

# OPINION

from **Assoc. Prof. Stoyko Petkov, PhD**, Department “Media and communication”, New Bulgarian University.

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communication - Television Journalism).

with a dissertation on the topic: “**Media Transformation in the Context of Television Sports Journalism**”,

presented by **Desislava Lyubenova Frantsova**, full-time doctoral student in the Department of Communication, Public Relations, and Advertising of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",

with supervisors: **Assoc. Prof. Polyana Ivanova, PhD and Prof. Simeon Vasilev, PhD**

## **I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of dissertation**

The presented dissertation work consists of 203 pages in total (with 133 pages as the main text) and includes an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, contributions, bibliography, and appendices. The presentation is clear, with a precise use of scientific terminology. The bibliography cites 122 information resources, with 97 in Bulgarian and 23 in English.

The researched topic in the dissertation work is highly relevant and underexplored in the Bulgarian context. There is a dynamic and revolutionary change in how media content is created and distributed, as well as the shifting expectations, habits, and role of the audience in this process. This shift disrupts old practices rather than building upon them. Sports journalism is no exception to these processes. By integrating new tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR), sports journalists are actively engaging in the battle for the attention of an increasingly demanding and tech-savvy audience. Desislava Frantsova asserts that "the topic of sports and sports journalism will always be relevant due to sport's place in society and the audience's interest in sporting events." (p.6)

The research object is correctly defined by the author: Sports journalism in Bulgaria and media transformations in the sector, emphasizing on "...part of the processes, cases and conflicts that lead to a change in both the content and the work of sports journalists." The study involves observations and examinations regarding "the distribution of sports news through representatives from both 'traditional' and 'new' media."

The aim of the dissertation work is clearly outlined: to track and analyze current issues concerning sports journalism in Bulgaria. The goal is to identify trends within the profession that drive its transformations.

Research tasks are accurately defined and implemented across three chapters: The First chapter explores theoretical foundations, defines key concepts, outlines significant processes, and influences within the field; followed by an analysis of sports journalism as part of the public sphere in the Second chapter, where it provides information, analyses, comments, shaping understanding of sports culture's significance; Finally, the Third chapter offers a historical overview of sports television channels in Bulgaria alongside contemporary trends.

The abstract of the dissertation spans 28 pages containing all essential scientific requisites - summary of the dissertation work, object and subject of study, main scientific goals and tasks, methodology used, summarized conclusions, scientific contributions.

## **II. Contributions of the dissertation research**

Desislava Frantsova's interdisciplinary analysis critically examines key concepts related to television coverage of sports events within digital transformation's context and increasing reliance on AI for communication professionals.

This study is one of the first comprehensive analyses focusing on television sports journalism in the 21st century (in Bulgaria), highlighting crisis scenarios during coverage that could inspire further developments in this field.

By simultaneously analyzing legal documents, journalistic texts, scientific publications, and expert interviews with communication specialists, this research provides comprehensive

insights into contemporary television sports journalism trends - making it a valuable contribution to this field.

### **III. Notes and Recommendations**

I recommend that the author continues her research by incorporating content from sports online media, podcasts, and vlogs. These reach a younger audience and are the result of both professional and citizen journalism practices. While on page 8 there is an indication for research focusing on TV programs from Bulgarian national television channels, bTV, and Nova, **as well as** popular websites, vlogs, and shows available on the internet, in chapter three a more detailed analysis can be found only regarding TV sports programs like "At the front of the Stadium", "With the cleats forward" and "The Home of Football".

For clarity in the second contribution section, it is recommended to specify "in Bulgaria". (One of the earliest comprehensive studies on television sports journalism in the 21st century in Bulgaria...)

It is suggested that the third contribution be defined in a way that clearly emphasizes the scientific-applied nature of the dissertation.

### **IV. Publications and Participation in Scientific Forums**

The author has listed four scientific publications and five participations in scientific conferences related to the topic of the dissertation.

All requirements of the Regulations for obtaining academic degrees and academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" have been met while covering minimum national standards.

### **V. Conclusion**

Based on the qualities, achievements, and research results outlined in the dissertation entitled "Media Transformation in the Context of Television Sports Journalism" by author Desislava Lyubenova Frantsova, I confidently recommend that the academic jury award Desislava Lyubenova Frantsova with an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in Professional Field 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - Television Journalism).

Date: 19/08/2024

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. Stoyko Petkov, PhD