OPINION
by Prof. Dr. Daniela Hristova Tasevska,
Saint Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo
of a dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology

Author: Annette Marinova Marinova-Mitova
Topic: Personal development of students in the context of school practices
Research supervisor: Prof. Dr. Katya Stoycheva

In this presentation, I provide my findings from the reading of the work, the subject of discussion in the course of the present procedure.

Applicant data

Annette Marinova-Mitova obtained a bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1996. in NBU and has a master's degree in clinical social work, BIOH - NBU since 1998. As a result of additional qualifications (*Psychodrama Assistant Training; Specialization in Clinical Social Work with Children and Their Families, Doctoral Program in Social Work, Smith College, School of Social Work, Massachusetts, USA, 2002; Training in Inclusive Education for Children with special educational needs, Wildfield Center for Children with Special Educational Needs, London, 2013; Diagnostics of Children's Cognitive Abilities with the HAWIK-R Test, National Center for Public Health, 2010 in SIEN-Bulgaria, clinical laboratory "The child and its symptoms", from 2017 to the present; training and formation in the Bulgarian Society for Lacanian Psychoanalysis, clinical seminars, psychoanalytic practice under supervision and personal psychoanalysis, from 2009 to the present*) has the status of a school psychologist, educational expert, trainer and supervisor, advisor in the field of inclusive education in the Ministry of Education and Science.

She worked as a part-time assistant in the Master's Program in Clinical Social Work and in the Department of Social Work at Burgas Free University. He is a member of a working group for the concept and project of the Law on preschool and school education. He is the head of the working group of the State Educational Standard for Inclusive Education. He is a member of a team for the management of the two national pilot projects under the operational programs of the Ministry of Education and Culture: "Inclusive education" and "Support for equal access and personal development".

I accept that the implementation of the mentioned activities is directly related to the research concept of the work, as well as an indicator of expertise in the field.

Data on the doctoral studies and the author's abstract

From the review of the deposited documentation, I find that it is in order and meets the criteria in terms of the formal requirements for conducting the present defense. The exams and activities included in the individual study plan have been successfully completed. With the presented 4 of publications issued in refereed and peer-reviewed sources, the candidate also meets the national requirements for covering the scientific-metric indicators for acquiring the relevant scientific degree. The presented Abstract of the dissertation has an appropriate volume of 27 pages, is structured according to the compositional organization of the research and adequately presents its main theses, results, conclusions. Its structure also includes the author's self-assessment of the contributing points of his research, with which I am in solidarity and accept without objection.

Dissertation Data and Research Contributions

The dissertation itself has a content volume of 171 pages and a total volume of 309 pages. They are conceptualized in an Introduction, three main chapters structured into sub-

chapters, Conclusion, Acknowledgments, References and Appendices. The appendices show the percentage distribution of the responses in the context of the conducted empirical research. The bibliographic reference indicates the use of 190 specialized sources, among which 31 in Bulgarian and Russian, 159 in English, French and German, as well as a balanced number of Internet resources. I consider the theoretical base of the development to be impressive, extremely informative, especially up-to-date and academically appropriate in accordance with the goals and the specialized language of the research. I believe that the topic is not only dissertable, but also completely non-trivial. I hasten to state that the complex presentation of the concept of indicators of personal development from the point of view of pedagogical practices contained in the work, concerning the regulated forms of supporting the personal development of Bulgarian students in the context of the school - is unique for the Bulgarian scientific space, and in given the opportunity to popularize it, I see the global contribution of this work.

The very text of the Introduction /p. 5-7/ eruditely leads and adequately guides in his specific design. Even here, although in outline, the model of the studied phenomenon is clearly presented in the perspective of the dynamics of definitive concepts, in the relation "child/student system - environment/school system". The mechanism by which metamorphoses in their semantics lead to different, often contradictory understandings about the nature, responsibility, prescriptions for action, stereotyping and stigmatization, the formation of diverse pedagogical, psychological, personal and social attitudes - towards personal development - is particularly precisely captured and revealed. and forms of school support.

I want to unequivocally state that here we are talking about the erudition and courage of a researcher who dared to participate in the high methodological debate of the pedagogical psychosocial models regarding the potential of the school practices used, the result of which - essentially and at the present moment "intensifies the risk for the problems and the difficulties of students to think in the paradigm of "failure, deficit, laziness", in which the system constantly stumbles and seems unable to overcome"/p. 6/.

Another significant component in the design of the conceptual framework is the language of the doctoral student, constituted as a transformative force for human thinking and behavior in the dissertation work - due to Anette Marinova-Miteva's resource to denote and define social reality, to generate order, meaning and value in the palette of the educational institution school. This is what I find in Marinova-Miteva's thesis that to study *"the ways of support in school"* means to form an authentic idea "of the possibilities for the realization of the personal potential, interests, desires of the students - all this turns the support into inclusion processes" . /c. 6/, which I distinguish as the most fruitful core of the research project. Incredibly precisely "clothed in words", this authentic idea is clearly embodied in the formulation of the main goal of the dissertation work, namely: " *... How key pedagogical personnel - teachers, school psychologists and pedagogical advisers - understand personal development and apply the regulated forms for support?* " /Ibid/.

In an original way, the empirical prerequisites of the study, which are laid down in the 4th problematic circle, are interpretatively woven into the theoretical analysis.

