



## OPINION<sup>1</sup>

from prof. Kristian Bankov, DSc., New Bulgarian University

*(scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution)*

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

with a dissertation on the topic: "Marketing communications of healthcare facilities for hospital medical care",

presented by VALENTINA IVANOVA MARINOVA, full-time / part-time / independent doctoral student in the Department Communications, Public Relations and Advertising of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Christo Nikolov Kaftandjiev, DSc.

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

Valentina Marinova has submitted for evaluation a dissertation, consisting of 229 pages divided into a preface, 4 chapters, and a conclusion. There are 228 titles in the list of references, of which 26 are in Bulgarian and 187 in a foreign language, 10 normative documents and 5 other sources.

The topic studied is extremely relevant, especially in the context of post-pandemic transformations in the healthcare system and the digitalization of communications. Its importance is also emphasized by the poor theoretical development of hospital communications in Bulgaria, which makes the topic of paramount importance for the theory and practice in the field of public communications.

The candidate demonstrates excellent bibliographic awareness and in-depth knowledge of a wide range of authors in areas such as social marketing, health communication, PR and advertising. Established researchers (R. Donovan, N. Henley, H. Rothfeld, N. O'Shaughnessy, A. Andreassen, R. France and R. Grover, etc.) as well as Bulgarian authorities are cited, which guarantees a rich theoretical basis.

The dissertation reinterprets and adapts existing theories to the specifics of the Bulgarian healthcare system, proving their applicability through specific cases, comparative analysis and contextualization. In this sense, the contribution is not in the creation of a new theory, but in successful application and adaptation.

Valentina Marinova introduces the concept of "marketing communications for a market with regulated development", which is an innovative definition tailored to the context of the healthcare system in Bulgaria. This is a clear contribution to the conceptual apparatus of the discipline.

The methods used – surveys, content analysis, observation and semiotic analysis – are well combined and applied adequately to the objectives of the study. The studies are substantiated and clearly related to the research questions and hypotheses. Although not completely original, functional classifications of communication practices in health care are made, as well as structuring factors, influencing hospital reputation, online presence and internal communication culture. Empirical data are well-founded,

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The text in italics offers reference points for evaluating the research results. Recommended volume of the opinion - 2-3 standard pages



verifiable and ethically obtained. Real hospitals, participants and examples are used, and the observations are clearly reasoned.

The dissertation presents new observations on the hospital communication environment in Bulgaria, especially in the private sector, and identifies specific problems and successful practices. This can be counted as a contribution through empirical discovery. The research supports key postulates of social marketing and public relations, proving their effectiveness through contemporary case studies from Bulgarian practice.

The work demonstrates very good bibliographic preparation, with references to authoritative international and Bulgarian sources. Specialized editions, normative documents and comparative analyses are also used. The dissertation is well structured – clearly differentiated chapters, logical transition between the theoretical and empirical parts, conclusions and contributions. The style is clear and reasoned. The text is written competently, with terminological accuracy, avoiding serious deviations from the literary norm. The language is academic but accessible.

There is a high degree of correspondence between the text of the abstract and the text of the dissertation, and the only thing that is omitted in the abstract is to indicate the title of the dissertation in Bulgarian.

## **II. Contributions of the dissertation research**

The dissertation offers an in-depth theoretical review and critical analysis of existing models of marketing communications in the context of healthcare. A synthesis is carried out between classical theories (of Kotler, Andreassen, Porter, etc.) and contemporary practices in the Bulgarian hospital environment, which leads to the adaptation of concepts to a specific social and institutional context.

Through the conducted empirical research, the dissertation directly addresses problems from the practice of hospital communication in Bulgaria, including online presence, internal communications and reputation management. The author formulates specific recommendations for improving the communication efficiency of health care facilities that have real potential for application. This gives the work practical value and operational utility.

Valentina Marinova proposes a new definition of communications for a "market with regulated development", which reflects the specifics of the healthcare system and is a contribution to the conceptual apparatus of marketing communication.

Although the paper does not introduce a completely new method, the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (surveying, observation, content analysis and semiotic analysis) has been applied operationally and with proven analytical value, especially in the context of limited resources and sensitive environments.

## **III. Notes and recommendations**

Many of the topics in the work concern digitalization, both of services and communications in the healthcare sector. However, the topic of artificial intelligence is not particularly touched upon, and it will certainly lead for the next decade. This is also my recommendation for the development of the candidate's scientific interests.

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

According to the attached reference, the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for approbation and disclosure of the results of the study according to Art. 5, item 5 and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and Art. 69, para. 3.

## **V. Conclusion**



The dissertation " Marketing communications of healthcare facilities for hospital medical care " submitted for an opinion fully complies with the requirements for applied scientific research and deserves a positive assessment. My firm opinion is that VALENTINA IVANOVA MARINOVA should be awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications – IMC)

Jury member:

Date: