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ABSTRACT

for obtaining an educational and scientific degree
"DOCTOR"
in a professional field - 3.9. "Tourism"

**Innovative marketing approaches
for the development of tourism**

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I. General characteristics of the dissertation

In the field of tourism in Bulgaria were focused large by volume of Bulgarian and foreign investments. Official data show that in 2019, in terms of foreign investment, tourism ranks fourth among the preferred industries for investment¹. According to some forecasts, the growth in the sector over the next 5 years was expected to be significant and Bulgaria to become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. However, the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic has confused all plans and forecasts, which objectively requires the search for and implementation of new approaches. The question of the choice of means and paths to be followed in order to fully meet the needs and requirements of customers remains open.

In this regard, it should be noted that the existence of well-informed and demanding customers is as important as their creation. This is especially important for the preservation and sustainable development of existing competitive advantages. All this, more than ever, requires overcoming the existing traditional ways of thinking and moving towards fundamentally new approaches that allow to realize to the greatest extent the benefits of new information technologies and the potential of human resources - the two most important factors. to increase the competitiveness of tourism in the created conditions. One of these innovative approaches is to improve its *visualization digitalization of the marketing process in the conditions of modern cluster structure*.

These approaches arise as a result of attempts by a number of managers to deal with the pandemic problems. They require an analysis, above all, of the main processes taking place in tourism and the awareness of the need for a radical change in business management, based on the assessment of the current state of the tourism business as a result of the pandemic crisis.

Relevance and significance. The cluster approach, digitalization and visualization as innovative approaches in marketing arouse justified scientific interest-to achieve high results in the development of the tourism business. Observations show that in Bulgaria, probably due to lack of sufficient experience, their application in the field of tourism services is limited, although as a prerequisite for achieving competitive advantages, in the end, can lead to good results and especially in a pandemic.

Information technology has proven its leading role in studying and accounting for customer needs. The task of developing a strategy for the use of information technology through digitalization and visualization is to create a series of targeted and coordinated actions that allow the use of information technology resources to create and maintain sustainable competitive advantages. This gives reason to believe that any *innovative marketing approach* could find its application in the intangible sphere, including tourism. In the potential of digitalization and visualization is the possibility of changes in the company in the direction of sharply improving the efficiency of the overall tourism business. These changes require new organizational structures, processes, information flows, management systems and corporate culture. All this is an essential prerequisite for increasing the competitiveness in each of the tourism activities, and the achieved results lead to the creation of sustainable competitive advantages in tourism.

¹ <http://www.tourism.government.bg/>

The analysis of the scientific literature shows that the issues related to innovation in tourism are not sufficiently studied and require constant research and analysis.

The "phenomenon" of digitalization and visualization and the cluster approach provokes the author's desire to develop and justify some of their theoretical and methodological aspects, and to derive some practical principles, as at this stage the developed methods and technologies are the main merit. practitioners and consultants in the field of these approaches.

The purpose of the present study is to determine the main aspects of certain innovative marketing approaches for tourism development - clustering, digitalization and visualization.

In order to achieve the set research goal, the dissertation seeks a solution to the following **scientific tasks**:

- *Analysis of the peculiarities of tourism;*
- *Analysis of marketing in a digital environment and the role of the tourism brand;*
- *Analysis of features of graphic design - advertising image as part of the innovative marketing approach and sustainable development of regional tourism;*
- *Analysis of the marketing positioning of the tourist brand in social networks;*
- *Development of an exemplary innovative structure in regional tourism based on a cluster approach*

object of the study are tourism structures at the regional level.

Subject of research are the digitalization and visualization of marketing in tourism-innovation clusters at regional level.

The research methodology is based on the use of a wide range of general and private methodologies corresponding to the interdisciplinary nature of the studied phenomenon - analysis, synthesis, analogy, sociological method, statistical methods, comparative analysis, modeling, rating method.

The main thesis defended in the dissertation is that the *use of digitalization and visualization of marketing activities in modern conditions and especially in a crisis situation allows to increase the efficiency of tourism by improving its critical dimensions.*

This, in our opinion, can be achieved through innovative marketing approaches and processes and their ranking in importance, in terms of the added value they create, through new solutions. On the other hand, these approaches lead to a change in the functioning of the entire chain of marketing processes, and hence to higher profitability.

The following are presented in separate parts of the dissertation **research hypotheses**:

First - creating sustainable competitive advantages by comparing the degree of dependence of the tourism business on digitalization and visualization, such as information technology.

Second - creating competitive advantages of the tourist product and by exploring the possibilities of the cluster approach.

The reliability and validity of the results of the research are ensured by using:

- results of fundamental and applied research of Bulgarian and foreign scientists and experts on the issues of innovative development of tourism;
- official statistical data, analytical and reference data from the Ministry of Tourism, etc.
- digital methods for obtaining and processing Internet information about the goals and objectives of the study.

Structure and volume of dissertations. Dissertation research **consists** of *introduced three chapters, conclusions and recommendations, applications, list of sources used - 163*

names. The main volume of the work includes (227 pages and contains - 18 tables, 23 figures, 20 formulas)

Introduction

modern globalizing and dynamically changing economy and the rapid turnovers of technological development have radically changed the competitive environment. The driving force behind these changes is information and communication technologies. New opportunities to generate and provide information change the way of life, work, thinking².

The coronavirus pandemic from the beginning of 2020. had a great influence on the state and practically on the further development of all spheres in the economy, including tourism. Such a severe crisis in the tourism business has not been observed since the Second World War. However, any crisis not only leads to negative consequences, but provokes new opportunities and challenges in the face of this serious test for the entire tourism business. Among these opportunities and challenges are: *accelerating the processes of digitalization of tourist services; more active introduction of innovative technologies; use of ideas of economic psychology; updating the individual approach to the client, as well as the environmental aspects of the tourist product; expand the geography of tourist routes and more.*

The tourism business is changing as a result of ever-changing needs. Along with them, the demand of consumers for the quality of the offered products is growing. It can be said that this change is related to the globalization of social processes and technologies to meet these needs. New technologies have also changed the competitive environment in the tourism business.

Competition and change are forcing marketing managers to constantly rethink their strategies, especially when existing competitive advantages are lost due to new technologies. This implies the need to look for new approaches to create competitive products to achieve new competitive advantages.

II. Structure and content of the dissertation

In accordance with the thesis, purpose, subject and method of research, the doctoral thesis is developed in three chapters.

Introduction

1. Theoretical aspects of the innovative potential of the tourism business

1.1. Characteristic features and peculiarities of the tourism business

1.2. Main and specific factors for the development of tourism

1.2.1. Main factors

1.2.2. Specific factors

1.3. Features of innovations in tourism

1.3.1. Factors for innovative development

² Gargarov Z., Petrov S., World Economy, 2019, S.

1.3.2. Specifics of the innovative activity

1.3.3. Nature of innovative management

1.4. The cluster approach - potential for innovative tourism business

1.4.1 Nature and features

1.4.2 Clustering - innovative factor

1.4.3. Competitiveness indicators

1.5. System for assessment of the innovative potential of tourism

2. Methodological features of marketing in tourism

1. Nature and specifics of marketing in the tourism business

2. Methodology of marketing research

2.2.1. Basic methodological approaches

2.2.2. Stages in the research methodology

2.2. Innovative methods for developing a competitive product

2.2.1. Method of quality functions

2.2.2. Specialized methods

2.3. Approaches to researching consumer behavior on tourism products

2.3.1. Stages in consumption and types of consumers

2.3.2. The semantic approach (thesaurus) for consumer evaluation

2.3.3. Criteria for consumer segmentation

2.3.4. Online survey of consumer behavior when choosing a tourist product in a digital environment.

3. Possible innovative marketing components in the tourism business

3.1. Regionalization of tourism based on a cluster approach

3.2. Digitization of the marketing environment of the tourist brand

3.3. Features in the use of graphic design and advertising image

3.4. Marketing positioning of the tourist brand in social networks

Conclusions

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Matrix for possible variants and degree of innovation of the branding strategy

References

III. SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

First chapter

Theoretical aspects of the innovative potential of the tourism business

1. Characteristics and features of the tourism business

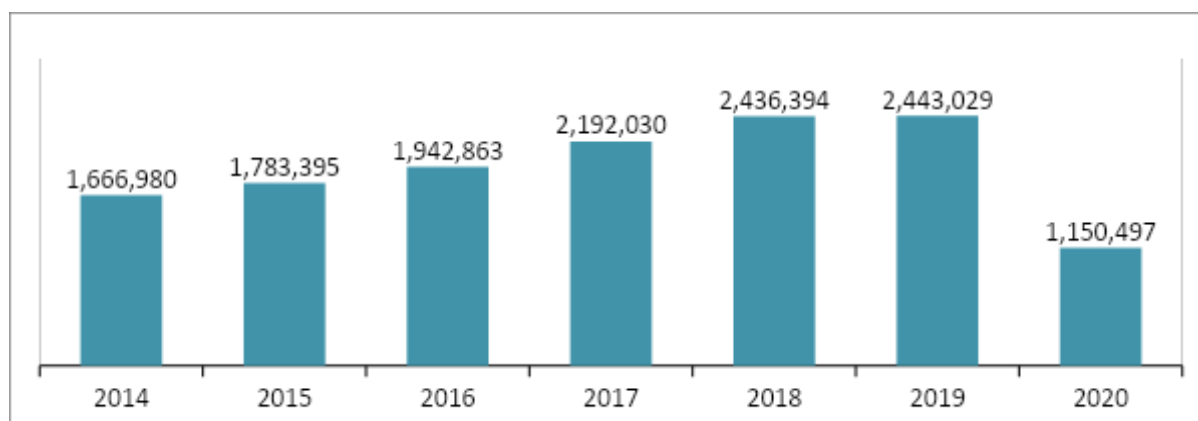
Today tourism has high hopes as an economic and social factor in the current and future development of our country. Prerequisite for this are our natural, historical, ethnographic and some other natural factors, as well as the foreign policy factor - Bulgaria's accession to the European Union, increased interest and confidence in the country and the fact that it is still insufficiently known to relatives and foreign tourists.

According to a study by the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) conducted in the autumn of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has cut up to one million jobs in global tourism every day. The most affected are Germany, followed by Russia, and Italy and Great Britain. The study notes that total losses for the industry could reach 2.1 trillion. dollars (based on experience from previous epidemics caused by swine flu *H1N1* and *SARS*).

For the period January - May 2020 the total number of tourist visits of foreigners in Bulgaria is 1,150,497. The decrease compared to the period January - May 2019 is 52.9%.

Figure 1

Tourist visits of foreigners in Bulgaria in the period January - May (number)



Source: NSI

There is a decrease in visits for rest and vacation, as 560 577 visits were realized and a decrease of -57.1%. Visits for the purpose of visiting are 88,235, and they decreased by -43.9%. The number of visits for business tourism is 317,946, which is a decrease of -50.5%. Visits for other tourist purposes are 183 739. Visits for rest and vacation form 48.7% of all tourist visits.

In this regard, it is necessary to classify the risks associated with tourism: *by degree of manageability* (manageable and unmanageable); *by duration* (long-term, medium-term and short-term), *by the nature of occurrence* (economic, managerial, technical); *by scale* (microeconomic, macroeconomic) and others. It is important to note that tourism in a crisis situation is a sufficiently vulnerable type of economic activity, but the recovery period is relatively short. Demand for tourism products and services is declining, but not completely disappearing.

In this case the emphasis is on the special *place of tourism in the economy of the country* as a type of economic activity³.

First of all, special attention is paid to the rationality in the activity of the households, to whose activity tourism is directly related.

Secondly, due attention is paid to the totality and interaction between such resources as the tourist base and the workforce in the tourism business.

