

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Vilyana Ruseva, PhD

of the dissertation of KRISTIANA NIKOLAEVA CHESHMEDZHIEVA

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

in the field of higher education "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences" at the Faculty of
"Management and Marketing" at the "D.A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics - Svishtov,
professional field 3.8. "Economics", doctoral program "Marketing"

Subject: **COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR POSITIONING A SCHOOL IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT**

Scientific supervisor: **Assoc. Prof. Ivan Rashkov Marchevsky, PhD**

1. General description of the materials provided.

The materials for the defense of a doctoral dissertation provided by Kristiana Nikolaeva Cheshmedzhieva, namely a finalized work, an abstract and a number of presented and published articles and reports at national and international scientific and practical conferences, are in accordance with the requirements of the regulatory documents and show readiness for admission to defense.

2. Data about the dissertation candidate.

The candidate's educational and professional development began in 2014, when she entered the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov, where in the period September 2014 - June 2018 she studied at the OKS "Bachelor" in the specialty "International Economic Relations". In parallel with her higher education, in the period September 2016 - October 2017 she acquired a professional qualification in "Economic Pedagogy" at the same university.

In the period September 2017 – June 2018, the candidate expanded her knowledge and competencies in the field of modern marketing through a specialization in "Digital Marketing" at Software University. After completing her bachelor's degree, she continued her education at New Bulgarian University - Sofia, where from October 2018 to May 2020 she acquired a Master's degree in "Advertising Management and Visual Branding".

In 2021, the candidate upgraded her professional training with the qualification "Associate in Marketing Activities", acquired at Software University. Since September 2022, she has continued her academic development as a doctoral student in "Marketing" at the "Dimitar A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

In parallel with her studies in the doctoral program, during the period 2023–2024, the candidate will acquire a postgraduate qualification in "Informatics and Information Technologies" at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and Methodius".

The candidate's professional experience began in 2014 as a technical assistant, with responsibilities in the areas of administrative, technical and advertising activities. Subsequently, her professional development focused on marketing and digital

communications, gaining practical experience in media planning, social media management, advertising campaigns, audience analysis and communication with partners and influencers .

Since 2022, he has also been developing pedagogical activities, which he subsequently combines with work in the field of social media and digital PR. In the period 2023–2026, he also worked as a marketing expert, and since 2026, he has been developing his own entrepreneurial initiative in the field of education and digital technologies.

The candidate's professional path outlines a consistent development and upgrading of practical competencies in the fields of marketing, digital communications, advertising, social media and education. There is a combination of practical marketing experience with pedagogical activity and entrepreneurial initiative, and in recent years there has been a clear specialization in the field of digital marketing, content creation and communications management in a digital environment.

3. Evaluation of the content of the dissertation

The dissertation is structured in three logically interconnected chapters, which sequentially move from the theoretical clarification of the research problem to the development of a conceptual model and its testing in a real educational environment. This structure corresponds to the set goal and allows tracing the author's logic from the theoretical formulation to the practical verification of the proposed solutions.

The first chapter is of a theoretical and analytical nature and is dedicated to the positioning of educational institutions in a digital environment. The essence and features of positioning, the development of the digital environment, the role of social media and the transformation of communication strategies of school institutions are examined. The analysis allows the author to justify the need for strategic management of the school's digital presence and creates the conceptual basis for the subsequent construction of her own model.

Chapter Two has a pronounced methodological character and constitutes an essential part of the dissertation research. It develops a conceptual model for the implementation of the school's positioning strategy in a digital environment, which integrates analysis of the environment, formulation of a positioning goal, analysis of target audiences, building institutional identity, selection of digital channels, development of a communication strategy, reputation management, measurement of effectiveness and subsequent optimization. An essential advantage is the cyclical nature of the model and the inclusion of feedback as a basis for adapting strategic decisions.

