



## REVIEW

from Prof. Dr. Simeon Ignatov Vassilev, 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.

with a dissertation on the topic: "Visual Communication and Digital Environment. Content Management, Information Architecture, and Online Media Design – Communication and Accessibility“,

presented by Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva, full -time independent doctoral student in the Department of Press Journalism and Book Publishing of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Dr. Veselina Valkanova

presented by Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva

### **I. Presentation of the doctoral (PhD) student / applicant based on the submitted documentation**

Based on the submitted documents, doctoral student Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Sofia University. She has a Master's degree in "Design of electronic publications and websites" from New Bulgarian University. Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva has journalistic experience as a reporter and editor, as well as experience as a team and project manager in the field of management, communication and sports.

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

The dissertation of Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva "Visual Communication and Digital Environment. Content Management, Information Architecture and Design of Online Media - Communication and Accessibility" systematizes and theorizes visual



communication, digital environment and online media, focusing on the influence of information architecture and design on the perception of the audience.

The choice of topic is significant for at least two main reasons - the dynamic development of the communication process and the increasing role of visual communication. The dissertator rightly notes the key importance and power of visual communication to influence audiences, and its value to the media environment and media content, which is increasingly presented visually. In this sense, the relevance of the chosen topic is also relevant. It naturally stems also from the dynamics of techno-evolution, and specifically from the processes of digitalization and convergence. Media transformation posits visual communication as a powerful factor for audience perceptions and for the value of media content in general.

Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva makes a very convincing case for the contemporary media model, which is characterized by an "expansion of visual images". This is exactly why research in the field of visual communication and visual content is gaining more scientific importance and need for in-depth studies. This is the reason why I consider the topic of this dissertation to be relevant and significant.

The dissertation has a precisely formulated object and subject of research interest, namely - online media and their visual communication, and as a subject - the aspects of visual communication through which web-based publications in Bulgaria affect the recipient and influence his perception.

The research has a clearly stated aim and well-formulated resulting tasks, which also imply the set hypotheses. The research aim is to analyze the influence and psychological impact of different elements of visual design on the perception process, and the tasks derived from the aim are: defining the basic concepts, analyzing the cognitive processes, systematizing the tools of influence in the design of online media, design as a motive for website visitation and analysis of Bulgarian online media in terms of accepted



accessibility standards. What makes a very good impression is that among the tasks set by the dissertation is the search for practical solutions, which also gives the dissertation an applied character.

I find the theoretical foundation of the dissertation very well laid. An interdisciplinary approach to the topic has been used, integrating methods from graphic design, web design, journalism, psychology, sociology and media regulation. The focus of the proposed work is the psychology of perception, which determines the theoretical framework and methodological approach. The following scientific methods are applied and very well explained in the study: content analysis, comparative analysis, observation, experiment, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, survey, etc.

The dissertation structure consists of three chapters as the dissertation also consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendices. The dissertation has a total length of 258 pages (179 pages of main text) and is quite sufficient for a dissertation. There are 45 figures, 15 graphs, and 6 appendices that give the text the necessary visual value. The dissertation has a substantial bibliographic resource - a total of 125 sources, of which 89 are in Bulgarian, 28 in English, and 36 are Internet sources. The abstract accurately reproduces the content of the doctoral dissertation.

Chapter One of the dissertation sets the theoretical framework of the research. The focus is on the main theories related to visual communication. The cognitive processes involved in the perception of visual information are theorized. Key theoretical concepts in consumer perception and engagement are presented.

The second chapter presents the results of a study using the content analysis method, the object of which are 30 of the most visited media sites in Bulgaria. The ways in which online media use the tools of visual communication for media impact are analyzed. An important focus of this chapter is the influence of colours and images on consumer



attitudes and behaviour. Key concepts and approaches to information structuring and visual design are presented.

### **III. Contributions to the dissertation research**

The dissertation offers a theoretical framework for visual communication and psychological aspects of perception in a digital environment and proposes a systematization of key concepts on the impact of online media design in Bulgaria. It makes a theoretical contribution to the analysis of new media impact trends in social media, especially visual elements and their perception in the digital environment. I share the dissertation's view that the dissertation makes a scientific contribution to understanding the relationship between cognitive processes and visual communication. This interrelationship is particularly important in relation to the new role of the audience. In this sense, the dissertation also offers practical solutions for different visual strategies. I find the experiment on the so-called accessibility in the Bulgarian online media a particularly valuable applied contribution. I define its findings as a scientifically grounded call for the need of such legal frameworks to improve accessibility and visual literacy of users and creators of media content.

### **IV. Notes and recommendations**

The dissertation work of Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva shows the serious professional growth. I am convinced that the dissertation is of interest to a wide range of readers. In this sense, my main recommendation is that Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva should continue and further deepen her research in the field of visual communication and especially in terms of artificial intelligence from the perspective of information architecture and online media design.

### **V. Publications and participation in scientific forums**

The scientific publications of Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva on the topic of the dissertation are three and have been published in authoritative scientific collections.



Their content represents very well the dissertant's publication activity and theoretical competence.

Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva fulfils the requirements of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for approbation and disclosure of the research results according to Art. 5, item 5 and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, par. 1, point 4 and Art. 69, par. 3.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The presented doctoral dissertation by Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva is original scientific research that shows systematized theoretical knowledge, original reasoning and justified conclusions. The dissertation impresses with the theoretical basis, the analysis and the obtained research results.

Proceeding from all that has been said so far, I recommend the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science to Iveta Vanelinova Yordanova-Aneva for her dissertation on "Visual Communication and Digital Environment". Content Management, Information Architecture and Design of Online Media - Communication and Accessibility".

Reviewer:

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