Third is the close interaction between the main factors of production (land, labor and capital) and the additional factors - entrepreneurship and information.

Fourth, tourism is associated with the general reproductive process, which is characterized by an increase in cash income.

In the fifth place, deserved attention is paid to the multifaceted and complex nature of the interconnected tourist activities.

At present, in our opinion, along with the differentiation of tourism products, the trend towards diversification is intensifying, as one of the ways for the tourism business to survive in the difficult competition for customers.

Practice shows that the technology of developing tourist products is influenced by some specific features: *political and social conditions; the specialization of the tourist areas: "sun - sea", "recreation - treatment", "sports", etc .; seasonality; "Elasticity" of demand; geographical affiliation of tourist services; subjectivism in assessing the qualities of consumers.*

These specific features of the tourist product are interrelated and affect its movement and realization on the market of services. Tourist companies, after assessing their own capabilities, in our opinion, it is desirable to once again analyze the demand in assessing its possible options in order to prepare the specification of the tourist product. Only then to start developing routes and service schedules. Further, in accordance with the service schedule to compile the tourist packages and the set of additional services. At the same time to conduct a contractual campaign with service providers.

The marketing strategy of companies entering foreign markets takes into account the territorial location of the foreign partner. Potential customers in the tourist market are always under the influence of an evenly distributed retail network throughout the country with a significant predominance of urban outlets. In our opinion, the desired result is achieved (ie the necessary tourist product of good quality, the required quantity and at the desired price), when the appropriate technology is used to organize negotiations with service providers.

1.2. Basic and specific factors for the development of tourism

The tourist activity is under the influence of certain basic and specific resources and production factors. The main factors of production include labor, land (natural environment) and capital, and the specific - entrepreneurship and information technology⁴.

The peculiarity of the tourist activity is connected with the fact that the leading place in it is occupied by the use of the possibilities of the natural environment. The return on investment in nature, compared to other industries, is estimated to be close to the maximum.

Two specific production factors in the face of entrepreneurship and information technology are analyzed as decisive for the success of the tourism business.

A special place in the analysis is occupied by the development and use of modern software. In this regard, automation in the work of travel companies is based on the use of specialized software. The following conclusions have been made:

First, the required level of automation is determined primarily by the scale that a travel company faces.

³ Lozanov, E., Analysis of the tourist activity, Sofia, 1995

⁴ Georgiev, L. Regional Economy, NBU, S. 2015.

Second, the office of the company needs adequate computer equipment, without which the modern travel company can not work. The same goes for e-mail. It is increasingly used as a convenient and mostly cheaper way to exchange information.

Third, it is necessary to create specialized travel software, depending on its users - tour operators, agents and others.

1.3. Features of innovation in tourism

The analysis of the development of innovative activity in the tourism business is based on research by scientists in various fields of economics. Its main factors are: the

- *level of scientific and technical development, economic and political stability, the availability of current legislation and other external factors;*
- *the availability of the necessary volume of natural, financial and other resources;*
- *the level of development of the tourist infrastructure;*
- *the current situation on the tourism market, as well as the degree and type of competition;*
- *the provision of highly qualified staff in all areas of tourism.*

The factors determining the specifics of the innovation process in the field of tourism are⁵:

- *first*, the impossibility of preserving tourist services;
- *second*, the volume of sales of tourist services in most areas is subject to seasonal fluctuations;
- *third*, tourism services are intangible as they are valued after consumption;
- *fourth*, the fact of sale and consumption of tourist services do not coincide in time;
- *fifth*, it is often necessary for the user to cover a certain distance to receive the service, ie. to leave the place of his permanent residence.

The specificity of the innovative activity in the field of tourism is determined not only by the peculiarities of the tourist services, but also by the specific peculiarities of their consumers and producers.

1.4. The cluster approach - potential for innovative tourism business

Innovative potential is seen as a systemic feature that allows timely adaptation of the tourism business to changes in the environment with the help of new knowledge.

The use of a cluster approach as a potential for innovative business is proposed to be based on relevant factor analysis. The advantage of factor analysis is related to the fact that it allows the reduction of the primary set of indicators to a smaller number of generalized factors, called main components. These factors are also defined as "hidden" because they are not explicitly present in the initial set of indicators.

The key feature uniting all interpretations of the concept of "cluster" is associated with the proximity of participants (or elements) in the cluster, with a certain model of internal interaction of cluster participants, which allows to form a new qualitative state of this community⁶.

According to official data, 261 clusters are registered in Bulgaria. The main center is Sofia, where there are 150, but such have also been established in Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas and Ruse⁷.

⁵ Malakhova, NN Innovations in tourism and service, Ed. 2nd, ext. and rework. - Rostov n / D: MarT Publishing Center; Phoenix, 2010.

⁶ Azoiev GL Innovative clusters of nanoindustry, M. 2012.

⁷ NSI website (www.nsi.bg)

For the formation of regional clusters in the field of tourism, the following stages are analyzed:

First stage, analysis of the socio-economic situation in the region and proving the need for the formation of a cluster structure in the region.

Second stage, formation of legal framework for the functioning of the cluster. On this basis, the methodological recommendations for the formation of the regional cluster are developed.

Third stage, forming the organizational structure of the regional cluster. The distribution of responsibilities is made among all participants in the cluster.

Fourth stage, creating a mechanism for interaction between all participants in the cluster.

Fifth stage, development of a system for evaluating the effectiveness of the functioning of the regional cluster. At this stage it is necessary to form a clear system of objective criteria that most fully and reliably reflect the current situation and prospects for the development of the cluster.

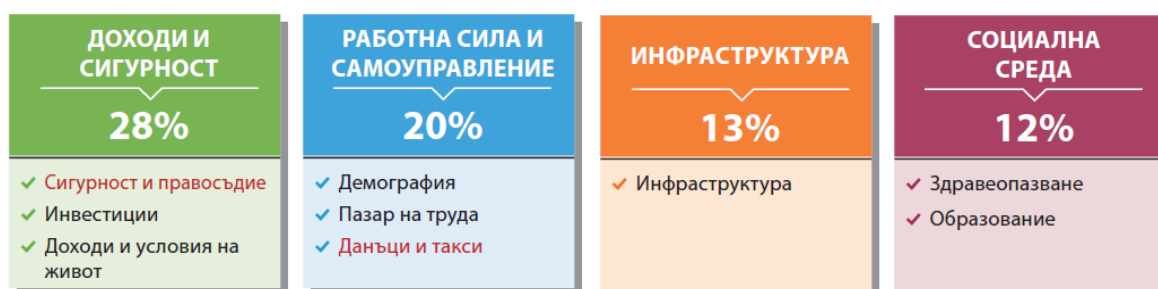
An important research task in the differentiation of the districts in Bulgaria is the creation of specific types of regional profiles, through which to identify the similarities and differences between them based on a study of the joint influence of indicators characterizing their socio-economic status.

The main criteria for determining and structuring the regional profiles in the analysis are the complex measures for 12 areas - "income and living conditions"; "labor market"; "Investments"; "Infrastructure"; "Taxes and Charges"; "Administration"; "Demography"; "Education"; "Healthcare"; Security and justice; "Environment"; "Culture".

Factor analysis allows the differences in the socio-economic condition of the districts to be identified in 4 "hidden" main components. Their relative influence (share in%) can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Main components and differences due to the respective factor (%)



Note: Red indicators have an inverse relationship with the main component. The overall differences determined by the "hidden" factors are 73%.

After identifying and interpreting the 4 "hidden" factors - the main components for the formation of the types of regional profiles, the following types of regional profiles (groups / clusters of districts) with different socio-economic status are identified⁸:

⁸ Tsvetkov A., publication on the Internet <https://www.regionalprofiles.bg/bg/top2015/>

Figure 7



Based on the factor analysis by A. Tsvetkov to establish the influence of various factors on the socio-economic development of the districts and the formed clusters the following generalizations can be made:

First, in all types of profiles are observed both positive and negative characteristics in different aspects of socio-economic their condition with the exception of Sofia (capital). Only it has an overall favorable socio-economic profile.

Second, economic development is directly affected by security and justice issues. However, investment decisions are influenced to a greater extent by other factors, and so much by the level of security and justice.

Third, at the moment, the approach of compensating for poor demographic characteristics through low local taxes and fees by possibly attracting investors and migrants will not yield significant results, as tax and fee levels are only one of the many factors determining both investment decisions and and decisions to settle or emigrate.

Fourth, out of the nine tourist regions in the country, only half have more or less favorable values of the considered indicators. This circumstance testifies to the need to apply innovative approaches to the organization, planning and management of tourism at the spatial level in Bulgaria

. Internationally, the analysis focuses specifically on Bulgaria's neighboring countries - Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey.

Factors influencing the level of development of the tourism sector in these countries are assessed through the Travel & Tourism - Competitiveness Index (TTCI). Its calculation takes into account the influence of 90 individual indicators, which are divided into fourteen pillars (Table 1).

Table 1.

Basic indicators for the formation of the index of competitiveness of travel and tourism

Indicators	Competitive criteria
Favorable environment	Business environment Safety and security Health and hygiene Human resources and labor market, Infrastructure of information and communication technologies
Policies and conditions supporting travel and tourism	Prioritization of tourism International integration Price competitiveness Environmental sustainability
Infrastructure	Air transport transport infrastructure Land infrastructure and ports, Tourist infrastructure
Cultural and natural resources	Natural resources Cultural resources and business travel

weight of each of the basic indicators is presented in the figure.

Table 2

Indicators of selected countries.

Indicator / Country		Bulga ria	Roma nia	Serb ia	Macedo nia	Gree ce	Turk ey
Favorable environment	1. Business environment	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	3.9	4.4
	2. Security and security	5.2	6.0	5.5	5.2	5.6	4.3
	3. Health and hygiene,	6.7	6.1	6.3	6.0	6.5	5.5
	4. Human resources and market labor	4,6	4,5	4,7	4,1	4,7	4,2
	5. Infrastruktura of ICT	5,2	5,2	5,1	4,7	5,2	4,6
Policies and conditions supporting travel and tourism	6. Prioritization of tourism	4.7	4.1	3.9	3.7	5.6	5.1
	7. International integration	3.9	3.9	3.2	2.3	4.1	3.8
	8. Price competitiveness	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.8	4.9	5.6
	9. Environmental sustainability	4.8	4.4	4.5	3.6	4.5	3.7
Infrastructure	10. Infrastructure on the air transport,	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	4.8	4.7
	11. Infrastructure on terrestrial transport and ports	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.6	3.8	3.6
	12. Tourist infrastructure	6.0	4.6	3.9	3.9	5.8	5.0
Cultural and natural resources	13. resources	3.7	3.2	2.1	2.2	3.5	2.8
	14. Cultural resources and business travel	2.1	2.3	1.7	1.4	3.3	3.8

These 14 criteria include individual indicators that are calculated on the basis of data from a World Economic Forum survey and range from 1 (worst) to 7 (best). The TTCI index

is calculated as the mean (arithmetic mean) of the four components below the index, which themselves calculate as the mean (arithmetic mean) of their criteria. Each of the criteria is calculated as an unweighted average of the variables of the individual components. For example, the criterion "Human resources and the labor market" is the unweighted average qualification of the labor force and the labor market.

1.5. System for assessment of the innovative potential of tourism

The creation of a complex system for assessment of the tourist-innovative potential of the regions requires⁹:

- *to define the objectives of the innovation policy, as well as the policy in the field of tourism development in the region;*
- *developing a strategy for the development of regional tourism;*
- *formation of an information base for making management decisions by the authorities;*
- *comparison of the achieved results;*
- *information provision.*

Each of these assessments is based on a set of indicators that most fully characterize the object to be assessed.

