OPINION

* for a dissertation on the topic: "Value-oriented models of interaction in an inter-ethnic educational environment (1991-2016)"
* for awarding the educational and scientific degree: "Doctor"
* of Dafina Lachezarova Pandin – full-time doctoral student in professional direction - 3.1: 3.1: "Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences" / DP: Ethnology - Ethnopsychological models in education» at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Faculty of History
* academic adviser: Prof. Irina Koleva, PhD
* Prepared the opinion: Ilia Iliev, assoc. prof., PhD, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. General presentation

Dafina Pandin has submitted the necessary documents related to the procedure for the defense of her dissertation work. She has earned significantly more than the minimum required credits and has five publications on her dissertation topic that appeared in 2023 and 2024. A dissertation of 276 pages is submitted, of which 32 pages are attachments. The bibliography includes 298 items in Bulgarian and foreign languages. 117 of the sources are online. The text has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism check.

The dissertation package meets the requirements of the law and the regulations for its implementation, as well as the regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and for occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

2. Relevance of the topic

In terms of content, the dissertation submitted for defense is in the field of ethnology, ethnopedagogy and ethnopsychology. The topic chosen by Ms. Pandin and her research supervisor is current and relevant. Perhaps the best evidence for this is the impressive amount of programs, strategies and normative documents related to the education of ethnic minorities, which have been produced by various Bulgarian institutions in recent decades, as well as the constant efforts of Bulgarian scholars from various fields to offer analytical and empirical approaches.

The structure of the dissertation is clear and logical. Initially, the theoretical frameworks in which the Bulgarian academic researchers and a large part of the educational institutions work are analyzed, in the second chapter it gradually moves from theory to institutional practice, including a SWOT analysis of normative documents, and in the third, it goes down to the micro level in order to track in the field, through interviews with pedagogical and non-pedagogical specialists, the adequacy of theoretical approaches and the effect of normative efforts.

3. General preparation of the doctoral student

Ms. Pandin has the necessary experience. For almost 10 years, she has worked in the field of education as a children's teacher, pedagogical consultant and school psychologist, she has a bachelor's degree in psychology from SWU and a master's degree in child-adolescent and school psychology. At the same time, he has an excellent knowledge of modern Bulgarian academic publications on the subject, as well as normative documents. This combination of immediate personal experience with deep theoretical training makes the dissertation particularly valuable, because in the analyzes we see a combination of theoretical evaluation and common sense, which can only be acquired through direct work in an educational institution.

The research methodology corresponds to the profile of the doctoral student. It consists of library work - analysis of normative documents, legislation, policies, theoretical analysis of publications in the field of ethnology, ethnopsychology and ethnopedagogy, as well as field research, including personal observations and interviews. The goals and tasks are clearly formulated and followed in the course of the work.

4. Content

Essentially, the first chapter of the dissertation examines ethnopedagogical reflection in the system of organized preschool education after 1989. Changes at the national level of educational policies for kindergartens are shown, taking into account ethno-pedagogical markers for the implementation of the reflexive approach in an inter-ethnic environment.

The first conceptual projects within the framework of "Children's World" from 1990 are analyzed, the similar theoretical positions of the authors are indicated, as well as the differences in their concrete solutions. The following is an analysis of the concept of educational work from 1991, "Project for a new concept of public preschool education in Bulgaria" from the same year, etc., with special attention paid to the program system "I change the world" of Prof. Irina Koleva. Followed by «Neogeia – New Earth» from 1999, Integrated Education Program for children with special educational needs from preschool age, Program for ecological socialization of three- to seven-year-old children, etc., and the testing of these programs in real conditions has been followed.

In the second chapter, the intellectual history of the ethno-reflexive approach in Bulgaria is examined with key stages and names, after which an analysis of programs and normative documents with their strengths and weaknesses, advantages and gaps and, above all, the potential to be actually implemented, is proposed. I find this part particularly valuable not only because of the author's systematic and often critical approach, but also because of the advantages that her personal experience of working directly in kindergartens and schools gives her. The third chapter is devoted to empirical studies, where the collisions of theoretical models and aspirational programs and normative documents with reality can be traced.

A combination of methods was used - personal observation, structured interviews with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with people working in the education system. The fieldwork was conducted in a disciplined and consistent manner, ethical requirements were met, and the results are fully defensible.

At the end, a theoretical-empirical model for a value-oriented educational policy in Bulgaria based on reflexive ethnopedagogy is presented. I am not competent to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the model, but the PhD student's effort to think through and systematize not only its strengths, but also its limitations and real applicability deserves respect.

The dissertation exceeds the requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor". It has the characteristics of scientific and applied research.

Contributions both of a scientific-theoretical nature and with practical-applied goals are indisputable.

5. Recommendation

In a future publication, the text would benefit if the part about the emergence and development of the reflexive approach in Bulgarian pedagogy and psychology was brought forward. This would allow a wider audience to understand the internal logic that led to the emergence of various preschool and primary school education programs and the prism through which their authors analyzed the situation and proposed their solutions.

6. Abstract

The abstract presents the main scientific paradigms, theses and conceptual conclusions of the dissertation research. It reflects the full text of the doctoral dissertation from a formal and substantive point of view.

7. CONCLUSION

The dissertation work of Dafina Pandin, her scientific contributions, presented through the publications of the doctoral dissertation, correspond to the field and professional direction for awarding the educational and scientific degree: "Doctor".

The scientific and educational activity of Dafina Pandin, as well as the research results achieved by her, give me reason to confidently recommend to the respected scientific jury to vote for awarding her the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field: 3.1. "Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences" / Ethnology - Ethnopsychological models in education /

20. 01. 2025 г.

Sofia (Assoc. Prof. Ilia Iliev, PhD)