

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Atanas Denev Luizov, PhD, Burgas Free University, Professional filed 3.8 Economics, Scientific discipline "Marketing"

Basis for the Statement: This Evaluation Report has been prepared pursuant to Rector's Order No. № РД-06-157/21.09.2026 appointing the Scientific Jury.

Author of the Dissertation: Plamen Yankov Yankov

Title of the Dissertation: Marketing Effects of the Application of Information Technology

2. General presentation of the dissertation

The dissertation comprises 168 pages and is organised into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a statement of scientific contributions, a bibliography and appendices. It includes 38 tables and 32 figures, while the bibliography comprises 203 references in English, Bulgarian and Russian.

The structure and length of the dissertation comply with the specific requirements established by the relevant academic unit and, accordingly, satisfy the provisions of Article 27(2) of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria.

3. Publications and Participation in Scientific Forums

The doctoral candidate has submitted four scientific publications comprising one journal article, two papers presented at an international scientific conference, and one chapter in a co-authored monograph. The publications are closely aligned with the research focus and subject matter of the dissertation.

The submitted publications meet the minimum national requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor, as stipulated in Article 2b(2) and (3) of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria.

4. Evaluation of the Structure and Content of the Dissertation

The dissertation is logically structured and comprises an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a statement of scientific contributions, a bibliography and appendices. The introduction establishes the relevance and significance of the research topic and sets out the principal research aim and four research objectives. The object and subject of the research, together with the central research proposition, are clearly defined, with particular emphasis on the importance of online presence in fostering customer loyalty within urban tourism. The principal analytical method, structural equation modelling (SEM), is presented, and five limitations delimiting the scope of the research are identified.

Chapter One provides the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study. It systematically examines the nature, specific characteristics and classification of marketing effects, as well as the role of information technologies in their manifestation. The literature review and bibliometric analysis establish a sound theoretical basis for the subsequent investigation.

Chapter Two focuses on the methodological framework. It examines the distinctive characteristics of urban tourism and the approaches available for measuring digital marketing effects. The selection of research methods is justified, and an evaluation procedure is developed, providing the basis for a conceptual model designed to investigate the relationships between online presence, service quality and customer loyalty.

Chapter Three presents the empirical and applied dimensions of the research. It reports the findings of surveys conducted among managers, owners and guests of accommodation establishments in the regions of Varna, Burgas and Dobrich. The principal relationships are examined using statistical techniques, including confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The findings are interpreted, and practical recommendations are formulated to enhance digital presence and strengthen customer loyalty.

The conclusion summarises the principal findings and conclusions arising from the research. Overall, the dissertation demonstrates a coherent structure, an appropriate academic style and precise use of specialised terminology.

The dissertation abstract accurately reflects the content, methodological framework, principal findings and scientific contributions of the dissertation.

The dissertation and its accompanying documentation comply with the regulatory requirements stipulated in Article 56(1) and (2) of the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna.

5. Evaluation of the Scientific and Applied Research Contributions of the Dissertation

The scientific contributions are well substantiated and are clearly reflected in the content and findings of the dissertation. The development of an integrated methodological approach and its empirical validation represent the most significant contributions in terms of scientific and practical relevance. The theoretical and conceptual contribution primarily involves the systematisation and further development of existing scientific knowledge, whereas the practical and applied contribution is supported by specific empirical findings.

6. Determination of the Presence or Absence of Plagiarism in the Dissertation and the Abstract

No evidence of plagiarism has been identified in the submitted doctoral dissertation or the accompanying dissertation abstract.

7. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I have no substantive critical remarks regarding the dissertation. I recommend that the doctoral candidate pursue further research in the fields of digital marketing, marketing effects and customer loyalty.

8. Questions to the Doctoral Candidate

In your dissertation, you outline potential directions for further research, including extending the conceptual model to incorporate additional dimensions of customer loyalty and a broader range of factors influencing consumer behaviour. In this context, could you identify which specific factors and dimensions of customer loyalty you consider most relevant for future investigation? In your view, how might their inclusion contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between online presence, service quality and customer loyalty, while also enhancing the practical applicability of the proposed research model within the context of urban tourism?

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, I am of the opinion that the dissertation entitled *"Marketing Effects of the Application of Information Technologies"* fulfills the normative requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor. On this basis, I give a positive assessment of

the dissertation and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury award **Plamen Yankov Yankov** the educational and scientific degree of **Doctor** in Professional Field 3.8, Economics, Doctoral Programme in Marketing.

29.07.2026 г.

Prepared by: [redacted]

/Assoc. Prof. Atanas Luizov, PhD/