System of indicators characterizing the innovation potential in the field of tourism

Table 5

Indicator	Characteristic	Unit of measure
1. Scientific and educational potential	1.1. Number of institutions from higher and secondary vocational education, providing training in the field of tourism.	Number
	1.2. Number of internal and external conferences, forums, seminars on the development of regional tourism, which were attended by representatives of the region	Number
2. Personnel potential	2.1. Number of workers employed in the tourism business in the region	Number
	2.2. Volume of financing of the events for retraining, advanced training and attestations of the tourist staff	Hill. BGN
3. Investment potential	3.1. Volume of the incoming tourist flow	Number of people
	3.2. Share of tourism revenues in GDP	
	3.3. Share of research expenditures in the total funding of the regional tourism development program	%
4. Institutional potential	4.1. Existence of regional normative-legal acts regulating the innovation activity	Yes = 1 No = 0
	4.2. Number of current regional legal acts in the field of tourism	

⁹ Tihomirova, II, Andreeva AA Innovative activity in the field of tourism: essence and specificity, M., 2015

	4.3. Number of projects in the form of public-private partnership in the field of recreation and tourism	Number
		Number

Second chapter

Methodological features of marketing in tourism

2.1. Nature and specifics of marketing in the tourism business The

relevance of the methodology of marketing research is determined by the fact that the ever-increasing role of tourism in the global economy implies the need to seek innovative marketing approaches in the fight for competitive advantage in tourism. They are also determined by the new pandemic situation, the characteristic feature of which is the disrupted dynamics of supply and demand. In these conditions, the role and place of marketing is constantly growing.

Marketing activity in tourism is mainly considered as:

- *marketing analysis and planning with subsequent disclosure of the group of potential consumers;*
- *analysis of the production of goods or provision of services to certain target groups;*
- *coordination in the tourist activity to achieve the most advantageous positions on the market;*
- *determining the ways to control the business process in accordance with the pre-set goals.*

Their relationship between the different levels of marketing is analyzed.

The state, local authorities and associations receive market data, including information from companies, and they in turn justify their marketing concepts based on national and local concepts for tourism development.

The Ministry of Tourism conducts marketing research at the national level, engages in the collection of statistics on tourism, advertising and promotion of tourism products on the world market, as the development and support of tourism plays an important role in state support. International experience shows that success in tourism directly depends on how the industry is viewed at the state level and to what extent it is supported by the state.

For their part, travel companies develop new products, tour programs, pricing, product quality improvement, as well as developments in the field of tourism product sales and the implementation of national and local marketing concepts.

2.2. Methodology of marketing research

Methodological approaches in the tourism business are mainly related to three types of research¹⁰:

first - ongoing research, conducted constantly to reveal all changes and trends in the tourism market (even minor changes in the environment can be significant for management decisions);

second - research of a certain situation (problem) in order to verify the assumptions or analysis of changes in the tourism market;

third - complex research in order to assess the emerging situation, the problems and threats arising from it and emerging opportunities.

¹⁰ Karakasheva, L. International Marketing, Prism, Sofia, 2007.

The main objectives of marketing research in the tourism business are defined:

First, the discovery of existing significant problems. Revealing the problems and reasons leading to reduced efficiency are often associated with very basic investments in research in the management process.

Second, keeping in touch with the target markets. They reduce the likelihood of risks from unexpected changes in markets. To some extent, research provides a guarantee that the company will not offer a product that is already outdated for the market due to changes in market conditions.

Third, cost reduction. Research helps identify the most effective methods of doing business and rule out ineffective ones.

Fourth, the development of innovative sources of profit. Research can lead to the opening of new markets, new tourism products and new options for using products that are already on the market.

Fifth, sales promotion aid. This concerns, above all, research into consumer attitudes towards the product, which seeks consumer evaluation.

Sixth, the creation of a favorable attitude on the part of consumers. Consumers believe that companies engaged in such activities actually care about them and make efforts to create a product that would meet their needs.

The methodology of research in tourism offers different approaches and forms - from elementary to more complex and from simple fact-finding to the use of complex mathematical models.

In our opinion, the analysis of a number of experts shows that the process of these studies should include several main stages:

First, identifying the problems and formulating the objectives:

Second, conducting a situation analysis.

Third, developing a research scheme.

Fourth, data collection.

Fifth, presentation of information in tables and analysis.

Sixth, interpretation of data.

Seventh, compiling a report.

Eighth, control.

Both primary and secondary data can be used at these stages. The data are primary - in order to solve a particular problem in a given tourist environment. Secondary - for other purposes and can be obtained from repositories of secondary data.

Wrong and ineffective approach, in our opinion, is to conduct tourism research aimed at obtaining primary data without checking the necessary information from available secondary sources. Primary data should only be sought if, after studying all relevant secondary data sources, not enough information is available to solve the problem.

Methodologically, secondary data should be used as a starting point for research. When appropriate sources of secondary information are found, this saves significant resources and time¹¹.

Despite their advantages, the use of secondary data has its drawbacks. The main disadvantage is that these data become obsolete over time. For example, the census is conducted, for example, every 10 years. At the end of this period, population data may change and may not be useful enough.

In conclusion, it is concluded that when it is impossible to use information from available secondary sources or when the available information is outdated or insufficient to solve the problem under study, or there are doubts about its reliability, it is necessary to work

¹¹ Statev, V. Economics of Tourism, Main Aspects, VUARR, Plovdiv, 2009.

with primary data. For example, in case of need for information concerning the opinion of consumers about a tourist product, it is expedient to look for primary information, ie. to interview immediate users. As already mentioned, the search for primary data is methodologically justified only after all the available information on the problem from secondary sources has been studied.

2.3. Innovative methods for developing a competitive product

The methodology for developing a competitive product that meets the requirements of the target consumer segments (implementation of the technology pull strategy) is known by various names. The best known of these is *quality function deployment (QFD)*¹².

At the heart of the methodology is the *QFD* idea of combining two components: *first*, the detailed needs of the user and *second*, the technical characteristics of the future or existing product.

The research part of is used to obtain the necessary information on needs *QFD - VoC*.

The *VoC toolkit* ("user voice") usually uses:

- *focus groups*;
- *in-depth interviews*;
- *special techniques from the arsenal of neuromarketing and associative methods*;
- *questionnaires*;
- *marketing experiments*;
- *"Mystery shopper"*.

All the listed methods belong to the category of field research on the market as opposed to desk research (collection and analysis of secondary, already existing information).

Along with "focus groups" and "in-depth interviews", other special techniques are used to study consumer behavior - *neuromarketing*, *associative methods* and more¹³.

Neuromarketing as a theory and practice for studying consumer behavior was developed by psychologists at Harvard University (USA) in the 1990s. It is based on the statement that for the mental activity of man (along with his emotions) mainly (90%) is responsible subconscious, ie. the uncontrolled area of the brain¹⁴.

Associative methods use conversations and associative tests of words and verbal associations. In the process of the associative conversation the respondent is guided by questions of this kind: "What provokes you to think this or that...?" "What thoughts do you have now in connection with ...? ", Etc. This method allows the respondent to say whatever comes to mind. In case some respondents have difficulty expressing their preferences (albeit due to insufficient vocabulary), they are limited to several answer options.

The implementation of these methods, in our opinion, implies high professionalism of the researchers, which is associated with high costs for their implementation. This is especially true for the interpretation of the results obtained. These methods are usually used after the researcher has already received information based on a survey, allowing him to formulate several hypotheses that can be either confirmed or refuted.

Questionnaires are used among buyers - individuals, as well as officials in both companies and organizations that are regular customers. The way of communication between the researcher and the respondents could be done through the press, mail, distribution of questionnaires and the Internet. In the first case, a questionnaire is published on the pages of magazines or newspapers, urging readers to respond in writing by mail to a specified address. In a postal survey, a corresponding number of questionnaires are sent to organizations and

¹² Molchanov NN, Marketing Innovation, M.2015

¹³ Molchanov NN, Marketing Innovation, M.2015

¹⁴ Boxwell, R., Jr., *Benchmarking for Competitive Advantage*, 2000

enterprises with a request for a response. The direct distribution of questionnaires is done to a group of people concentrated in one place with a request to fill them in and hand them over directly.

The marketing experiment is seen as an active method for collecting primary information about consumers and the tourism market¹⁵. It is useful for studying consumers at the stage of bringing an innovation to market.

The main object of the marketing experiment are consumers. The subjective side of the experiment is the fact that, *firstly*, the consumer perceives the outside world in accordance with his individual experience and *secondly*, that the marketer also perceives the information he receives, to some extent subjectively. In this regard, several classifications of marketing experiments are used. According to one of them, three types of experimental approaches are distinguished: *preliminary experiments; real experiments; quasi-experiments*¹⁶.

In the long history of *QFD*, the users of this methodology have managed to apply all available tools for marketing research. What is special is that this approach is the only one that practically overcomes the chronic discrepancy between qualitative and quantitative research. Virtually all information about the needs obtained in the process of processing the results of qualitative research is subjected to quantitative analysis at the next stage. With regard to the specific tools, in each project it is dictated by the inevitable trade-off between costs and results.

2.4. Approaches to research the behavior of the consumer of tourist products

The

consumption of tourist products is analyzed through the relevant *factual, virtual and economic* parameters.

The process of consumption of the tourist product is divided into three main stages, which differ from each other in form and content.

The first stage - the perception of the product.

The second stage - virtual consumption.

The third stage - actual consumption.

It should be borne in mind that at the stage of actual consumption the object of perception by the mind is not the tourist product itself, but the process of its human consumption. It is manifested in the sensations, which are internal information signals about the body, distinguished and processed by the brain thanks to the amazing ability of human consciousness to introspect. The features of the different stages are listed in the table.

Table 7

Stages in the process of consumption

<i>stages</i>	<i>form</i>	<i>content</i>
<i>Perception</i>	<i>Creation and use of an information channel between the product and the user.</i>	<i>Recognition (identification) of the tourist product.</i>
<i>Virtual consumption</i>	<i>Thought modeling of actual consumption.</i>	<i>Use of the information component for the material products or the achieved forms for the ideal products.</i>
<i>Actual consumption</i>	<i>Perception of sensations from consumption.</i>	<i>Satisfying the needs and gaining experience from the actual consumption.</i>

The proposed analysis is an attempt to study it from the standpoint of marketing, although consumption may be the subject of research from other fields of scientific knowledge.

¹⁵ Aaker D., Marketing Research, St. Petersburg. 2004

¹⁶ Gladkikh IV, Price research in marketing: content, history, methodology, St. Petersburg State University, 2004

Marketers should pay close attention to practical issues directly related to consumption processes in order to be able to manage them in achieving the economic goals of the company.

Practical experience, in our opinion, has shown that the process of consumption of new tourism products depends on two main factors:

- *first*, the degree of readiness of the consumer to accept the new product;
- *second*, the degree of innovation in the new tourism product for the particular consumer.

According to these factors, consumers are very clearly distinguished.

The table shows some types of survey users depending on the speed of perception of a new product¹⁷.

Table 8

Types of users in terms of innovation

<i>Type</i>	<i>Feature</i>
<i>Innovators - 2.5%</i>	<i>First to try innovation. Prone to risk</i>
<i>Quick followers - 13.5%</i>	<i>Leaders in opinions. In their environment they make the product famous and fashionable</i>
<i>Fast majority - 34%</i>	<i>Ready to acquire the new product based on positive feedback from representatives of the reference group</i>
<i>Late majority - 34%</i>	<i>Acquire innovation after its clear advantage</i>
<i>Conservatives - 16%</i>	<i>Perceive innovation only when it becomes a traditional product</i>

segmentation of consumers according to other principles for acquiring an innovative product is largely focused on:

- *first*, residents of large cities;
- *second*, young consumers;
- *third*, high-income earners;
- *fourth*, persons with a high level of education, ie representatives of professions with predominant mental labor.

