

## OPINION

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Author of the dissertation: **Nikola Ilichov Ilchev** (d020420200), doctoral student at the EA "D.A.Tsenov", Svishtov, Department of "Commercial Business", for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor" in the field of "Economics and Management (Trade)" in the field of PD 3.8 "Economics"

Topic of the dissertation: **"BUSINESS MODEL ADAPTATION FOR TRADE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT"**

### **I. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION:**

The dissertation of Nikola Ilichov Ilchev was discussed and directed for public defense at a meeting of the Department of "Commercial Business", Faculty of "Production and Commercial Business" at the Academy of Economics "D.A. Tsenov", Svishtov.

The developed dissertation has a volume of 170 standard pages and is structured in: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, used literature, lists of tables and figures, declaration of originality and reliability, appendices.

The literature used includes a total of 91 literary sources, of which 17 are in Cyrillic and 74 in a foreign language.

The results of the research and analysis are presented in 29 figures and 12 tables.

My opinion was assigned on the basis of Order No. 1304/11.12.2024 of the Rector of the SA "D.A.Tsenov", the city of Svishtov, as a member of the Scientific Jury, elected by the Faculty of Production and Commercial Business, Protocol No. 5/10.12.2024. It was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff at the AE "D.A.Tsenov", Svishtov.

### **II. EVALUATION OF THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION:**

The topic of the dissertation is very relevant. It focuses on building a modern business model for the trade of food products and beverages used in everyday life, in conditions of a constantly growing share of online supply and online sales of various goods. In the busy everyday life, the service of online stores based on mobile technologies proves to be very practical. This makes consumers increasingly turn to online services.

The object of the study are traders offering food products and beverages, both offline and in a digital environment, in order to compare their activities and draw conclusions and recommendations that support the construction of a hybrid business model.

The subject of the study is the business models for the trade of food products and beverages in a digital environment and the possibility of their implementation in an enterprise developing mainly traditional trade.

The purpose of the dissertation is correctly formulated and fully corresponds to its structure.

The research tasks that are solved in order to fulfill the set goal are four. They arise from the goal and are logically connected with the content structure of the dissertation.

The dissertation work formulates a research thesis that is provable.

The fulfillment of the set goal and tasks is carried out through the following methods: logical and retrospective analysis; synthesis of primary and secondary data; comparative analysis; survey method; historical approach, induction and deduction.

The dissertation work indicates the limiting conditions in territorial, temporal, subject aspect, as well as in relation to the conduct of the survey.

The introduction presents the relevance of the developed topic, the object and subject of the study, the goal and tasks, the research thesis, the research methodology and the limiting conditions of the study.

The first chapter presents an in-depth theoretical analysis of the research of leading Bulgarian and foreign authors on the issues related to the online food and beverage market. The doctoral student presents a conceptual framework for the study. Very good knowledge of both general economic theory and specialized economic theory related to traditional and online commerce is evident. The author's opinion is highlighted in the presentation. Accurate conclusions are formulated from the literature analysis.

The second chapter of the dissertation is distinguished by its analytical and methodological nature. The main factors influencing the success of digital trade in food and beverages are analyzed. Different combinations of business models using one or more technologies, the presence of one or more markets are presented. The world experience in online trade in food and beverages is studied. On this basis, the doctoral student clarifies the characteristics of the business model for online trade in food and beverages. He develops his own algorithm for creating and implementing a business model for trade in food and beverages in a digital environment (Fig. 11, p.104). The presentation in this chapter demonstrates the doctoral student's very good knowledge of the topic, the generalizations and conclusions are precisely formulated.

The third chapter is constructive and perspective in content. In it, the doctoral student presents practical and applied aspects of adapting a business model for offline food and beverage trade in a digital environment, based on the largest retail chain of stores in the Ruse region, which owns 26 retail outlets. A comparative analysis was carried out between the traditional model at the studied site and the online store model. Their main advantages and disadvantages were identified. Adaptation of the offline model to the online business model was proposed (Table 9, p.124). The results of an own survey, which establishes the attitudes and satisfaction of consumers in online food and beverage trade, were analyzed and correctly interpreted. The survey was conducted among 220 respondents from across the country in April 2024. The third paragraph provides guidelines for adapting the business model for food and beverage trade in a digital environment, including three scenarios independently developed and schematically presented by the doctoral student, presented in Fig. 27, 28, and 29. The presentation in the third chapter demonstrates depth of knowledge, originality in the proposals, and argumentation in their presentation.

The conclusion of the dissertation summarizes the main results of the study.

The results of the scientific research have been popularized in the country and abroad, with two articles published and two reports presented at scientific conferences.

The abstract meets the requirements and objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

Summing up, the assessment of the structure and content of the doctoral dissertation, I believe that the requirements for acquiring the ONS "Doctor" in the Department of Economics and Management (Trade) have been fully met. There is a balanced ratio between the individual parts of the dissertation, it is very well structured. The goal has been achieved and the initially set tasks have been solved. The research thesis has been proven. The style of expression is scientific and understandable. When developing the dissertation, the rules of scientific ethics have been observed. The authors used have been cited accurately.

### **III. SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENTIFIC-APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION:**

The developed dissertation has scientific and scientific-applied contributions that will help to expand and upgrade the theoretical and methodological statements in the field of traditional and online trade in food and beverages.

I believe that the presented adapted business model for trade in food and beverages, adapted for an offline retail outlet, is an original contribution of a theoretical-applied nature. I also confirm the other contributions that are presented in a report by the doctoral student.

In the report-declaration for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for awarding the ONS "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences" the doctoral student achieves 40 points out of the required 30 points.

### **IV. QUESTIONS ON THE DISSERTATION:**

I have the following questions for the author of the developed dissertation:

What are the main risks for retail outlets in their transition from traditional to e-commerce with food and beverages?

How can retail outlets overcome these risks?

### **V. GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION AND CONCLUSION:**

The doctoral student Nikola Ilichov Ilchev has developed the dissertation at the necessary scientific level and has fully fulfilled the requirements for acquiring the ONS "Doctor" in the Department of Economics and Management (Trade)". This gives me reason to assert that the doctoral student possesses in-depth knowledge and successfully applies modern research methods in the field of economics and trade, correctly interprets the results obtained, and has undeniable scientific and applied contributions.

In conclusion, I would like to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to evaluate the highly developed dissertation work and vote positively for the awarding of doctoral student **Nikola Ilichov Ilchev** the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Trade)", professional direction 3.8 "Economics", field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences".

08.02.2025  
Stara Zagora

Prepared the opinion: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Prof. Todorka Atanassova-Kalaydzhieva)