In *the first* /p. 8-12/ an extremely detailed and highly informative interpretation of Yuri Bronfenbrenner's model of human development as a key dimension is presented, as the movement of the very concept of "human development" is chronologically unfolded, in the context of the psychosocial adaptation and integration of the human individual. In *the second* problematic round /c. 12-63/ the concept of the indicators of personal development (the child's system) is considered, skilfully placed in the perspective of the psychodynamic approach - Freud, Adler, Fromm, Horney, Erikson and Jung; the humanistic approach - Rogers and Maslow; the cognitive-behavioral approach - Kelly, Skinner, Bandura; the approach of traits - Allport, on the one hand, and on the other hand - in the perspective of empirical research, data

on the personal development of students in the Bulgarian context have been searched and analyzed. Adhering to the historical principle - factually and analytically - Annette Marinova-Mitova with concern and deep understanding reveals the methodological and conceptual limitations of the approaches, with a focus of analysis on the solutions of the socio-cultural, motivational and socio-cognitive approach, as well as with a vivid emphasis illuminating debates within child system theory. With the same manner of academic writing and brilliantly displayed erudition, the presentation in *the third* and *fourth* problematic sections of the first chapter /p. 63-80/, neatly organized around the phenomena of personal development of students and the forms of support at school (system of the environment). The analysis is multi-layered. Moreover, it is creatively integrated into the semantic emphasis placed on the influence of pedagogical practices on the relationship between the system of the child (the student) and the system of the environment (the school).

I definitely believe that the theoretical framework of the dissertation work not only enriches the model of empirical research, increasing its heuristic potential. I appreciate this highly informative and systematic conceptualization as a general contribution to the theory, application and methodology of qualitative and quantitative research approaches in psychological science, pedagogical, therapeutic and social practice regarding the personalization of school forms to support the personal potential of Bulgarian students.

They are the main subject around which gravitates the methodology of the conducted empirical research, presented in the second chapter of the work /p. 81-114/.

Two types of research were carried out: (1) "The personal development of students in the context of school practices" - a theoretical-methodological framework for development based on the interaction between the individual and his environment was substantiated. (2) An empirical framework model is applied to search for relationships for which interactions are determinative.

The object of the research is a total of 259, from different settlements in the country. 219 of them filled out a questionnaire "Personal development and school practices", and 40 respondents were participants in a written interview prepared specifically for the purposes of the main research with the three professional groups of participants - teachers, school psychologists, pedagogical advisors. The interview contains two open-ended questions and is a qualitative component of the research design. The methodological setting is described precisely and comprehensively. The verification of the assumed hypothesis is specified in *5 research questions:*

1. *Are there differences in the understanding of personal development and in the practiced forms of support among teachers who teach in a different type of settlement (environmental factors)?*
2. *Are there differences in the understanding of personal development and in practiced forms of support among teachers who teach students from different stages of education (child factors)?*
3. *Are there differences in the understanding of personal development and in the practiced forms of support among teachers of different experience and age (teacher factors)?*
4. *Are there differences in the understanding of personal development and in practiced forms of support between different specialists - teachers, school psychologists and pedagogical advisors?*
5. *Are there differences in the significance of the indicators from the individual categories and in the assessment of the impact of the school on their development among the pedagogical specialists studied?*

and was carried out with a well-argued and tailored toolkit for the specifics of the research.

Both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results is original and synthetically carried out. The formulated conclusions are directly related to the subject of the study and logically follow from the analysis of the processed data.

A particularly valuable point of contribution I see in paragraph 3 of the third chapter "Discussion of the results of the empirical research" and in the explanatory text about the "surprise" of the answers of school psychologists, pedagogical advisers and teachers"; the limitations of the performed procedure and the shared recommendations for its optimization.

As in the entire dissertation work, so here - clearly and categorically - the candidate demonstrates to us a deep knowledge of the issue, a brilliant mastery of terminology and respectable professionalism.

The contributions reflect the main scientific achievements in the dissertation work:

In a theoretical aspect: (1) Scientific information investigating the dynamics of the relationship "child (student) system - environment (school) system" is systematized. (2) Contemporary statistical realities and a global national research picture of the increasing risk for students' problems and difficulties to think in the paradigm of "failure, deficiency, laziness" are outlined.

In applied aspect: (1) *An author's methodology for* searching for differences, comparing data and deriving new studies with a connection between personality psychology and education was created and tested . (2) A complex psychological study was conducted for the first time, which used a questionnaire and an interview in addition to the obtained picture of the personal development of students through the eyes of key pedagogical personnel, and data was obtained on the forms of support for personal development of students introduced by law (ZPAO).

Regarding the requirements for citation and correct reference to authors, I find that the development perfectly meets the criteria and meets the standards.

Publications and participation in scientific forums

Annette Marinova-Mitova has presented the texts of general publications on the topic of the dissertation, including 2 articles and 2 reports published in refereed editions and peer-reviewed proceedings of scientific conferences. There are dozens of participations in scientific forums, seminars, trainings, and appearances as an expert on a number of projects. She is also active in the public space with a large number of articles and interviews in popular publications related to the social stigma of early childhood development and inclusive education.

IN CONCLUSION, based on the stated findings, the result of the reading of the dissertation work "The personal development of students in the context of school practices", written by Anette Marinova Marinova-Miteva, I categorically declare a positive vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction 3.2. Psychology.

14.08. 2024 Member of a scientific jury: .....
Veliko Tarnovo /prof. PhD Daniela Tasevska/