For marketers, differentiating consumers in terms of risk also deserves attention. Modern psychophysiological research shows that the propensity to risk and its avoidance are innate reactions that are associated with such personality traits of the individual as impulsiveness, independence, the pursuit of success.

Table 9

Types of users in terms of risk¹⁸

<i>Type</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>Risk-takers</i>	<i>Able to present a significant number of alternative solutions, believe in their own strengths, have a low level of anxiety, are oriented to the external environment, strive for success and dominance and are aggressive.</i>
<i>Risk avoiders</i>	<i>Unsure of themselves, have a high level of anxiety, are oriented towards internal motives, unable to generate decisions.</i>

There are several methods for measuring indicators by levels of innovation. A common approach for all applied methods is the selection of operational parameters that meet the needs of users to assess the levels. The following groups of parameters are usually used in the evaluation:

- *purpose of the product;*
- *reliability;*
- *environmental friendliness;*
- *operating costs (consumption price).*

¹⁷ Angel D., Blackwell R., Miniard P., Consumer Behavior, St. Petersburg, 1999

¹⁸ Gargarov Z., Risks in economic and financial activities, S. 2015

It is accepted, as a rule, that the higher the innovative level of the product, the greater its value. Four types of market environment of a new tourist product can be distinguished with the following main parameters:

- *first*, when the concept of the tourist product is new for the company, but familiar to the market;
- *second*, when the product concept is new to both the company and the market;
- *third*, when the market is familiar with the company and the company is familiar with the market;
- *fourth*, when the market does not know the company and the company does not know the market.

Table 10

Matrix of a new tourist product

<i>C1 - the tourist product is new for the company, but familiar to the market; P1 - the market knows the company, and the company - the market.</i>	<i>C1 - the tourist product is new for the company, but accustomed to the market; P2 - the market does not know the company, and the company - the market.</i>
<i>C2 - the tourist product is new for both the company and the market; P1 - the market knows the company, and the company - the market.</i>	<i>C2 - the tourist product is new for both the company and the market; P2 - the market does not know the company, and the company - the market.</i>

To explain the specifics of economic behavior of consumers in the theory of semantic information, the widely used concept of "*thesaurus*" is used (systematized set of knowledge available at a certain stage of society, group or individual).

The main idea of this theory is the fact that the information can be assessed by the perceiving system by the degree of change of the own information of the meanings contained in the system with the help of the accumulation of external information. Thus, in order to receive some information from external sources, the consumer must have a certain minimum "stock of knowledge", which in science is referred to as a "thesaurus".

For success, the tourism product must correspond to the thesaurus of consumption for the respective category of people. In our opinion, it is best for the product to slightly exceed the emerging thesaurus for consumption by a specific category of customers. The product will be rejected if it lags behind the high consumer thesaurus.

In relation to the existence of barriers to perception of new products (with different awareness of the users of the product) is a useful marketing to subdivide customers several standard categories - *in their level of awareness of the product and the willingness to acquire innovative destination*

choice of market segment realization of innovations is defined as the most important task for marketing for any innovation-oriented company, which is solved by searching for consumers in terms of its commercial interests. From the point of view of information processes, it is necessary to look for users who are closest to the thesaurus. Two criteria for consumer evaluation are identified as the most important.

First, the extent to which the company can best satisfy the interests of a particular group of consumers.

Second, the extent to which working with a given category of users will bring greater benefits to the company.

Differentiation of the market by segments (with subsequent comprehensive analysis) allows the company to determine (for the product) or select (for the developed product) its target users and optimally develop product, marketing and advertising strategy. Depending on the approach to the segmentation process, the following marketing strategies are distinguished:

- *first - mass, undifferentiated marketing*. The company offers one (average) product for the whole set of consumers;

- *second - concentrated marketing*. The company concentrates its efforts on offering one or more products in one market segment (niche);
- *third - product-differentiated marketing*. The company offers several segments a product specially developed for each of them;
- *fourth - individual marketing*. The company offers an individual product for each user.

Each of these strategies is determined by the number of identified and potentially profitable segments and the company's resources. When limited, a focused, focused marketing strategy is preferable.

It is proposed that when orienting the travel company to the target segment or segments, the activities be carried out in the following sequence:

- *development of principles for market segmentation;*
- *development of profiles of certain market segments;*
- *assessment of market segments in terms of economic interests of the company;*
- *selection of target segment or segments;*
- *development of a marketing complex for the selected market segment.*

The company should choose a segmentation approach depending on the type of innovation, market characteristics, goals, objectives, conditions and opportunities for its own activities, as there are fundamental differences in the market segmentation of ordinary consumer goods and those of tourism products.

In the market of tourist products, as a rule, standard a priori segmentation is used, from which the most significant products for the given market are selected¹⁹.

Table 11

Base priori segmentation of the tourist market	
groups	Principles of segmentation
<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Gender</i>
	<i>Age</i>
	<i>Size of family</i>
<i>social</i>	<i>level educational</i>
	<i>qualifications</i>
	<i>Professional affiliations</i>
	<i>Regional affiliation, nationality,</i>
	<i>social status</i>
<i>Economic</i>	<i>Level of Income</i>
	<i>Payment methods</i>
<i>psychographic</i>	<i>Lifestyle</i>
	<i>Personality type</i>
	<i>Attitude to health</i>
	<i>Hobby</i>
	<i>Characteristics of leisure time</i>
	<i>Отношение към иновациите</i>
<i>Geographically</i>	<i>Region</i>
	<i>Administrative unit</i>
	<i>Population density</i>
<i>Nature and climate</i>	<i>Climate zones</i>
	<i>Annual temperature fluctuation</i>
<i>Life conditions</i>	<i>Features of the region</i>

¹⁹ Ovrutsky AV, Social ontology of consumption, M.2012

	<i>Home features</i>
<i>Physiological</i>	Health conditions
	Physiological features

The evaluation of the selected segments is done from the point of view of the economic interests of the company, ie. profitability, which implies the availability of the following marketing information:

- *number of consumers of a given type and average consumption of the product;*
- *trend in sales of a similar product in the given segment;*
- *level of competition in the segment (how many companies compete in it);*
- *profitability of work with this segment (ratio between the acceptable price for the segment and the cost of the product with the necessary characteristics for the buyer).*

An online survey of the author on consumer behavior when choosing a tourist product in a digital environment.

In the period January - February 2021. I prepared and undertook organizational activities in connection with the conduct of an online survey in a digital environment of consumer behavior when choosing a tourist product. The survey was conducted in the period March 15, 2021 - March 25, 2021. During this period, 130 people took part in the survey.

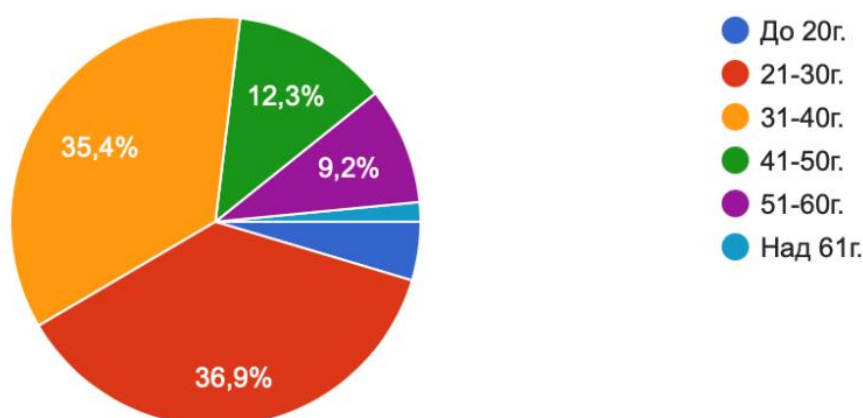
Participants were asked, without being influenced by the Kovid 19 situation, to provide answers based on the period before the pandemic or their behavior after the end of the pandemic, in order to ignore the impact of the non-standard socio-economic and psychological aspects.

1. Profile of the participants.

1. Gender

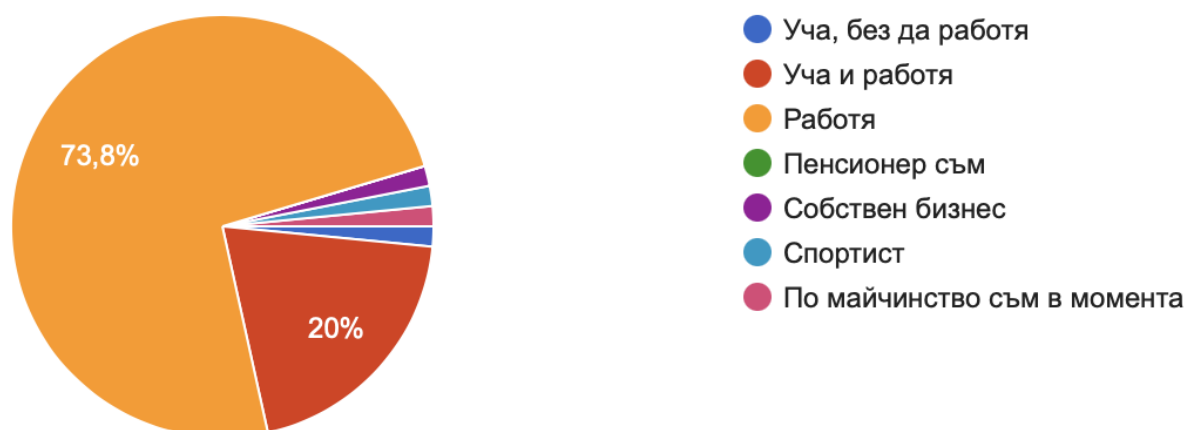
106 of the participants are women, which is 81.5%. The number of women compared to men is higher because, according to our observations from practice, they most often deal with issues related to family vacations. It has also been proven that the fairer sex is more active in the online space.

2. Age



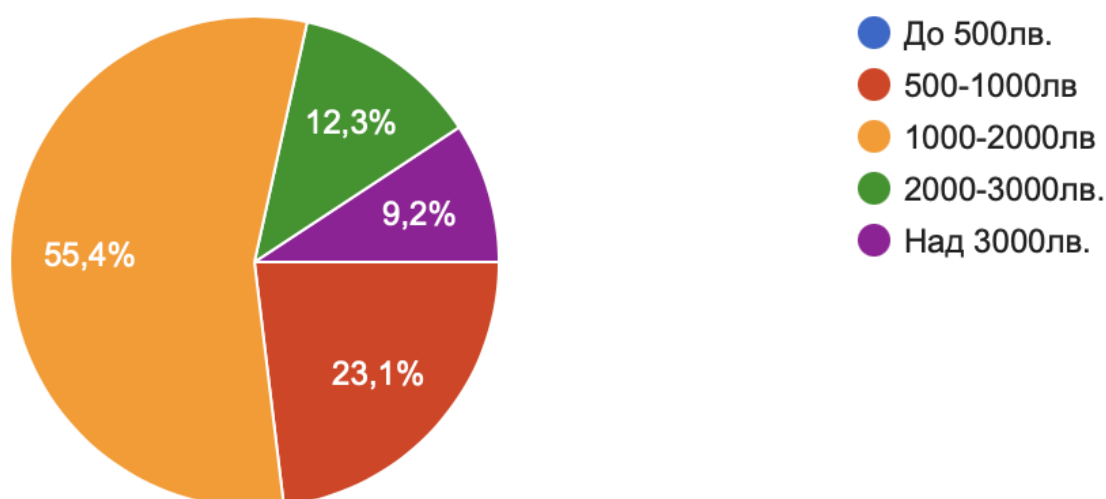
In terms of age indicators, the most active are the participants in the age segments 21-30. and 31-40. They are followed by those in the age range between 41-50 years. The least active are those over 61, which is determined by the online form of the survey.

