

OBSERVATIONS

On the dissertation paper of Panayot Krassimirov Stefanov for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor according to 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences – PhD Program "Media and Communications" (Mass Culture)

on the subject: "The prospects for the magazine as a media platform in a time of transformations of the paper press. Strategies of quality Bulgarian-language magazines in the beginning of the 21st century"

By Prof. Dr. Efrem Efremov

Information about the PhD student

Panayot Krassimirov Stefanov was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the Department of Press Journalism and Book Publishing on July 20th, 2020, with supervisor Associate Professor Georgi Lozanov. The doctoral student has completed the necessary activities on an individual basis, has successfully passed the exam in the specialty, was dismissed with the right to defence on 20 July 2023. On March 25, 2024, a procedure was opened for preliminary discussion of his dissertation work on the topic "The prospects for the magazine as a media platform in a time of transformation of the paper press. Strategies of quality Bulgarian-language magazines in the beginning of the 21st century"

We should note here that the doctoral student has defended his doctoral thesis in front of our department on 9th of May 2024. He has answered the questions raised, as well as conscientiously considered the critical comments of reviewers and colleagues from the department

Panayot Stefanov has a master's degree from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski, he has graduated from a bachelor's program in journalism with the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. His professional experience since 2015 was related to the Magazine "032", of which he was the founder, publisher and editor-in-chief. Despite its regional focus, he's practically made of the magazine a good read for people who are outside the Plovdiv issues. Our colleague is the winner of a number of professional awards, such as the award in the "Clean Journalism" competition of 'Dir.bg', an award in the "40 to 40" project of Darik Radio in the category of Media and Communications, etc.

Information about the dissertation and the abstract

The dissertation paper on the "The prospects for the magazine as a media platform in a time of transformations of the paper press. Strategies of quality Bulgarian-language magazines in the beginning of the 21st century" has a total volume of 311 pages (including References and Appendices), structured in an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a Reference and an Appendix. The bibliography includes a total of 200 sources, of which 107 in Cyrillic and 93 in Latin, its own empirical study was conducted using the semi-standardized interview method with open questions and a case study, 1 table, 11 diagrams and 4 images were included.

On the topic of the dissertation paper, Panayot Stefanov has indicated his publications of three articles in scientific collections and continuing editions with scientific peer review, which satisfies the requirements of the law for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of PhD.

The abstract comprises 24 pages and presents the dissertation work through a description and analysis of: the relevance of the topic, object and subject of the research, its objectives and tasks; working hypotheses; the methodology; necessary restrictions; content and main points. Here he lays out his main summaries; raises

issues and formulates his vision for magazine development. The abstract is accurate and meets the requirements of the law.

Assessment of the actuality of the problem

The topic is undeniably relevant. Above all, there are no similar studies in Bulgarian media science. For various reasons and with few exceptions, the journal did not arouse interest among native researchers. There is one more thing - the author of the study has published and still publishes a quality magazine with a regional focus. I have always supported practitioners who want to make sense of their experience and bring it to some theoretical foundations. Moreover, the current digitization and convergence of models complicates the sensitive derivation of clean formulations for release types. The author has set himself a rather ambitious task and has largely succeeded. Undoubtedly, his good theoretical preparation and extended methodological basis contribute to this success. I am grateful that the author has come to terms with internal paper defence notes and narrowed down his objectives, and that he has explained the scope of the study.

Assessment of Dissertation Contributions

I will depart from the traditional review listing and analysis of each chapter. Most important here is that the author has coped with his task. The text is analytical, the clearly formulated scientific hypotheses are proven. The author has clarified the concepts he worked with and outlined the specificity of the magazine as a media product. And it brings not only informational value to its readers. It is important to note that the PhD student directs his research gaze to the ever so important issue of paper press transformations. He coined his own term of "Paper Premium". I've had a hard time accepting it, yet I respect his opinion. It is very important to note that the

research is original and with enhanced authorship. Panayot Stefanov has demonstrated to us his critical reflection on the researched problem, he is capable of analyzing the processes and drawing clear and justified conclusions. I would not conceal especially liking the part where he justifiably defended the paper press and proven its importance.

Not insignificant is that the author logically showed his view of the prospects for the magazine's development. Those were logical and substantiated. The doctoral student showed knowledge and critical reflection, bringing out original theses, which he defended convincingly. The empirical part in conversations with established publishers took precedence over the theoretical statements, which was not a weakness of the paper.

Questions:

- What is the difference between an online magazine and a media platform?
- How does he understand and justify the term he introduced of "paper premium"?
- Why is there a worldwide "boom" of specialized and niche magazines?
- What is the typological difference between a weekly paper and a magazine?
- Does he think that a new "Press Law" would help create quality Bulgarian journalism (especially for magazines) and in what way?

In conclusion:

The present dissertation paper has a certain contribution to the research in public communications and information sciences and to media studies. Once again, I would like to point out this was his first study. Which brings the advantages and disadvantages of the "first". The advantages are definitely more.

Which gives me grounds to support before the respected members of the scientific jury the awarding of the educational and scientific degree of PhD /doctor's degree/ according to 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences – Doctoral program "Media and Communications" (Mass Culture) of Panayot Krassimirov Stefanov for the dissertation paper on the following subject: “The prospects for the magazine as a media platform in a time of transformations of the paper press. Strategies of quality Bulgarian-language magazines in the beginning of the 21st century”

Prof. Dr. Efrem Efremov