



## OPINION

from Assoc. Prof. Diana Petkova, PhD, FJMC, Sofia University.....  
*(scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution)*

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

with a dissertation on the topic: "...Global Changes in the PR Business. Effective Social Media Management",....

presented by Maxim Moncho Behar....., free doctoral student in the Department of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Dr. Sc. Lyubomir Stoikov.....

presented by...Assoc. Prof. Diana Petkova.....

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

Maxim Behar's dissertation is devoted to a particularly important problem in the social sciences: the impact of social media and of the artificial intelligence on different audiences and groups. The dissertation is very well structured and consists of four main chapters, in which a balance has been achieved between theoretical interpretations and own research. The sources have been accurately cited and include 185 titles in the Bulgarian and English languages. The dissertation focuses on the global changes of the PR business at the beginning of the 21st century. Four main hypotheses have been formulated for the development of PR in the new information environment, emphasizing the key importance of social media and the new communication tools they impose. This is by no means a new thesis, but consistently and with concrete argumentation, Maxim Behar outlines new problems in the context of already existing theories and hypotheses about the role of social media in public communication. For me, the hypothesis of the rehabilitation of the figure of the leader is particularly important and interesting, a fact that becomes an essential reason for the new global "revolution" in the PR business, as defined by the doctoral student. The methods used in developing the problem are in-depth interviews and case studies.

The first chapter explores the traditional approaches and tools of public relations. An own definition of PR has also been proposed: "to convey the truth in a way that is



understandable to people, taking into account and analyzing professionally and in detail the characteristics of the audiences to which the communication is directed, as well as the characteristics of the promoted object - a person, product or service" (p. 21). The statement that one of the main tasks in modern PR is related to working with the truth is also important. Some links between PR and propaganda have also been traced, and the change in content has been examined in the context of the evolution of communication technologies and of the public communication. The thesis of the global merging between public relations, advertising and digital services has also been presented.

The second chapter concentrates on the global media transformations of the PR business. The existence of the media in its traditional version is threatened, and according to the PhD student PR agencies are increasingly turning into newsrooms. Although such a statement may seem extreme to some researchers, the fact is that mass digitalization affects not only the activities of the traditional media, but also significantly changes the main functions of public relations. An emphasis is also placed on the fact that visual content is gaining more and more importance. In this chapter, the doctoral student also formulates the practical rule "of the three s" in PR (speed, simplicity, self-confidence, p. 107-8).

The third chapter presents case studies and an international empirical study involving PR professionals from 65 countries. The own research continues in the following fourth chapter, where the possibilities of artificial intelligence are explored. The accent is put on storytelling as a PR tool for influencing audiences. In conclusion, the author of the dissertation notes that whatever revolutions are taking place in public relations, the task of PR specialists is to reveal truths and only complete transparency can ensure effective communication.

The abstract corresponds fully to the content of the dissertation work and is prepared according to the requirements.

## II. Contributions of the dissertation research

An essential contribution of the dissertation research is the critical analysis and the enrichment of already existing knowledge in the field of PR. I will point out here that the dissertation is based on the book "The Global PR Revolution", first published in English by AllworthPress in New York. In this sense, I would like to emphasize on the significant practically applied contribution of the dissertation. Its author has more than 30 years of experience in the research and practical field of journalism and public relations. This is why one of the most significant merits of the proposed text is the interdependence between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Hence, the presented work can be used by PR specialists and students as a valuable source of knowledge and skills.

## III. Notes and recommendations

I have no serious objections, but rather questions. The author shows extraordinary enthusiasm for the artificial intelligence. Although the introduction of artificial intelligence



as a PR toolkit can have a number of positives, aren't there also some challenges or disadvantages associated with it?

#### IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Maxim Behar has submitted a large number of publications on the subject of the dissertation, several of which are monographs. Thus, the requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for approving and disclosing the results of the research according to Art. 5, item 5 and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and art. 69, para. 3. have been covered.

#### V. Conclusion

In conclusion, due to all the contributions and merits of the dissertation work, I will vote with conviction for Maxim Behar to be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

Jury member: Assoc. Prof. Diana Petkova, PhD

Date: 26.10.2024