3. Employment



Over 90% of the respondents are working people, as 20% of the respondents combine work with learning. This is a very good indicator for our study, because the survey included people who earn their own money for tourism products and services.

4. Income



The average salary for Bulgaria at the end of 2020 is 1437 BGN²⁰, and this determines the high number of participants with a salary of 1000-2000 BGN, which make up 55.4% of the respondents or 72 people.

2. Results obtained

1. The most memorable type of advertising of a tourist product or service

After asking the question "What type of advertising in the field of tourism did you see last?" We received the following answers in descending order:

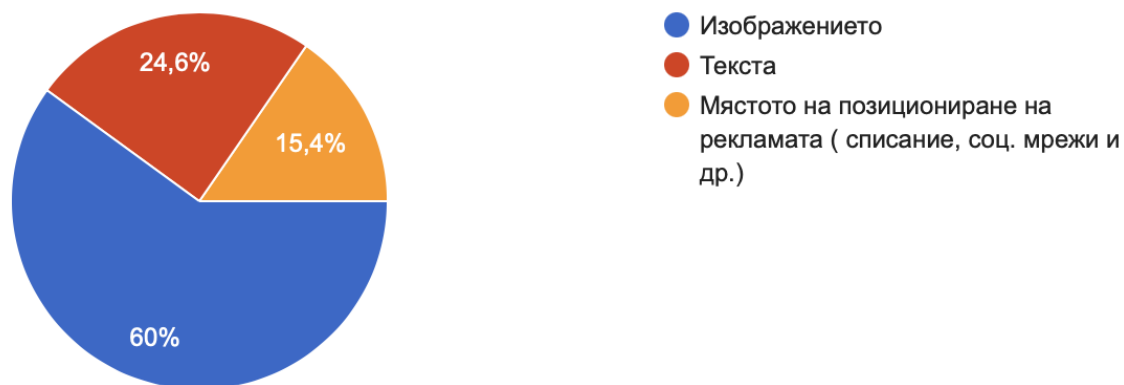
- Advertising on social networks -76.9%
- Banner on the site- 10.8%
- Billboard advertising - 4.6%
- Television advertising-4.6%
- Advertising in print-1.5%

²⁰ According to the National Statistical Institute - <https://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/3928/национално-ниво>

Digital advertising occupies over 87% of the answers received, which proves its effectiveness compared to other types of advertising.

2. *The most important component of an advertisement for the end user*

To the question "Which would you attach the most importance to the interest in advertising a tourist product?" We received the following indicators:



The greatest importance was given to the image present in the advertisement, which proves the importance of visualization. In second place is the text layout and in last place the positioning of the ad.

3. *Types of advertising*

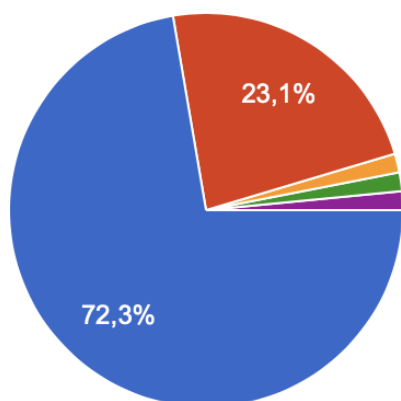
After asking the question "What type of advertising do you most often pay attention to?", Respondents indicated similar results for image and video, and text advertising remained in the background. This result is due to the fact that both types of advertising have a visual impact, which once again confirms the importance of visualization.

Respondents were also asked several questions about their preferred destinations and their actions before and during the booking of a tourist product or service.

4. *How often do you choose Bulgaria for your vacation / trip?*

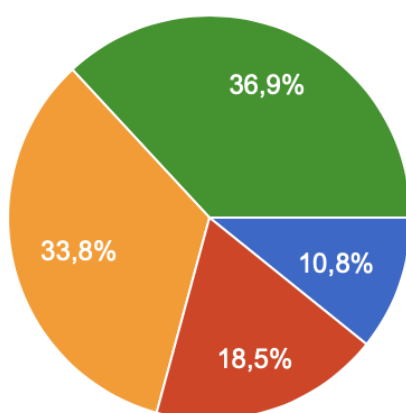


5. *What is most important for you when choosing a holiday / excursion destination?*



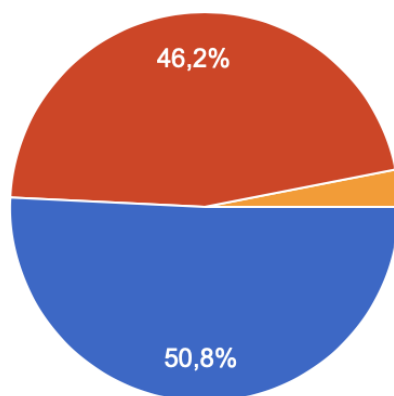
- Местността и интересните забележителности
- Хотела и хотелското обслужване (храна, СПА зона...)
- Да примат кучета над 25кг
- И двете посочени са важни
- И двете изброени по-горе

6. *How much time do you spend exploring the place you will visit?*



- Действам импулсивно и не правя проучване
- Около половин час
- Над 1 час
- Няколко дни

7. *How do you prefer to book your vacation / trip?*



- Изцяло онлайн
- Разговор по телефона със сътрудник
- Посещение на място и личен контакт със сътрудник

From this block of questions we learned that the majority of respondents prefer Bulgaria for their vacation or trip. When choosing a destination, the most important thing is the location and attractions. And they spend as much time researching as possible. The reservation itself is made mainly either online or by talking to an employee.

Based on these data, the author concludes that one of the most important factors in the 21st century is to quickly and easily find information about the area where the tourist

products are located, because after reaching the ad to the end user, he makes more detailed study.

In conclusion, it is summarized that marketing can also use special expert systems to analyze and select market segments. Such systems are usually both highly specialized (solving the task of segmentation only) and universal software packages.

Chapter Three

Possible Innovative Marketing Components in the Tourism Business

3.1. Regionalization of tourism based on a cluster approach The

tourism cluster is a secondary institution, as the rules in the cluster are aligned with the rules of higher level institutions. From this point of view, the cluster manifests itself as an internal institution included in larger institutions. It is oriented towards specific participants in the economic institution, as it is created on the basis of a certain territory, which, of course, limits the circle of possible participants in the cluster. The rules for the functioning of the economic entities within the cluster are determined by the set of the following mechanisms:

- Organizational-economic mechanism;
- Financial mechanism;
- Mechanism for legal regulation.

Our analysis is aimed at improving the organizational and economic mechanism, as one of the components of the tourism cluster. The first chapter highlighted some problems in the existing approach to the organization of tourism clusters. To eliminate these problems and contradictions, we believe that it is necessary to improve the mechanism for the functioning of tourism clusters. In our opinion, the solution to this problem lies in the transition to an innovation-oriented path for the development of tourist systems. The need to introduce innovations in the field of tourism was justified in the first chapter. According to the innovation activity, three types of clusters can be distinguished: *innovative; stimulating innovation development; using foreign innovations.*

The distinction of the tourism-innovation cluster among the other clusters and agglomerations in the field of tourism should be done according to the following criteria:

- *peculiarities in the structure of the participants in the cluster;*
- *developed innovation infrastructure, stimulating the influx of highly qualified specialists, as well as investments;*
- *high share of innovative products in the total volume of production (services).*

The most appropriate approach for the organization of regional tourist clusters is to do it on the initiative of state authorities. This task should be paramount for the municipal authorities, as only the state in the current situation can finance the creation of the necessary tourist infrastructure, the absence of which is a significant barrier to the entry of private capital in the industry.

The development and improvement of the innovation policy of the cluster presupposes the formation of an appropriate policy and strategy for its development. The strategic plan for the development of the cluster makes the behavior of the subjects in the cluster more predictable. In addition, planning at the individual entity level within the cluster should be carried out in accordance with the overall development strategy.

The task of developing a system of indicators reflecting the effectiveness of the tourism innovation cluster is one of the most important, as the planning of future development indicators should be based on existing achievements. The conclusion is that without a unified evaluation system it is impossible to assess the dynamics in the development of the cluster.

The infrastructure of the tourist-innovation cluster includes all elements of the tourist infrastructure - the means of accommodation, the public catering enterprises, the transport

system, etc. These include banks, funds, stock exchanges, technology parks, business incubators, information and consulting centers and others.

The key competencies of each tourism-innovation cluster are determined by its main competitive advantages. The competencies of the cluster are divided into basic and newly created.

The basic competencies include those on the basis of which the cluster structure is created, ie. the set of key competencies of the subjects, potential participants in the cluster.

The basic marketing competencies for the tourism-innovation cluster are manifested through: the

- *ability to study the tourism market, competitors, consumers, suppliers, partners, etc .;*
- *skills in the field of advertising company development, pricing policy, choice of distribution channels, etc.*

Newly created competencies of the tourism-innovation cluster are those that are manifested directly in the process of functioning of the cluster. Unlike the basic ones, they have an extremely individual character and therefore will be different for each tourism-innovation cluster. Their common feature will be the development of innovation activities of tourism enterprises in the cluster.

The final stage in the creation of the tourism-innovation cluster is the development of a system for evaluating the effectiveness of innovations in the functioning of the cluster.

At this stage, in our opinion, it is necessary to form a clear system of objective criteria that most fully and reliably reflects the current situation and prospects for the development of innovative activity in the cluster. Such an evaluation system becomes the basis for strategic and current planning in the development of the cluster system.

3.2. Digitization of the marketing environment of the tourist brand

Consumers in their ideas and behavior do not distinguish between marketing, sales or customer service. These distinctions are relevant in detail only for business. For the individual user, they are simply different aspects of the same thing that do not affect them. Impressive online video is just as essential to the user experience as the use of the product itself. These interactions are part of the company's brand image and each brand impact gives more meaning to this image and experience.

The tourist brand as a concept in marketing describes the tourist service, which has established its image and reputation in the market. It is not a simple set of logo, name or destination, but the way consumers perceive the company and its services. In this regard, tourism marketing is a process of creating, developing and managing a tourism brand. Branding methods can be very different - from a simple corporate identity layout to a massive PR campaign. For this reason, it can be concluded that branding is a set of actions aimed at forming an overall positive image of the travel company, its products. More generally, branding involves the management of the brand and its reputation.

The goal of building a brand is to create an experience for consumers through highly influential ideas and associations and to predispose them to pay a premium price for the brand.

Although a brand is everything that is controlled by its owner, it is also seen as everything that arises in the minds of customers. Brand are the ideas, memories and feelings that arise every time a person thinks about consumption.

The emergence of global information networks, and especially the Internet, has led to a revolution in the fields of management and marketing. The changes affected both the external relations of the companies and their business partners, as well as the internal business processes in the companies themselves. Not only new approaches to business management are constantly appearing, but the existing ones are radically changing.

Information has established itself as one of the main marketing tools for managing the tourism business.

We analyze the properties of existing information systems.

Table 16

Properties of information systems²¹

Types of Information Systems								
Type of inf. system The	nature of perception	The nature of the flow of information			Submission of information		The nature of communication with the audience	
	Optical	Acoustic	Directional	Interactive	Dynamic.	Static.	An individual.	Mass
Telephone	-			+	+	+	+	-
Print	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
Radio	-		+	-	+	-	-	+
TV	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
Internet	++ ++ ++ ++							+

Based on table it is concluded that the Internet has an advantage over other information systems. Through the Internet, potential customers can be in constant contact with the advertiser. Therefore, this system, which was originally created for training and research, is increasingly attracting the interest of the tourism business.

At the present stage, the digital environment is ideal for the implementation of tourism branding. The advantages of the online environment are mainly manifested in the following:

- *in reaching a huge audience of users compared to traditional communication channels;*
- *in the speed of information dissemination;*
- *in the ability to control and manage all processes;*
- *in direct interaction with users and the ease of receiving feedback. For example, when using blogs for brand development, the comments below them can be understood as the prevailing opinion of users;*
- *in the low cost of marketing activities as a result of the use of digital tools. For example, the cost of making a website, its SEO optimization and advertising combined will cost less than the cost of TV advertising.*

Conceptually, the travel brand remains a brand in any environment, both online and offline. But the work of creating, developing and managing a new tourism brand in a digital environment has its peculiarities.

When creating a travel brand in a digital environment, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of Internet users.

²¹ Zalozhnev A.Yu., Information technologies of marketing. Customer Relationship Management, M. 2009

In the process of formation and development of the tourist brand the differences are more and more significant. The main emphasis is on the creation, optimization and maintenance of a commercial site, as well as marketing communication, more specifically the various manifestations of Internet advertising.

The main approaches in digital branding are related to the following processes²²:

First - search engine optimization or SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

Second - contextual advertising.

Third - banner advertising.

Fourth - PR articles.

Fifth - Social Media Marketing (SMM).

Sixth - viral marketing (through popularity).

Seventh - reputation management in the digital space.

All these approaches to digital branding are part of marketing tourism communication. The main task of this communication is to inform about the main competitive features of the brand and its advantages to reach the target audience in order to lead to consumption of the product of this brand. In this regard, all the functions of marketing communications are reduced to two main tasks - increasing sales and brand promotion and three main functions - informational, expressive and motivating.

In recent years, advertising campaigns and business events have increasingly been conducted through digital networks. Assessing their effectiveness has become a major problem, as huge sums are invested in the development of the tourism business every year.

One of the most important and popular indicators for measuring the effectiveness of online advertising is the ROI. The following formula is used to calculate the ROI²³:

Formula 15

$$ROI = (PRO - INV) / INV$$

where:

PRO = profit from the advertising campaign

INV = investment for the advertising campaign

Internet advertising makes it possible to track the actions of users and thus to see what profit these actions bring. The calculation of this ratio is done by the product of the value of the click (determined depending on the conditions of the Internet campaign) and the conversion rate - CTR.

CTR (click-through rate) is an indication of the ratio that measures the frequency of clicks on the ad. The formula for calculating CTR is as follows:

Formula 16

$$CTR = \frac{Clicks}{Impressions}$$

where:

Clicks = number of clicks

Impressions = number of impressions

In practice, it is difficult to unambiguously determine what a good CTR should be. Google's online advertising value of about 0.4% is considered an average, while Facebook's average is about 1.0%.

²² Davenport, T. and James E. Short, *The New Industrial Engineering: Information Technology and Business Process Redesign*, 2015

²³ Capon, N. and R. Glazer, *Marketing and Technology*, 2010

Sometimes a small number of clicks can cause an advertiser to think that the ad is appearing in vain or there is an error in the settings. But this is not always the case.

To confirm this argument, the well-known marketing model AIDA (A-attention, I-interest, D-decision, A-action) is presented. When all 4 stages of AIDA, namely-attention, interest, decision, action, are implemented, any marketing strategy can be considered completely successful. But this does not mean that in case of interruption of any of the stages, the marketing strategy should be considered unsuccessful.

The CTR should be approached with understanding, because it does not reflect the costs incurred for advertising or the profit received from it. This does not mean that it does not matter, but that it simply needs to be analyzed along with other indicators.

Several methods for increasing the CTR are analyzed and they are presented in the image.

Figure 8

Methods for increasing the CTR



*Графиката е изготвена собственооръчно в Adobe Illustrator

The given model shows 4 main methods for increasing the CTR coefficient, Each of them is considered:

Quality of an advertising product. Advertising material must be written competently, with true and intriguing content. If there are images, they must correspond directly to the ad text and also be attractively designed.

Specificity when setting up the ad. It is necessary to target the target audience as specifically as possible.

Ad location. Most social networks have more than one location option for our ad. Not always the most expensive location turns out to be the most profitable. The location must be chosen according to the context of the ad.

Competitor analysis. It is necessary to monitor the actions of competitors. Customers who are in the same environment and with the same financial opportunities, most often turn to the company, offering them a greater variety of online promotions, gamifications, bonuses, etc.).

If this model is followed, the advertising campaign will significantly increase its CTR and consequently increase its effectiveness.

The coefficient VTR (view-through rate), measuring the attractiveness of the advertising message, is calculated by the formula:

Formula 17

$$VTR = TCV / TMI$$

where:

TCV (Total Complete View) - number of full impressions of the ad;

TMI (Total Measured Impressions) - number of impressions.

VTR is most commonly used to measure the effectiveness of an ad containing a video. Unlike CTR, VTR deals exclusively with the attractiveness of advertising, although it is ambiguous. Thanks to this ratio, the brand image on the Internet can be assessed.

CTI (click to interest) is a part of measuring the effectiveness of advertising. Calculated according to the formula:

Formula 18

$$CTI = VAI / TMV$$

where:

VAI (Visitors with actual interest) - visitors with real interest

TMV (Total Measured Visitors) - total number of visitors

In order to more clearly present the three complementary indicators - CTR, VTR and CTI prepared the following image.

Figure 9

Performance indicators



*Графиката е изготвена собственоръчно в Adobe Illustrator

The image shows the user's action and what kind of efficiency the respective indicator measures.

So far, the presented indicators were mainly related to paid advertisements on social networks. One of the main advantages of social media marketing is that even without investing in paid advertising, the brand can still be advertised. To do this, you need to create a group or page and manage it properly.

The next indicators to pay attention to are those that are directly related to social media accounts²⁴. -Net growth (NG). Engagement rate. Scope of publications. Virality of the publication.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the effectiveness of social media marketing can be measured by many other types of indicators. The results of the study of the diversity of indicators are often ambiguous. In this case, the most frequently used ones are selected and presented.

3.3. Peculiarities in the use of graphic design and advertising image

The generality that is inherent in advertising and design is determined, as well as the peculiarity that determines their specificity in the tourist brand.

The English term design has different meanings - purpose, intention, project, plan, drawing, construction, drawing, sketch, composition and others. The designer is a designer,

²⁴ Halilov D., Marketing in social networks, M. 2014

constructor, draftsman, fashion designer, etc. Graphic design is the design of a message in the field of visual communications and the creation of a language for messages²⁵.

Initially, it was perceived as a montage of text with an image.

Advertising can also refer to project activities, but in the broadest sense of the word. Advertising communications are unfolding in the space of social engineering technologies (structuring the consumer world, user grouping, stratification, etc.).

However, neither design nor advertising is art. Contrary to works of art, designed to selflessly admire, touch or shake the personality with its spiritual and emotional content, both advertising and graphic design have a practical purpose, i.e. application functions. The purpose of advertising is to stimulate sales or to form the fame of the company. Graphic design is designed to perform the following main functions in the tourism business:

- first*, to identify, i.e. to determine the object and its affiliation;
- second*, to inform, i.e. to orient man in the urban world;
- third*, to advertise, i.e. to present and promote the tourist product at the expense of attractiveness and easy to remember;
- fourth*, entertaining, i.e. to orient to the values within the mass culture for recreation and entertainment.

Another characteristic feature of advertising and graphic design is the different situation with authorship. The creation of an advertising product, as a rule, is a collective technology, in which the copyright, by its nature, belongs to the group, the travel agency, etc. In the process of creating graphic design, authorship is extremely individual.

Graphic design and advertising also differ in their ultimate goals. The first is aimed at clearly presenting ideas, creating an impression on the consumer, and the second is focused on selling the product or service.

In the conditions of starting a tourist business, the advertisement can simply present a tourist product, using one or another artistic style, as the offer is made without a choice. The problem of unique sales arises when the market is saturated with excess quantities of tourism products and demand is formed, different from the needs of typical functional needs. The problem with emotional supply arises when the oversupply of tourist products is complemented and accompanied by innovations in culture.

The functional graphics for a unique tourist offer allows to create consumer interest by:

- *forming collections*, i.e. services of different companies with the same function;
- *styling*, which stimulates the demand for fashion performances and determines the moral obsolescence of existing tourism products;
- *formation of a certain graphic language*, through which an advertising appeal is created;
- *market segmentation*;
- *consonance of advertising ideas with the mood of the target audience*.

Necessary and sufficient conditions, allowing the consumer to make an emotional offer for the sale of a tourist product, are defined as:

- *overproduction of signs in the information society*;
- *growth of individual preferences and deep market segmentation*;
- *taking into account the point of view of the consumer who has formed emotional relationships with the brand*;
- *semantic (sign) saturation of the market*;
- *need for creativity in advertising - influence on a subconscious level*.

This distribution of information in the marketing scheme, analyzed separately, gives grounds to conclude that the visual communication in advertising to a greater extent carries

²⁵ Runge VF, Design of visual communications, M. 2006

information about the "advantages" and "values" of the advertised tourist product. "Peculiarities" are more relevant to verbal language. Such differentiation stems from the mechanism of influence of different types of information. If "features" imply unification of perceptions and rational processing of information, then "advantages" and "values" appeal to the emotional side and thinking, which largely corresponds to the visual language of the advertising image of the tourist product. It should be noted that the formation of consumer motives is directly dependent on the level of internalization of users of advertising for the values of the advertised product. In other words, visual communication as the main channel for the explication of "value" is beginning to play a dominant role in the advertising image, increasing its effectiveness.

It is recognized that the ratio between the visual and verbal component also depends on the type of tourist advertising. It is obvious that radio advertising can never become a visual communication, and advertising in the press will never be completely released from the word. However, even within individual types of tourist advertisements, the following trends are distinguished.

Table 17

Distribution of the visual and verbal component, depending on the type of tourist advertising

№	Type of advertising	Visual component	Verbal component (oral)	Verbal component (written)	Trends
1	Press advertising	+	-	+	Reduction of the verbal component
2	TV advertising	+	+	+	Reduction of the written component
3	Radio advertising	-	+	-	
4	Outdoor advertising	+	+	+	Opportunities for the oral component
5	Internet advertising			+	Integration
6	Advertising through souvenirs	+		+	
7	Cinema-video advertising	+	+	+	Integration
8	Postal advertising	+	-	+	Integration
9	Printing advertising	+	-	+	Integration
10	POS-advertising (point of sales - point of sale)	+	+	+	Integration

As shown in the table, in a significant part of the visual and verbal components of the advertising image in most types of tourist advertising there is a tendency for integration. However, in advertising in the press and television there is a tendency to reduce the relative share of the verbal component in the advertising image.

Some verbal technologies give the advertising text aspiration or direction - argumentation, suggestion, imitation.

Argumentation requires arguments in order to change the position or beliefs of the other party. The same technique is used in advertising argumentation, for example, the use of facts (figures, terms, descriptions of events), etc. The argumentative resource lies exclusively in the verbal plan.

Technological suggestions include appeals in advertising to national stereotypes, violation of borders and cultural norms, informational consolidation, widespread use of metaphors, verbalization of all kinds of human feelings and experiences, and more.

Imitation implies the presentation of certain patterns of behavior as role models, following an image. Applicable to the verbal element of advertising, imitation includes the typing technique: the use of typical representatives of the target audience, typical situations, typical language, etc.

With the help of social media, a number of key tasks for travel companies are being addressed. There are dozens of social networks and the choice of which of them a company should be present is a huge burden.

Three main types of social networks are separated and analyzed:

First - *general format social networks*. These networks are designed mainly for informal communication between users (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.). The huge audience of this type of network makes them especially attractive for use with marketing purposes.

Second - *professional social networks*. This type of network is designed for professional communication of users. An example of this type of cut is LinkedIn. They are ideal for finding new employees and business partners.

