



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 – 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 „Communication, Public Relations and Advertising“ of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Polyva Ivanova and Prof. Dr. Simeon Vasilev



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

Desislava Lyubenova Frantsova 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 "Media Transformation in the Context of Television Sports Journalism", doctoral program "Media and Communications - Television Journalism", professional field 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences.

In addition to the academic experience and publications of the doctoral student, she is also an active sports journalist, reporter and presenter on the Bulgarian National Television.

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

The total volume of the dissertation is 133 pages without the appendices. The bibliography contains 122 sources. Of these, 97 are in Bulgarian, 25 are in foreign languages. Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices.

The topic of the dissertation is current and Desislava Frantsova's practical experience in the field contributes to the successful research. In the age of non-linear consumption of media content, sports seem to remain among the few phenomena that cause real mass viewing in real time. This is largely a strong argument for its importance in modern society. However, the field has not been bypassed by the media transformation and the presented research successfully outlines different directions in which televised sports journalism is changing.

The work was developed competently and at a good professional level. Citation requirements are met. The bibliography is correctly formatted. The dissertation can serve as a basis for a more in-depth study of television sports journalism, systematizing the scientific achievements in this field. In the presented text, the object and subject of the research are clearly defined. The subject is "*sports journalism in Bulgaria and media transformations in the sector*" (8 pages). The wording corresponds to the research conducted and to modern academic standards. The author defines the purpose of the study as follows:

„...to follow and analyze current issues related to the sports journalism in Bulgaria“.



The aim of the research formulated in this way is ambitious and includes many aspects that are difficult to analyze. This requires a specific methodological approach in order to truly draw relevant conclusions based on theoretical and empirical research. Overall, the dissertation achieves its goal. Desislava Frantsova should be congratulated for her hard work on a challenging topic.

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

- Theoretical basis, definition of the conceptual apparatus and outline of essential processes and influences in the sphere;
- Analysis of sports journalism as part of the public sphere;
- Historical review of sports television in Bulgaria. Defining the current trends in the field;
- Research part – analysis of professional and ethical standards and challenges in the profession through different methodological approaches.

The pre-set tasks have been successfully completed. Some wording may be adjusted in places to allow for a more accurate reflection of the PhD student's achievement. 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 theoretical framework of the study makes a good impression. Key names from Bulgarian sports journalism researchers such as Efremov, Latifyan, Veleva and others are included. The foreign-language sources present significant developments in the field of researchers such as Kunchik, Lipman, Rus-Moll, Schram, Sturm and others. The entire first chapter of the study is devoted to the theoretical aspects of the field. Some of the considered phenomena are too general as a theoretical statement. Among them are globalization, digitalization, convergence, mediatization. The chapter presents the stages of media transformation. Special emphasis is placed on artificial intelligence and its applications in sports journalism.



In the second chapter, sports journalism is presented as part of modern social processes. There is also a historical overview of sports television in Bulgaria, which gives a clearer framework of the investigated phenomena. Contemporary trends in sports journalism are outlined. An extremely valuable part of the chapter is the analysis of the development and impact of social networks. Issues such as internet regulation, fake news, disinformation and more are addressed. A parallel is drawn between 'traditional' and 'new' media in the context of sports content.

The third chapter is devoted to the study of professional and ethical standards and challenges in the profession through different methodological approaches. It is divided into 4 parts with a focus on individual problems and processes related to modern sports journalism. Desislava Frantsova has chosen to include in it bias in sports and sports broadcasting, the impact of the war in Ukraine on the sports field, the COVID-19 pandemic and television rights for sports events. It is appropriate to congratulate Ph.D. student Frantsova for the scope and courage to attack such significant topics in the context of the researched phenomenon.

The presented conclusion perfectly summarizes what was achieved in the dissertation work. The research highlights sport as a social phenomenon and a societal movement. The text manages to capture the dynamics in the field, a direct result of technological evolution. The specific aspects of modern practice presented in the third chapter are also examined in depth. Overall, the study is structurally, methodologically, and stylistically sound.

III. Contributions to the dissertation research

I accept the stated contribution points based on what is presented in the text, the excellent work with theoretical sources and the sought-after practical applications of concrete and abstract concepts from the field of sports journalism. I believe that the doctoral student successfully completes her research quest within the framework outlined at the beginning of the text.

As a particularly valuable contribution to the research, I would single out the doctoral student's theoretical work and conclusions from it:

"An interdisciplinary analysis of key concepts related to television coverage of sports events in the context of digital transformation and the increasing role of artificial intelligence for communication professionals".



IV. Notes and recommendations

The dissertation work is of value and contribution. It provides an opportunity to build on the text in future research. I recommend that Ph.D. student Frantsova publish 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 Frantsova presents 4 scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation work. This is more than required by law as a minimum. It makes a good impression that some of the publications are in recognizable and established periodicals in the field.

The author has also participated in 5 scientific conferences on the topic of the dissertation work, which is a clear indicator of the desire of doctoral student Frantsova to present the achieved results and to actively seek feedback from her peers in the process of writing the work.

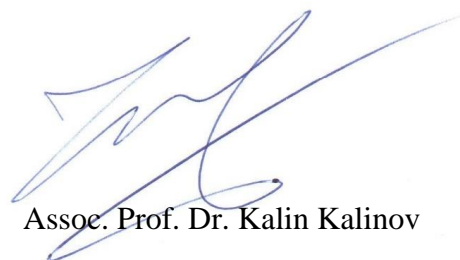
The requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" are met. The doctoral student meets the minimum national requirements according to the criteria specified in the Regulations for 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 Desislava Lyubenova Frantsova on the topic "Media transformation in the context of television sports journalism" 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 the professional field 3.5 Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - Television Journalism).

Date: 20th August 2024

Reviewer:



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Kalinov