

OPINION

From Assoc. Prof. Stella Angova, UNWE, Media and Public Communication Department

For obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field
1.2 Pedagogy (Media Pedagogy)

With a dissertation on the topic: "Media Literacy And Critical Thinking In 5-7-Year-Old Children"

Presented by Katya Dimitrova Stoyanova

with supervisor: Prof. Dnaail Danov, DSc.

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

The contribution of the thesis is visible in the wording of the title. The focus is on an audience born in the new media world where anyone can produce content, there is a deficit of interest in mainstream media, but therefore the young audience spends a lot of time on social media. The research is aimed at 5-7 year olds for whom the internet is a native habitat. For them, working with digital tools is not a problem - acquiring technological competences does not require time resources, it happens intuitively and quickly. That is why it is essential to work with the youngest in order to build critically thinking members of society - the future guardians of democracy. They need to know how to perceive media messages, who to turn into an influential personality, and to demand that the creators of media products not only seek profit, but also show social responsibility and an ethical attitude. Growing up today's children to be smart and critical should be a conscious strategic state policy, but we see that NGOs, universities and schools are mainly working in this direction. Therefore, I admire the series of dissertations in the Department of Preschool and Media Pedagogy of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the purposeful establishment of this scientific field in Bulgaria with serious applied results.

The dissertation has an important goal - "to establish the interdependence between critical thinking skills and the level of media literacy, on the basis of which a model for the development of critical media literacy in the context of media education for 5-7 year old children can be developed" (p. 8). It is relevant to the topic of the paper, sets a specific research agenda and points to an important contribution. I agree with the rationale for introducing the concept of critical-media literacy into scholarship, and I accept the author's perspective. The work is built around the idea of the changing paradigm in education and how the dynamic challenges can be addressed so that the whole of society benefits.

The text follows a well-established structuring practice: theoretical overview and justification, critical analysis of the existing scientific literature on the topic, definition of key concepts. There is an excellent knowledge of the development in science of the idea of media literacy in the context of preschool education. This critically conceptualised knowledge enabled the PhD student to move from theory to application by conducting

her own research in three stages amongst a diverse audience to engage with stakeholders in the educational process - children, parents, students of media pedagogy and teachers. The criteria chosen to frame the research are correctly stated. This approach allows the author to propose his own Model for the development of critical media literacy in 5-7-year-old children. The results were analyzed, visualized and verified. Each scientific and research action is substantiated. Positively impressive is the self-organization of two test-training batteries on critical-media literacy in 5-7-year-olds, which set a valuable framework (template) for future similar studies. Another significant contribution that I notice is the proposed Story Development Method to create questions for all cognitive levels of thought processes on the test-and-learn battery model. I agree with the conclusion about the need to seek sustainable educational outcomes, as their implementation will have a real effect on the whole society in the long run. And one more positive impression of the paper: five recommendations have been proposed that are realistic to implement and will benefit a wide range of audiences.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

Seven contributions are listed which are relevant to the thesis and I accept as correctly defined. They are both in terms of media studies and pedagogical science and in terms of application in practice.

III. Notes and recommendations

My only recommendation is that the text be published as a monograph.

IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

A sufficient number of publications have been submitted and by this indicator the author meets the minimum national requirements. The list of projects in which Katya Stoyanova has taken part and the scientific forums are very impressive. III. Notes and recommendations

V. Conclusion

The dissertation presented for opinion deals with a topical and still undeveloped topic in Bulgaria. The research is interdisciplinary, scientific and practical. However, it has another value - it shows the author's public commitment to the topic. The text has a logical structure, scientific argumentation, good language, literacy, own models and definitions are present. All this gives me a reason to propose to the esteemed scientific jury to vote for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Katya Dimitrova Stoyanova for her work on "Media literacy and critical thinking in 5-7-year-old children", and I declare that I will give my positive vote.

Sofia

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Opinion author:.....

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