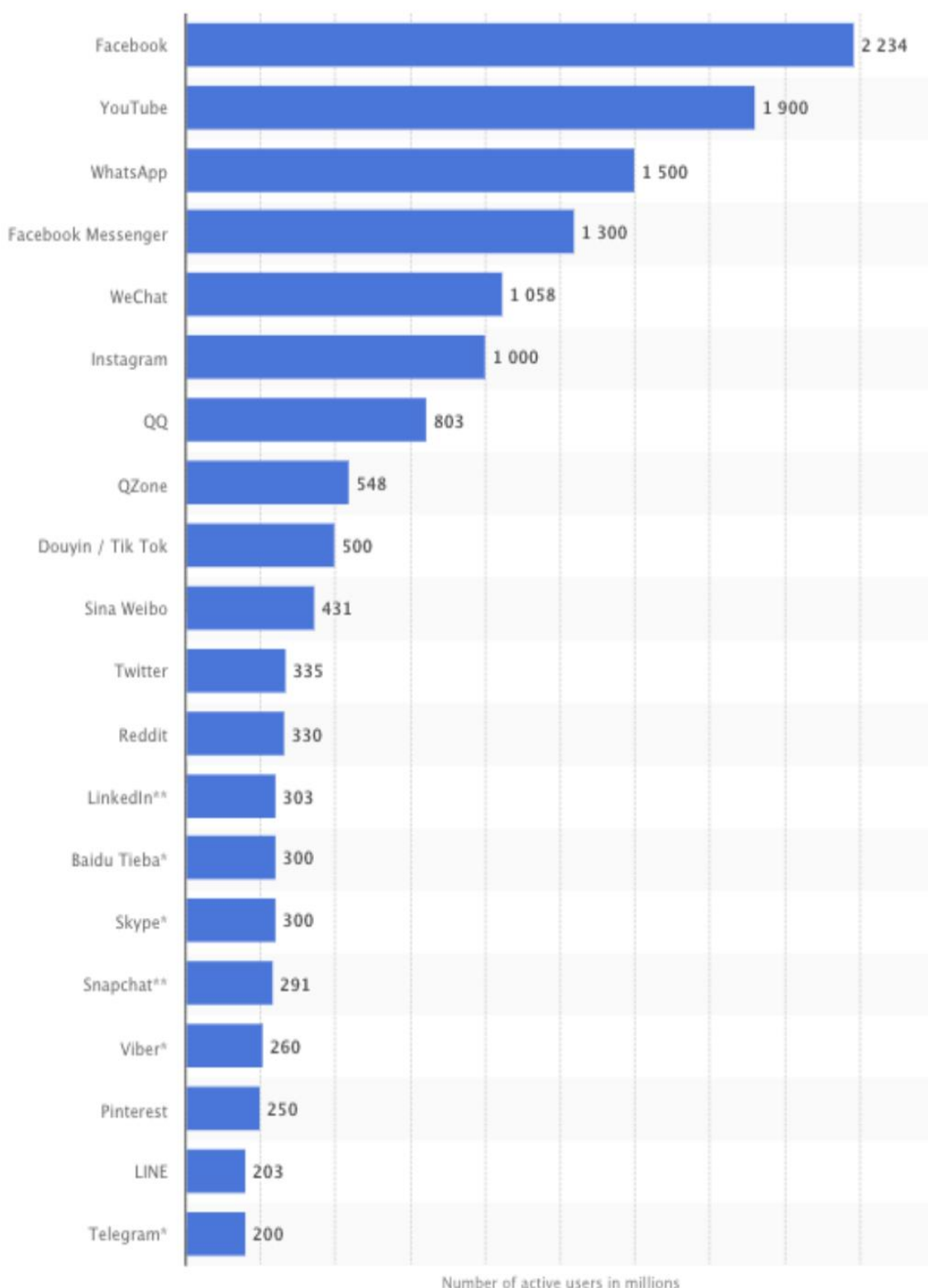
Third - *social networks of interest*. The advantage of social networks by interests is their uniqueness. Such networks are created so that users can communicate, united by their common interest in a given topic. It can be said that this type of network is the logical continuation of the thematic forums.

Apart from the type of social network, its popularity is also taken into account. The image shows a graph taken from the Global Net Index Panel, showing the number of active users of social networks²⁶.

²⁶ *Global Digital Report 2018*

Figure 10

Number of active users in social networks



The leadership of Facebook is clearly distinguished, this social network is the most popular in Bulgaria. There are about 3.3 million Bulgarian accounts there, and the distribution of men and women is approximately equal. Interestingly, 2.3 million users can be reached via computer and up to 3.2 million via mobile device. In second place is Youtube, which is very popular in our country. About 70% of Bulgarian online users visit it at least once a week.

Another social network used in Bulgaria is Instagram. About 500,000 Bulgarian accounts are registered in it.

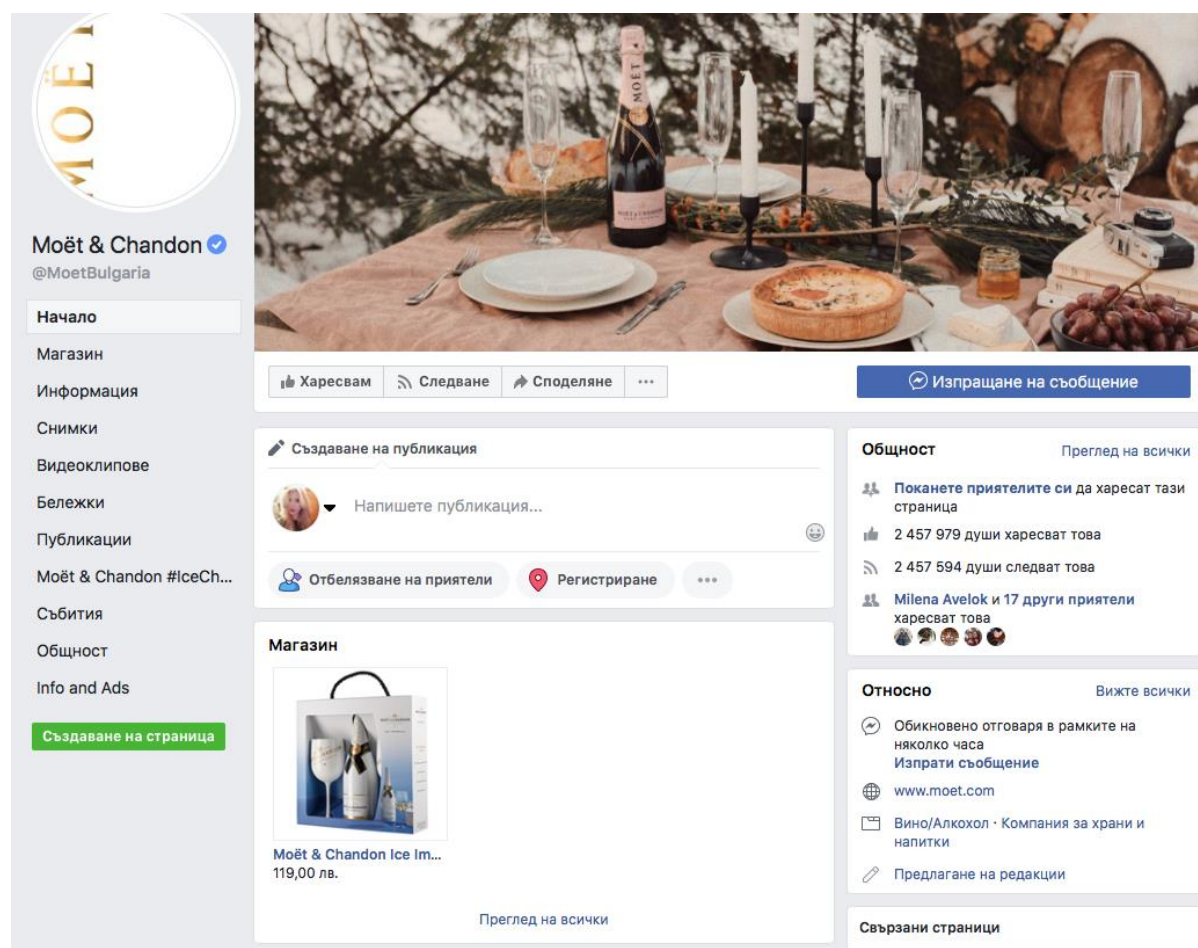
It is on these three social networks that special attention is paid.

On Facebook, each user can create their own profile with photos and personal information, through which to contact other users, make friends with them, show them their own photos and videos, share with them content interesting to him and so on. n.

The following image shows an example of a trademark profile on Facebook.

Figure 11

Sample design profile on Facebook The



main feature of the social network is the ability to create a Facebook group or Facebook page.

The table shows the main differences between the Facebook group and the Facebook page.

Table 18

Comparison of Facebook group and Facebook page

Criterion	Facebook group	Facebook page
Accessibility	Can be public, closed or even secret	Always public
Purpose	Communication with the audience	Official news about the brand, person or organization
Opportunity for action by followers (participants)	On participants are allowed to comment and post	Followers have the right to comment and post content if the administrator has allowed

<i>Interaction of followers (participants) with the content</i>	<i>Each post is published on the wall of 100% of the participants in the group.</i>	<i>The new post or was not covered in tape followers, depending on a complex algorithm, but never 100%</i>
<i>Targeting advertising</i>	<i>is forbidden (at the time of reading the thesis may be permitted)</i>	<i>Enabled</i>
<i>Internal statistics</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>has</i>
<i>the ability to upgrade</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>has</i>

Analyzing the table concluded that both formats have their advantages and disadvantages, but build tourism marketing strategy is better suited Facebook page. This solution is acceptable mainly for the availability of internal statistics in this format.

