

## REVIEW

of a thesis for awarding the educational and scientific doctoral degree in the doctoral program "Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (public administration) in the Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov

**The review was prepared by:** Prof. Ivalinka Pencheva, PhD, University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, Faculty of Economics, Department of "Economic Management"

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

**Author:** Magdalena Slave Andonovska

**Academic supervisors:** Prof. Lalka Borisova, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Mihail Chipriyanov, PhD

**Basis for presenting the review:** Order No. 239 of March 8, 2023 of the Rector of the Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov for participation in a scientific jury for the defense of a dissertation thesis

### I. Information about the doctoral student

The creative autobiography presented by Magdalena Andonovska includes information about her employment from 1995 to 2022. Until 2013, she was a journalist, holding various positions - columnist, analyst, commentator and editor. After that, she was a lecturer at the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje at the Faculty of Public Relations and Marketing. At the same university, she also held the position of "Director of Communications". Since 2017, she has been appointed to the State Election Commission as a communications expert.

The information in the creative autobiography of doctoral student Magdalena Andonovska shows that she has performed work activities that are relevant to the topic of the dissertation thesis. This is a prerequisite for scientific interest and motivated research behavior.

## II. Overview of the thesis

The presented thesis „Management of media communications for the formation of public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia“ is aimed to find a solution to a number of problems relevant to the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) corresponding to the relational relationships between the management of media communications and the formation of public opinion.

**The subject** of the research is focused on the process of managing media communications for the formation of public opinion in the RNM.

The presented thesis is 240 pages long, 210 of which are main text, 7 with used literature and 23 pages of appendices. It contains an introduction, a three-chapter exposition, a conclusion, reference literature, and 12 appendices. The literature used includes a total of 117 literary sources, 71 of which are in English. To enhance the exhibition, 22 figures and 47 tables are presented. There is a proportionality between the volumes of the individual heads. The subject of the research, its volume and structure, as well as the researched and used literature sources fully meet the established standards for the development of scientific work for the educational and scientific doctoral degree under the doctoral programme „Organisation and management outside the sphere of material production (public administration).“

## III. Assessment of the form and content of the thesis

The topic of the scientific paper submitted for review "Management of media communications for the formation of public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia" is related to the search for a solution to a problem relevant to a contemporary pluralistic society, namely creating a better order in the media environment. The solutions proposed in the dissertation work to this problem in RNM will contribute to increasing the competitiveness and freedom of the media, reducing political influence on the media and media communication, forming media literacy and critical thinking in different social groups, etc. This, in turn, will contribute to raising the media image of the RNM and the positive outcome of the EU accession efforts, which makes the topic undeniably relevant.

The study is subordinated to the main thesis of the author that institutionally supported and science-based management of media and media communications is a key condition for the formation of public opinion, for the credibility and truthfulness of media publications in the RNM and, supported by a strategic approach, becomes a factor of stability in future accession and full integration into the EU. In this regard, **the aim** of the dissertation work was also



formulated, namely to determine the aspects of information modelling and the impact of overall media communication on public opinion and individual citizens, as a result of which to propose measures and mechanisms for change and development, combined with a better regulatory system. **The tasks** set are linked to the achievement of the main objective.

**The subject** of the research in the proposed document is the media in the RSM and the subject, as already mentioned above, is the process of managing communications with the media to form public opinion in the country. The methodology used is based on a number of research methods such as: system-differentiating and system-integrating, descriptive, comparative, inductive and deductive, heuristic. In formulating alternative strategic solutions and development mechanisms, the author uses modelling/business modelling, strategic analysis, risk analysis, descriptive methods, etc.

All this gives me reason to conclude that the relevance and significance of the dissertation work are well argued, the goals and tasks - clearly and precisely formulated, and the object - actually existing. Regarding the **elaborating of the problem** of the research field, it cannot be claimed that it is new. At the same time, the author's ability to analyze and evaluate processes and activities in accordance with the surrounding environment leads to generalizations and conclusions that are relevant to objective reality. On this basis, he shows his own understanding and attitude to the problems under consideration and offers opportunities for their solution.

**The volume** of the thesis (240 pages) and its structural differentiation (introduction, three chapters, conclusion, literature used and appendices) follow the established standard for such research.

The formulated **theme** shall be characterised by clarity and focus on the issues under consideration.

**The introduction** is built logically correct. It justifies the relevance and relevance of the research. Its subject and object are correctly stated. The research thesis, the aim of the research and the tasks leading to its achievement are clearly formulated. The restrictive conditions under which the study is conducted are also indicated.

**The first chapter** of the thesis is dedicated to the theoretical determinants of communication in the media environment. The role of media communications for the development of society is characterized. The media is seen as an indispensable factor in carrying out public relations. The author comes to the conclusion that they are essential for building the democratic capacity of the state. The main determinants of the media are revealed, emphasizing media pluralism, internet communications, social media and the formation of



public opinion. Special attention is paid to the media work standards in PNM, incl. the introduced principles and reference documents for defending freedom of expression.

The conclusions reached by the author at the end of the first chapter show a thorough knowledge of the theoretical determinants of communication in the media environment.

