



REVIEW

from **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Kalinov**

Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications – Persuasive Communication)

with a dissertation on the topic:

„**Models of Persuasive Communication in the Imposition of Culinary Brands**“,

presented by **Antonia Ivanova Ivanova**, full-time doctoral student in the Department „Communication and Audiovisual Production“ of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisors: Prof. Dr. Chavdar Hristov and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mila Serafimova



I. Presentation of the doctoral (PhD) student on the basis of the submitted documentation

Antonia Ivanova Ivanova is a full-time doctoral student at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The topic of her dissertation work is "Models of Persuasive Communication in the Imposition of Culinary Brands", doctoral program "Media and Communications - Persuasive Communication", professional field 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences.

In addition to the PhD student's academic background and publications, she is also a practitioner with extensive experience in organizational communication in the private and public sectors, which undoubtedly contributes to a full-fledged and in-depth research.

II. Assessment of the qualities of the text of the dissertation

The total volume of the dissertation is 275 pages without the appendices. The bibliography contains 219 sources. Of these, 35 are in Bulgarian, 184 are in foreign languages. Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices. It is noteworthy that the bibliography meets academic standards and is correctly formatted.

The topic of the dissertation is current and relevant to the modern media and communication environment. Culinary brands occupy an increasingly significant place in the daily life of our society. Numerous print and audiovisual formats are dedicated to the culinary field, and personalities from this professional field become recognizable public figures who have a strong presence in the media and social networks.

The work was developed competently and at a high professional level. The dissertation can serve as a basis for a more in-depth study of "culinary brands" by systematizing the scientific achievements in this field. The object of the research is "famous chefs as imposed culinary brands". Its subject is the specific models of persuasive communication used in building personal brands and their corporate models. The author defines the purpose of the study as follows:

„...to conduct an analysis of the communication techniques and strategies in the persuasive communication of various celebrity chefs with similar tools of influence and changing people's attitudes and to highlight models of persuasive influence in the imposition of culinary brands by constructing specific behavior matrices through techniques and strategies for persuasion“.



The goal of the research formulated in this way is ambitious and includes many aspects that are difficult to research and related to the contextual positioning of brands. This necessitates a specific methodological approach in order to truly bring out the patterns in the communication situation. Overall, the dissertation achieves its goal. Antonia Ivanova should be congratulated for her hard work and the courage to attack such a challenging topic, which at the same time is not widely developed in the field of Bulgarian communication science.

The tasks set in the dissertation are relevant and meet the purpose of the research. These include:

- to consider the role of the persuasive communicator and related components of persuasive communication;
- to determine the techniques and behavioral strategies of persuasive influence in the imposition of culinary brands, as well as to consider visual rhetoric as a function of influence;
- to examine the concept of brand and define the concept of a culinary brand as a celebrity chef;
- to clarify the relationship between persuasive communication and cooking;
- to identify the scientific approaches that will help to create a research methodology;
- to identify patterns of persuasive influence through specific celebrities.

The assigned tasks have been successfully completed. Formulated in this way, they correctly reflect the doctoral student's research process and the achieved results, which make the work valuable in a theoretical and practical-applied sense. The applicable hypotheses described in the dissertation work follow the logical sequence of the development.

Overall, the structure of the dissertation corresponds to the researched issues and contributes to the persuasive argumentation of the author's theses.



The broad theoretical framework of the study makes a good impression. Key names from Bulgarian communication science such as Kaftandzhiev, Mavrodieva, Serezliev, Hristov and others are included. Foreign language sources present significant developments in the field by researchers such as Benoit, Berlo, Cialdini, Chaiken, Cacciopo and Petty, Festinger, Fishbein and many others. The entire first chapter of the study is devoted to the theoretical aspects of persuasive brand communication. Definitions of basic concepts such as persuasive communication, persuasion, propaganda, manipulation and social influence are presented. Various components of the persuasion process are examined, as well as applicable theoretical models and behavioral strategies. Special emphasis is placed on visual rhetoric as part of persuasive communication. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the specifics of the brand as a concept, its mass impact and added value.