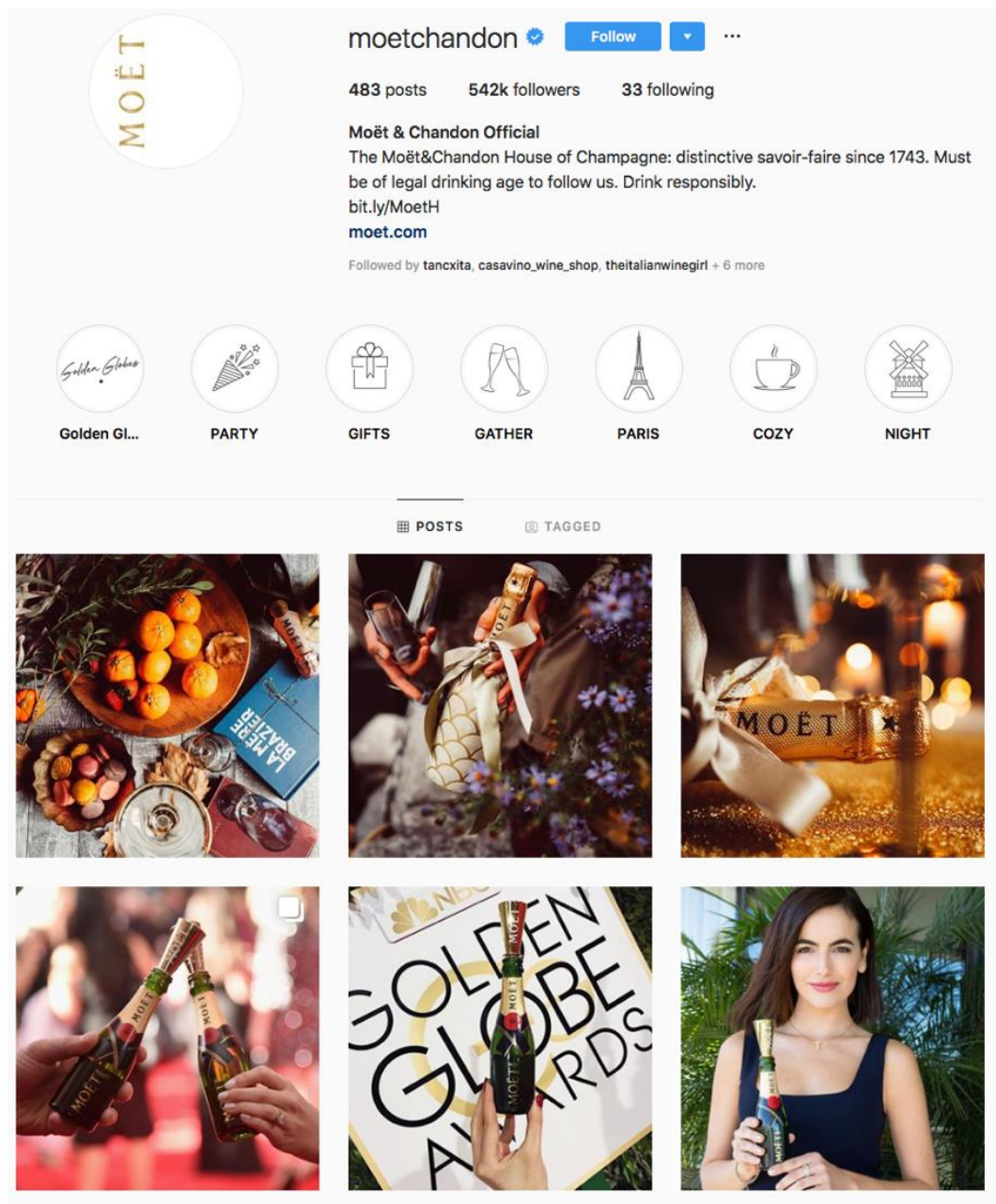
"Instagram" is a free application for sharing visual content, allowing users to do almost everything concerning photographs and video - day stories, live, share your own photos and videos as in **"Instagram"**, and in other social networks .

The main advantage of a travel agency and have an account in "Facebook" and **"Instagram"** is that the accounts can be connected. In this way, the tourist advertising campaign on social networks can be combined for both. This will reduce costs and increase its efficiency.

It is important to note that despite the connectivity of the two networks, Instagram is a separate product and has its own characteristics.

The image shows an example of a trademark profile on Instagram.

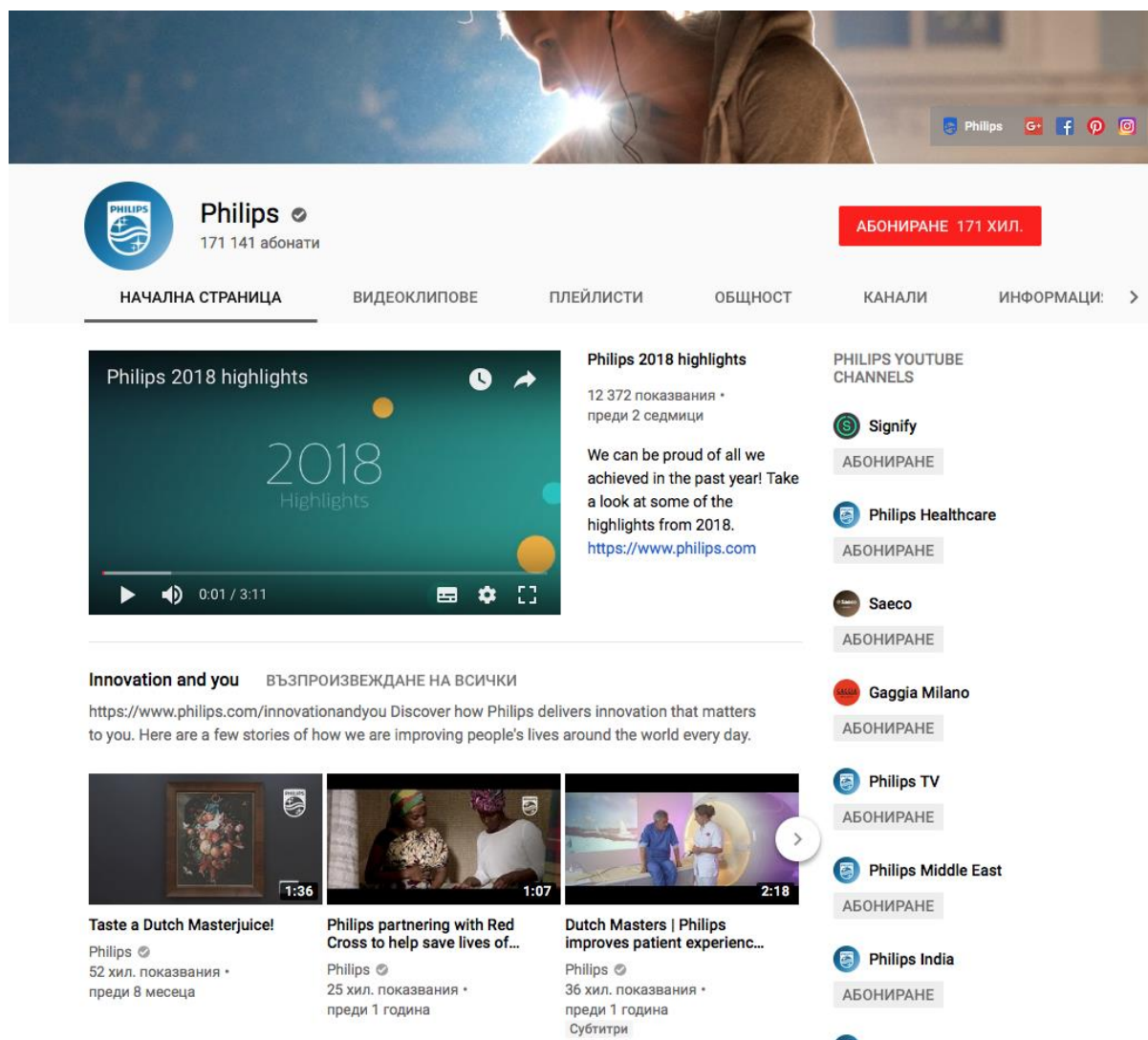
Figure 12



Instagram account design

Currently, Youtube is the third most visited in the world. The image shows a sample Youtube profile.

Figure 13



Youtube Profile Design

Youtube offers 2 main features to its users:

- *watching videos uploaded by other users;*
- *upload your own videos;*

Youtube videos can be easily and quickly shared on other social networks. Currently, "Youtube" is the most preferred platform for sharing video content.

Advertising on social networks is distinguished by its specific term - SMM (Social Media Marketing). The purpose of conducting SMM is to increase the loyalty of the target audience to a brand by developing brand activity in social networks, blogs and forums.

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of the tourism business in Bulgaria conducted in the dissertation follows the main conclusion: that the efforts of the tourism business should be directed towards consolidation to realize readiness for transition to innovative approaches to work.

At present, the tourism market in Bulgaria is still insufficiently studied in terms of its potential for development of competitive tourism goods and services and its readiness to transition to innovative approaches to work.

The analysis of the nature and peculiarities of the tourism business and the modern factors for its development conducted in the first chapter imposes the conclusion that marketing research should be focused on the following complex tasks:

1. *Implementing a regional campaign the potential demand for tourist services, respectively the existing supply, as well as the factors influencing them;*
2. *Analysis of marketing positioning of the tourist brand in social networks.*

The results of the complex analysis of the above main tasks required the following conclusions:

1. A key conclusion related to the marketing of the tourist brand in digital environment, *is the need to use innovative methods to develop a competitive product, namely, the methods of neuromarketing and survey research to study the behavior of the consumer of a tourist product.*
2. Based on the factor analysis of A. Tsvetkov from 2015. of the socio-economic development of the districts and the formed clusters the author of the present work offers the following theoretical generalizations:
 - different types of their socio-economic status are observed in all types of profiles;
 - economic development is influenced by security problems, but to a greater extent by complex factors;
 - the approach of low local taxes and fees to possibly attract investors and migrants will not yield significant results;
 - The tourist regions in Bulgaria require the application of innovative approaches to the planning, organization and management of tourism at the spatial level.
3. The analyzes in the present paper pose as a primary problem the need to develop programs to stimulate the process of clustering in tourist areas, as a basic form for formulating and implementing a policy for sustainable development of regional tourism. This approach requires a large amount of information about the producers and users of tourist services, about the factors influencing the tourist demand and the nature of this influence.
4. The author gives a practice-oriented definition of the "*tourism cluster*" as an economic institution and the most appropriate innovative approach to tourism development. A key feature that unites all interpretations of the concept of "cluster" is the proximity of participants (or elements) in the cluster, a model of internal interaction of participants in the cluster, which allows to form a new qualitative state of this community.

In the implementation of the scientific tasks the following results were obtained:

 - *The peculiarities of the system for effective work with the clients and the system for feedback with the users are revealed;*
 - *An appropriate marketing strategy has been developed with the specific elements for the most effective mix of marketing in a digital environment and the role of the tourist brand;*
 - *Features of graphic design as part of the innovative marketing approach for sustainable development of regional tourism are revealed;*
 - *An algorithm for the marketing positioning of the tourist brand in social networks is proposed;*
 - *An exemplary innovative structure in regional tourism based on a cluster approach has been developed*

Successful tourism business requires not only the ability to provide quality services, but also to know to whom, why and for what purposes they are needed. This can be achieved with the help of innovative marketing approaches.

The correct understanding of the tourist products desired by the consumers provides the tourist companies with an opportunity:

- *to forecast their needs;*
- *to reveal the products with the greatest demand;*
- *to improve relationships with potential customers;*
- *to understand what consumers are guided by when deciding to acquire a tourism product;*
- *to disclose the sources of information used for decision-making in the acquisition of a tourist product;*
- *to establish who and in what way influences the formation and decision-making for the acquisition of the tourist product;*
- *to develop an appropriate marketing strategy and specific elements for the most effective marketing mix;*
- *set up a customer feedback system;*
- *to create an effective system for working with clients.*

Thus, marketing research of consumers of tourism products involves the creation of a system for determining the range of data needed in connection with the company's marketing situations, their collection, analysis and reporting of results and subsequent use of research, a process consisting of a series of several stages. This set of tasks is solved with adequate resource provision.

The dissertation analyzes and studies the main innovative marketing approaches to the development of a competitive tourism business, in particular digitalization and visualization as the main marketing tools.

The research conducted by the author confirms the key role of digital marketing in the process of making an informed decision about tourist travel.

As an example of good practice we analyze the visualization and digitalization of marketing aimed at increasing the competitiveness of tourism products of the companies, providing employment by offering jobs, increasing the level of service to potential users of tourist services, expanding the spheres of service through contacts with international agencies for the implementation of exclusive tours and other forms of tourism.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that innovative marketing approaches in the tourism business allow travel companies to determine their positions at any given time, to expand the scope of services for potential customers, for a sustainable and stable presence in the market of tourism services, to direct its activity to increase profitability.

Scientific novelty

The main contributions of the dissertation are the following:

- 1. A structural-logical scheme is proposed, reflecting the author's view on the relationship between digital and visual aspects in marketing innovation.**
- 2. The author develops a nine-step algorithm for developing a successful marketing strategy.**
- 3. The need for transition to an innovative cluster approach for the organization and management of regional tourism structures in Bulgaria is justified.**

- 4. On the basis of an online survey, a factology was obtained, which enriches the theory of consumer behavior when choosing a tourist product in a digital environment.**
- 5. To determine the degree of innovation of the brand, a matrix is proposed, revealing the relationship between the branding strategy and the innovation of the tourism business.**