

Annotation

The objective of this master's thesis is to examine the concept of opinion leadership—to define it, to describe where it originated from, how it has developed over time, and finally, to apply this phenomenon to the Czech journalist community and its current members. Based on relevant international literature, the author of this paper assumes that opinion leaders exist in every social group or community around the globe, possessing an extraordinary personal influence on the decision-making and opinion-forming process of the people within their social network. Simply put, opinion leaders are the individuals to whom others look for guidance, credible and accurate information and context when they are in doubt or experiencing indecisiveness. For journalists, the possibility to have someone to whom they can turn for all the above-mentioned is crucial, the author believes, for it is a daily part of the profession to handle information cautiously, to evaluate news critically and objectively, and to get acquainted with a confusing topic in a relatively short period of time. Firstly, the paper offers a thorough theoretical framework for understanding the concept of opinion leadership, which is followed by a practical part consisting of a two-phase research examining opinion leaders in the ranks of Czech contemporary journalists. The first phase aims to identify those individuals by carrying out questionnaire survey among journalists working for leading Czech media companies, while the second one, being more of a complementary project, aspires to confront the identified opinion leaders with how they are perceived by their peers, and to understand and describe some of the phenomena that occur along with their status.