

S T A N D P O I N T

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**PROFESSIONAL FIELD: 5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION SCIENCES**

**SUBJECT: DISSERTATION WORK FOR AWARDDING THE
EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE "DOCTOR" IN
PROFESSIONAL FIELD 1.2. PEDAGOGY (MEDIA PEDAGOGY)**

AUTHOR OF THE DISSERTATION: ZHIVKO GEORGIEV RACHEV

DISSERTATION TOPIC: PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY

ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR: PROF. DANAIL DANOV

Zivko Georgiev Rachev is a full-time doctoral student in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (*Media Pedagogy*; Doctoral Program *Media Literacy*). His academic education at UNWE is based on transport economics (BA - 2006, MA - 2008). He is fluent in English and French, which was enhanced by his professional specializations in France (1999-2002 and 2006). His specialization in Italy in Psychopedagogical language communication of children (2010-2011) is directly related to the topic of his current scientific research work.

The dissertation text of the doctoral student Zivko Rachev is developed in accordance with the structural and content requirements and possesses the qualities of a scientific work "dissertation". An innovative and current topic is presented, related to the set aim - to concentrate on the communication processes and their interconnections, which the media carry out every day with a diverse adolescent audience. Through successful application of established research methods, extensive empirical material has been analyzed in order to justify the choice of the object of the dissertation research - the practical aspects of media literacy aimed at specific social groups. The theoretical approaches to

media literacy and the analysis of media education in the European Union, France and Bulgaria constitute the subject of the undertaken scientific work.

The text of the dissertation is developed in 168 pages and is structured in: introduction, three chapters (organized in separate sections), conclusion with basic findings conclusions and recommendations, scientific contributions, a list of publications by the doctoral student on the topic, and a list of the literature used and notes.

What is valuable about the work is that the PhD student documents in detail the nature and the necessity of media education. On 21 pages are listed the Cyrillic and Latin sources used, with which the author has dealt with in the course of his research. The listed titles give an idea not only of the quantity, but also of the directions and overall scientific interests of the candidate and are a concentrated expression of his pursuits in the research field. He focuses on the different dimensions of media literacy historically and analyzes the key concepts for its theoretical interpretation.

In his dissertation, the author refers to a number of European documents, studies and publications, which point to the skills that enable users to use media effectively and safely as fundamental to media literacy. Nowadays, these skills are also interlinked with the study of digital tools and technologies in order for users to acquire the critical thinking skills to make judgments, to analyze complex realities, to recognize the difference between opinions and facts, making them more resilient to the various forms of media disinformation.

The dissertation presented is based on the degree of education of teachers, students and parents in the field of media and information literacy. A comparative analysis of the increased influence of the media in the conditions of crisis and social distancing is made. In this sense, the first chapter: *Media education in the context of the relationship between pedagogy and media* is fundamental. In it, the author places the main focus of his reasoning on "the third and seemingly most often neglected function of mass media in our country,

the one related to education". In the three sections of this chapter, aspects in educational systems, related to the role of digital literacy for solving educational problems, as well as to the importance of the educational standard for media literacy among children and students, especially in the conditions of the COVID 19 pandemic, are examined. The research questions posed are related in a comparative plan with the use of the devices, the activities, the children's skills, their perceptions, the mediation and the effectiveness of the offered programs in different educational systems at home and abroad. The author approaches with particular attention the analysis of the digital literacy of the adolescent media audience, by discussing the four components of Sonia Livingstone's model: access, analysis, evaluation and creation. Thus, the doctoral student substantiates his thesis that communication carried out on the Internet affects the interaction between members of different social groups and that modern digital technologies constitute a building block of the overall system of training and education.

Essential to the dissertation work is Chapter Two: *Parameters of the study - research model*, developed in two sections. Two hypotheses have been formulated, which are developed in detail in three stages, directly related to the parameters of the exploratory study. The methodological framework is also clearly outlined. The results of the survey of the respondents - representatives of institutions in pre-school, primary and secondary education from six cities from all administrative regions of the country (nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the participating institutions) are presented in tabular and graphic form, which makes the survey representative in terms of geographical distribution.

The PhD student expertly analyzes diverse models of media literacy education implemented in schools in different countries, either as a separate subject or as integrated through digital means into already existing subjects, drawing on a broad theoretical base, research practice and normative European documents.

Chapter Three: *Analysis of the effective formation of media literacy among media educated subjects* is structured in two sections. Based on the practices in France, the author analyzes the correlation between media and educational institutions in order to provide an opportunity to overcome the processes of stereotyping in children and students, with which the symbolic nature of communication is connected. The planned comparative analysis of media education is carried out on the basis of four main research questions. The doctoral student outlines the opportunities for digital media literacy training, but also highlights the risks to pedagogical activity in the ever-changing media and communication environment among the delicate school audiences. The tabular presentation of the results of the participation of students, teachers, parents, social networks, media industry and state institutions in the educational process of media literacy clearly illustrates the author's reasoning, including the options for the innovative application of artificial intelligence. The findings of the study logically outlines arguments for media education strategies.

Обобщенията в Заключението са придружени от изводи от предприетото изследване и препоръки за разпространението на добри практики и за развитието на референтни инициативи в областта на медийната грамотност сред учащите се.

The summaries in the Conclusion are accompanied by the basic findings from the research undertaken and recommendations for the dissemination of good practices and for the development of reference initiatives in the field of media literacy among learners.

The scientific and the applied contributions are formulated in an overview at three levels: theoretical, research and practical. Ten scientific publications are listed on the subject of the dissertation, two of which are in English.

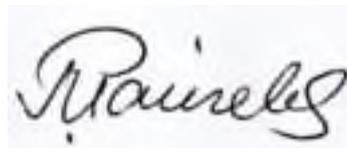
Some remarks could be made on the presented text. Extensive reference to European documents, for example, could be accompanied by a comment on their application.

My question to the doctoral student, whose answer would hardly make it difficult for him, is related to the two hypotheses put forward in the Second Chapter, namely - to what extent they are confirmed or refuted by the research.

Bearing in mind the detailed elaboration of the current issues studied and the merits of the proposed dissertation work, the serious contributions to the educational sphere, the media sector and the public, the importance of the conducted empirical research and the conclusions drawn, as well as the publications on the subject of the dissertation, I highly appreciate the work done by the doctoral student under the expert mentorship of his supervisor. My comments do not detract from the significance of the development.

In conclusion, based on everything stated above, I would like to express my support for the work presented, for which I vote positively. For this reason, I propose to esteemed members of the scientific jury to accept the dissertation and to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Zivko Georgiev Rachev in professional field 1.2.Pedagogy (Media pedagogy).

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