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**D.A. TSENOV ACADEMY OF ECONOMICS –
SVISHTOV
DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**

R E V I E W

for awarding the educational and scientific doctoral degree

Reviewer: Prof. Margarita Bogdanova, PhD

Author of the thesis: Magdalena Slave Andonovska

**Topic: Management of communications with the media for the formation of
public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia"**

I. Overview of the thesis

This review has been prepared on the basis of Order No 239/08.03.2023 on the confirmation of the composition of the Scientific jury in the open procedure for public protection of a thesis on the topic "Management of communications with the media for the formation of public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia" developed by Magdalena Slave Andonovska, for the acquisition of the educational and scientific doctoral degree in the professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, Subject 'Organization and management outside the sphere of tangible production (Public Administration) '.

The review is in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria - ZRASRB, the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov.

The relevance of the topic is undeniable due to the serious problems that are observed in the media environment in many Balkan countries, respectively in the management of processes related to the formation of public opinion. At the same time, there are tools that can be used and it is in this connection that the **purpose** of the development is formulated: *to determine aspects of information modeling and the impact of overall media communication on public opinion, and of course how this affects individual citizens. What is the harm or benefit to society, to citizens, or to the various other parties to the process.* As part of the goal, the author's intentions are *to propose measures and mechanisms for change and development, combined with a better regulatory system.*

The **object** of the study is the media in the Republic of North Macedonia, and the **subject** is the management of communications with the media to form public opinion in the country. Three tasks have been formulated, the execution of which corresponds to the research framework of the thesis.

The main **research thesis** is that *institutionally supported and science-based management of media and media communications is a key condition for the formation of public opinion, for the reliability and truth of media publications in the RNM and, supported by a strategic approach, becomes a factor of stability in future EU accession and full integration.*

Three main sub-theses are also formulated to clarify the author's intentions in the research process.

The work consists of 240 pages, of which 217 pages are main text, including literature, and 22 pages are annexes. Structurally, the work contains an introduction, an exposition consisting of 3 chapters and a conclusion, a list of the literature used, 12 appendices, a list of the designations used. A large number of literary sources related to the topic of the dissertation – a total of 117, including in Bulgarian, Serbian, English and German, were processed.

The volume of the dissertation work, the visual aids - a total of 22 figures and 47 tables, as well as the processed scientific literature meet the requirements for similar types of scientific works.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the thesis

The **introduction** contains the necessary attributes – relevance of the research, a research framework that is well grounded and provides a basic idea of the doctoral student's intentions, the research toolkit, the expected results, the structure and the restrictive conditions. The methods used for the study of secondary sources, for empirical research and processing of the obtained results, and for formulating the necessary strategic decisions according to the author - according to the formulated tasks - are presented in detail. The degree of development of the topic by Bulgarian, Macedonian and other foreign researchers in the field of media communications is also indicated.

The **Chapter One** is devoted to the role of media communications for the development of society. The doctoral student explains correctly, with understanding and in sufficient detail the most important highlights of the practice of public relations as an integral part of the media in recent years. Their importance for building the democratic capacity of the state is assessed. The main determinants of the media are revealed. Special attention is paid to the media work standards in RNM, incl. the introduced principles and reference documents for defending freedom of expression. Benchmarking of researched practices is also presented, which serves as a starting point for subsequent analyses.

In the **Second Chapter**, the management of the media in the RNM is examined. Their functions, issues related to the regulation, organization and business models of the media are examined and evaluated in detail. A wide-ranging analysis of the activities of the main institutions involved in the management of media communications was carried out.

In the **Third Chapter** are presented the results of the empirical study of the influence of media communications on the formation of public opinion in the RNM. Graphic

presentation of the data obtained and analytical estimates were made. Important guidelines for successful media communications are highlighted. The strategic initiatives are defined by a proposed new concept for the development of media communications in the RNM.

The empirical research is done precisely. The methodology is clearly presented - a standardized survey through a specially designed survey with closed and open questions. The survey card is presented in an appendix. An approach of "a sufficiently large finite number of representatives (sample)" was chosen, which was justified by the "practical impossibility of clarifying the values of the investigated characteristics for all representatives of the general population". A "controlled mailing" of the survey card was implemented with a view to attracting respondents who were knowledgeable about the questions in the survey. 40 media were surveyed, selected by the random sampling method.