**The second chapter** of the dissertation is focused on the media management in the RNM. The way in which they operate and are managed was subsequently examined. In this context, the specific aspects of the business management of media organisations and the value creation of their work were assessed. The applicability of the main value creation models has been assessed. A comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the activities of organisations and institutions involved in the management of media communications has been carried out. At the end of this chapter, the doctoral candidate summarises and reaches conclusions that show a comprehensive, comprehensive and detailed study of the way media management is handled in the RNM.

In the **third chapter** of the thesis, the results of the empirical study of the influence of media communications in the formation of public opinion in the RNM are presented. A graphic presentation of the received data was made and analytical evaluations were made regarding: the specifics of work and creation of media content; external pressure on the media; the managerial and editorial approaches used; upholding freedom of speech and satisfying the public interest and democratic values. On this basis, the author outlines the guidelines for achieving successful media communications. It proposes future initiatives that will lead to the improvement of media communication for the formation of public opinion in the RNM. They are defined by means of the proposed six-component new concept for the development of media communications in the PNM.

The conclusion provides summaries, deductions and recommendations based on the study carried out. They show the performance of the tasks and the achievement of the stated objective.

The above gives me reason to conclude that a comprehensive study of the management of media communications for the formation of public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia has been achieved through the content of the dissertation. It has been demonstrated that institutionally supported and science-based management of the media and media communications is a key condition for the formation of public opinion, for the reliability and truthfulness of media publications in the RNM and, backed by a strategic approach, becomes a factor of stability in future EU accession and full integration.



To reinforce the exposition, the results of the research and the conclusions, 22 figures and 47 tables, which are the work of the author, are presented.

The scientific linguistic and stylistic editing of the scientific work is precisely done. No deviations from the content, repetitions and logical contradictions were found.

No violations of the rules of scientific ethics were noticed, both in the dissertation and in the other materials related to the defense procedure.

The abstract is 35 pages long. It is properly structured and contains information that corresponds to the content, reflects the results achieved by the author and the contributions of the dissertation work.

#### **IV. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the thesis.**

**First of all.** Good practices in the field of media in the RNM in general, as well as in various aspects of their functioning, regulation and management in particular, were assessed.

**Second one.** Empirical research has been carried out with a clear and well-founded methodology and a logical link to the aims and objectives of the dissertation. A critical analysis of the results obtained in relation to the media environment has been carried out, taking into account the objective circumstances relating to media regulation in the RNM, which largely predetermines the unleashing of the potential for the development of media communications and the formation of a free competitive media market.

**Third one.** A Concept for the Development of Media Communications in the RNM has been proposed, which sets out basic priorities, sets out specific objectives, defines target groups (direct and indirect) and highlights the main emphases of communication with them. The concept also proposes activities to achieve the stated objectives.

I accept the above contributions as the work of the PhD candidate and believe that they will contribute to the implementation of a coherent policy for the development of the media environment and media communications, as well as to making progress in the formation of public opinion in the RNM.

The doctoral candidate presents four publications related to the topic of the thesis, including one study and three articles. One of the articles was published in a publication referenced and indexed in the international database Skopus. Two of the papers were co-authored, and the featured studio and one of the papers - independently. This shows that the ideas proposed and the results achieved in the dissertation work have found resonance and recognition in the specialized literature.



By submitting a list of publications, the doctoral candidate proves that he or she has fulfilled the minimum national requirements for the educational and scientific degree 'doctor' in field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Sector 3.7 Administration and management, scoring 45 points out of the required 30.

#### **V. Critical notes, questions and recommendations to the thesis.**

In this part of the review, I will afford to place one addition to the mentioned points of contribution, asking one question and making a recommendation to doctoral student Magdalena Andonovska.

The contribution I find is related to the characterization of the media as part of the public relations system. To the pluralism of definitions of public relations, in which they are seen as a management function, doctoral student Andonovska offers her own one, namely: public relations appears as a management function that assesses public views, identifies the policies and procedures of the individual or organization in the public interest, plans and implements programs of action to gain public understanding and acceptance.

In relation to the developed Concept for the Development of Media Communications in the RNM, it is argued on page 29 of the abstract that 'at a later stage after the completion of the strategy cycle it should be established as a Concept for the Development of Media Communications in the RNM'. My question is, what is the doctoral student's view of how the idea can be realized?

My recommendation to a PhD student, Andonovska, is that in the future, when she focuses on the study of media as part of the public relations system, she focus on relational dependencies that can lead to influence on public opinion.

#### **VI. Summary conclusion and opinion**

Based on the scientific analysis of the thesis on the topic 'Management of media communications for the formation of public opinion in the Republic of North Macedonia', I assume that it represents a completely independent scientific research with a theoretical-applied nature on a current and significant problem. I categorically consider that the dissertation contains scientific and applied scientific contributions and fully meets the requirements for the educational and scientific doctoral degree specified in the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Rules of Application. This gives me reason to give a positive assessment of the open procedure and to propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific doctoral degree to Magdalena Slava

Andonovska in the doctoral programme 'Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (public administration).

22th of March 2023

Reviewer: ..

(Prof. Ivalinka Pencheva, PhD)