This chapter also focuses on profiling the main target audiences, the specifics of generations Z and Alpha , the role of parents as strategic decision-makers, the choice of communication channels and the system of indicators for assessing effectiveness. In this way, the author seeks the relationship between audience characteristics, content, communication channels and measurable results of digital positioning.

The third chapter is of a practical nature and is aimed at testing the proposed model in a real school environment. Through a case study approach and analysis of secondary

quantitative data and marketing metrics, the applicability of the developed conceptual framework has been assessed. The results of the use of various communication channels have been analyzed and specific recommendations for SMART goals, KPIs, communication calendar, multi-channel approach, content adaptation and digital risk management have been formulated.

Overall, the content of the dissertation demonstrates a good connection between the theoretical propositions, the developed model and its practical application. I particularly positively assess the author's aspiration to transform the theoretical propositions about digital positioning into a practically applicable management tool for school institutions.

4. Evaluation of scientific and applied scientific contributions

I accept the contributions presented by the author, believing that they are primarily of a **scientific and applied nature**.

The main contribution can be defined as the adaptation and systematization of concepts from marketing, brand management and digital communications to the specifics of school institutions. A significant result is the development of a conceptual model for the implementation of the positioning strategy of a school institution through digital communication tools. The systematization of indicators for assessing the effectiveness of digital communication, as well as the testing of the proposed model in a real school environment, should also be positively assessed.

The practical value of the development is enhanced by the formulated specific recommendations for managing digital presence - using SMART goals, building a KPI system, a communication calendar, adapting communication to the specifics of individual platforms, a multi-channel approach, and managing risks in a digital environment.

5. Critical notes and recommendations

Based on the findings already made regarding the fulfillment of the quantitative and qualitative requirements for holding the academic position of "doctor", I have no critical comments or questions regarding the submitted materials for the competition and the overall presentation of the candidate. I would recommend developing the possibilities for generalizing the results obtained to different types of school institutions. In the future development of the study, it would be useful for the proposed model to be tested on a larger sample of schools and supplemented with primary quantitative and qualitative data.

The recommendations made are primarily of an advisory nature and do not call into question the overall positive assessment of the development.

6. Final assessment

The dissertation represents a current and practically oriented study of an issue of increasing importance for the management of contemporary educational institutions. The author demonstrates knowledge of theoretical frameworks in the field of marketing,

positioning and digital communications and the ability to adapt them to the specifics of the school environment.

The developed conceptual model, its testing and the formulated practical recommendations give reason to assume that the set research goal has been achieved and the main tasks have been fulfilled. The results of the testing show the applicability of the model in a specific educational environment, while the author outlines opportunities for its subsequent expansion and testing in various school institutions.

Although I do not know the candidate personally, I follow with interest her professional development and public appearances in the field of education, digital technologies and entrepreneurship. Based on my personal teaching and mentoring experience and my many years of work with student teams from the secondary education system, I can express my positive impression of her activity, consistency and aspiration to introduce and popularize innovative educational practices.

I believe that Kristiana Cheshmedzhieva has built a recognizable professional image, and her media and public presence brings additional value to her overall professional profile. Her ability to connect education with digital technologies, media literacy and modern communication approaches and to reach a wider professional and public audience through her work is particularly positive.

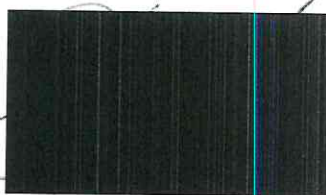
I am convinced that the successful completion of the current stage of her academic development will be a valuable achievement for the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov, which in this way supports the development of young specialists, combining scientific research with active practical and social engagement. I wish Kristiana Cheshmedzhieva to continue her consistent development in her academic career, transferring her accumulated practical experience, innovative approach and professional energy to her future teaching and research activities.

Based on the qualities of the dissertation work, the achieved results, and the formulated scientific and applied contributions, I give a positive assessment of the presented dissertation and support the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to the candidate.

11.09.2026

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Signature

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Assoc. Prof. Vilyana Ruseva. PhD