Extremely valuable for the work is the second chapter, which examines cooking as a communication practice. Historical tracing of the genesis and evolution of the phenomenon is important to outline the context of the contemporary culinary brand. The "cooking show" as a format has been followed, as have cookbooks and other channels for celebrity chefs to communicate effectively.

The third chapter presents specific examples from practice, thereby outlining the applicability of the theoretical propositions. The examples from practice (case studies) chosen for research are suitable, comparable and allow the drawing of key conclusions about the modern culinary brand. The names of Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver, Anthony Bourdain and Jada De Laurentiis are recognizable, but at the same time they use different brand strategies, which makes the research complete and presents the variety of possibilities for building a culinary brand.

The final fourth chapter is also an impressive empirical contribution to the researched topic. It contains the results of a survey and in-depth expert interviews. The selected toolkit corresponds to the research objectives and has been successfully implemented. The results are displayed correctly. The sample size is impressive given the operational and financial constraints of writing a dissertation. 111 chef respondents took part in the survey, and the doctoral student also processed 22 in-depth expert interviews, which correspond to nearly 9 hours of time. Among the respondents, names such as Andre Tokev, Ivan Zvezdev, Antonio Ivanov, Leo Bianchi, Uti Bachvarov, Simeon Nikolov and many others make an impression. The selection of respondents shows an excellent distribution between popular and recognizable personalities among chefs and those with high professional vocations that do not receive as much coverage on television and other media platforms.



The presented conclusion perfectly summarizes what was achieved in the dissertation work. The research thesis has confirmed that “celebrity chefs use branding models, combining various communication techniques and behavioral strategies, including visual rhetoric, as well as building a personal brand and a good image in the culinary world by demonstrating talent and style, innovation and professionalism; good communication and trust with the audience; presentation of useful and practical information; active participation in social networks, training of chefs, support of charitable causes and other initiatives, media appearances, etc., as well as creation and maintenance of culinary communication channels - TV shows, books, websites/blog, video channels, etc.”.

III. Contributions to the dissertation research

I accept the stated contribution points based on what is stated in the text. The PhD student separates scientific from scientific-applied contributions, which makes a good impression. Science should be linked to practice in the field of social sciences, and the presented research achieves this goal. I have no objections to the thus derived and formulated contributions of the doctoral student, which are based on excellent theoretical work and a well-conceptualized, conducted and analyzed empirical study with a variety of methodological approaches.

IV. Notes and recommendations

The dissertation work is undoubtedly of value and contribution. It provides an opportunity to build on the text in future research. I recommend that PhD student Ivanova publishes her research in the form of a monograph, making it more widely available to researchers, practitioners and students.

V. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Doctoral student Ivanova applies 3 scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation work. This meets the requirements of the law as a minimum. It makes a good impression that the publications are in recognizable and well-established periodicals such as "Postmodernism Problems" and Newmedia21.

The requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" are met. The doctoral student meets the minimum national requirements according to the criteria specified in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

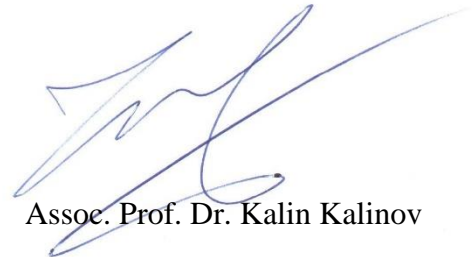


VI. Conclusion

The dissertation work of PhD student Antonia Ivanova Ivanova on the topic "Models of Persuasive Communication in the Imposition of Culinary Brands" is undoubtedly valuable and helpful. I hereby accept the proposed text and give a positive assessment for the acquisition of a scientific and educational degree "doctor" in professional direction 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - Persuasive Communication).

Date: 23rd August 2024

Reviewer:



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Kalinov