One main hypothesis and six additional hypotheses were defined and proved by means of statistical analysis. Data were processed with SPSS® Statistics. One-dimensional and two-dimensional distributions (cross tables) of the obtained results are presented. Conclusions adequately present the main results and the logical connections between them.

In the **conclusion**, based on the data from the empirical study, final conclusions and recommendations are summarized for the improvement of institutionally supported and scientifically based management of the media and media communications, which corresponds to the research thesis of the dissertation work.

At the end of each chapter, conclusions and summaries are presented, which not only summarize the results obtained but also draw conclusions and qualitative interpretations that give an overall picture of the problems studied.

The author seeks the place of the media somewhere "between communication and economic science", i.e. considers the imposed business models of the media in PCM as a factor for freedom of speech. In this sense, the topic is loaded with political burdens because it affects the role of the rulers in ensuring media freedom. This realistic view deserves respect and perhaps explains why the thesis is defended in Bulgaria and not in the RNM.

The work is distinguished by its multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary character. Financial, organizational, marketing, technological, ethical and legal aspects of the media are examined, incl. references to copyright law and regulations in the RNM.

The chosen approach of strategic analysis of the issues is in line with the thesis objectives and shows some important directions for future investment and development which in practice express 'the potential to increase value creation in media business organisations and hence to increase their competitiveness'. It also addresses social issues related to the role of the media, including media literacy, hate speech, reinforcement of stereotypes and their negative impact on society.

These aspects of the work are summarised in six final 'leading proposals' which summarise the author's conclusions on the chosen topic.

The thesis is written in an understandable language with correct use of the specialized scientific terminology of the issue. There are no significant deviations from the theses in the

exposition, repetitions of views and passages, as well as the presence of logical contradictions.

I believe that the rules of scientific ethics have been observed when citing literary sources.

The abstract accurately and fully reflects the work. It is developed according to the requirements, contains all the necessary details and presents the main problems in a broad form. It contributes to the acquisition of a complete understanding of the scientific value and practical applicability of the achieved scientific and applied scientific results, in the context of the author's proven research thesis.

The submitted publication reference shows that the doctoral candidate has published one study and three articles, one of which is indexed in Scopus. This goes beyond the minimum national requirements for a 'doctor' qualification. Two participations in scientific forums are also mentioned, which shows that the doctor's ideas have reached a wide audience.

III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The Statement of Scientific Contributions lists three contributions, which can be formulated as follows:

- By means of a benchmarking study, good practices in the functioning, management and regulation of the media in the RNM were evaluated.
- A survey was conducted, on the basis of which the main parameters of the media environment in RNM were defined in several sections. The outlined picture of the media environment has been critically analyzed, taking into account objective barriers and circumstances related to media regulation in the RNM, which to a large extent predetermines the potential for the development of a free, competitive media market.
- A Concept for the development of media communications in the RNM is proposed with formulated priorities, specific goals, target groups and the interventions for their inclusion, as well as activities to achieve the planned goals are identified.

In purely practical terms, there is considerable work to be done in validating this concept and its recognition by the indicated stakeholders, but this is an issue that is beyond the objectives of the thesis.

I believe that the contributions formulated in this way adequately reflect the author's achievements. The dissertation work is dominated by scientific and applied results, which is typical for most works in the educational and scientific doctoral degree.

IV. Critical notes and recommendations

As a member of the teaching department and as an internal reviewer, I observe the progress of Magdalena Slave Andonovska in developing the dissertation work and the

consistency with which the recommendations were reflected. I have no critical remarks about the author.

I recommend that he continue to work and publish the results of his research, incl. in Bulgaria, as the topic is current and covers relevant issues in our country as well.

V. Summary conclusion and opinion

The thesis submitted for review is an up-to-date and significant independent scientific study with theoretical summaries and practical contributions. The author has planned and implemented a research methodology that is adequate to the described problems, and the conclusions are correctly presented. Independently are reached conclusions and generalizations that complement and enrich existing knowledge and the application of existing theory in the analysis of specific management problems. These merits fully cover the requirements of the regulatory framework in the country - ZRASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov.

With complete conviction, I give a categorical positive assessment of the dissertation work and propose to the scientific jury to award Magdalena Slave Andonovska an educational and scientific doctoral degree in professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty "Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (Public administration)".

30.03.2023

Reviewer: ...

(Prof. Margarita Bogdanova, PhD)