

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Anna Konstantinova Trosheva - Assenova

dissertation on:

Integration of ICT in Educational Process and the Role of School Management in Primary and Secondary Special Education

**for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 1.2. Special
Education**

PhD candidate: Tegos Georgios

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Neda Balkanska

1. Compliance of the procedure with the current legislation.

By order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. No. RD-38-276/ 03.06.2024, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the procedure for awarding the PhD degree to Georgios Ioannis Tegos, a full-time PhD student in the professional field 1.2. I am a PhD candidate in Pedagogy (Special Pedagogy) with training in English. At the first meeting of the Scientific Jury held on 11.06.2024, pursuant to Art. 12 of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", I have been appointed to draw up a review.

The dissertation has successfully passed an anti-plagiarism check and has been discussed at a meeting of the Department of Special Pedagogy in compliance with all legal requirements for opening a public defense procedure.

Doctoral student Tegos has submitted all the documents in electronic and paper format necessary for the defense of his dissertation, according to the requirements of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Doctoral Students and the Regulations for its Application and according to the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at the Sofia University "St. I will study at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski.

No procedural violations were found.

2. General biographical presentation of the candidate

Georgios Ioannis Tegos has completed two Bachelor's degree programmes in Application of IT in Management and Economics and in Business Management. He holds a Master's degree in Special Education and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management from the University of Nicosia. He has undergone numerous certified trainings in IT, Pedagogy, Inclusive Education and

Special Education. Since 2016 he has been an IT teacher for children with special educational needs and learning disabilities.

Georgios Tegos' qualifications as well as professional career indicate clear professional goals in the field of educational management, IT education and special pedagogy. The topic of the proposed dissertation appears as a logical continuation in professional growth.

3. Relevance of the dissertation topic.

In view of the widespread penetration of ICT in our everyday life, and consequently in the educational process, as well as the revolutionary changes brought about by the application of artificial intelligence, I evaluate the topic as particularly relevant and important for special pedagogy. The emergence of distance education as a necessity during the Covid-19 epidemic has shown many advantages and problematic areas of application for children and students with special needs that need special attention in the research community.

4. Structure and content of the dissertation.

Georgios Tegos' dissertation is 231 computer pages long and includes an introduction, four chapters, conclusions, references and appendices. The first two chapters present a literature review on the topic. The first chapter is entitled "School Leadership and Management in Special Education" and presents the administrative bodies in the educational institution and the role of school leadership, which are the basis of human resource management in educational institutions; the functions and effectiveness of the head of the educational institution, the role of teachers and leadership in successful school integration, as well as its advantages and problem areas. Special attention is paid to the current state of special and inclusive education in Greece in order to present the image of the school in which the experimental study is conducted.

Chapter two is entitled "teachers', students' and school management's relationship with the integration of information communication technologies in special education. It presents the place and benefits of using ICT in the education of children with special needs, and the role of teachers' attitudes, preparation for implementation and school management in introducing ICT in the educational institution. Useful tips are given to support teachers by the management in the innovation.

Chapter three presents the research design with its purpose, questions, hypotheses, objectives, contingent, methodology and instrument. All these are described correctly, are interrelated and pursue the stated purpose. The methodology applied suggests reliable results. A questionnaire for teachers and school management was used to survey 244 respondents and an experiment with 10 students. The results were statistically processed and are presented and analysed in the last chapter. Setting clear parameters and research inquiries in advance helps to clearly present and distinguish the results of the following:

- Participant demographics
- ICT integration
- Barriers to ICT application
- Perceptions and attitudes towards ICT application

- Role of school leadership
- ICT integration in terms of gender and educational attainment
- Teachers' and management's competence in ICT application depending on their level and type of qualification.

This chapter concludes with a paragraph called Discussion, which presents and analyses the results in summary form and seeks consistency with the research questions and formulated hypotheses.

5. Scientific-theoretical and practical-applied contributions.

The contributions are presented according to the different parts of the study - to the literature review, structuring of the research methodology, extent and quality of ICT integration, impact of gender and preparation on ICT application, identification of barriers to ICT adoption, attitudes and perceptions towards ICT use, impact of ICT on school performance and the role of school administration. To a large extent, they replicate their results and analysis.

6. Abstract.

The abstract presented in English and Bulgarian correctly reflects the essence of the dissertation. The author's ability to convey important information in a synthesized form shows an excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter under study and the research conducted.

7. Publications on the topic of the dissertation (content and fulfillment of the scientometric requirements).

The PhD student has 4 independent publications in conference proceedings of the FNOI, SU, which have undergone a double blind peer review process. In terms of subject matter, the publications reflect the research process and work on the dissertation. The publications meet the scientific metric requirements for the PhD degree.

8. Personal impressions.

My personal impressions of the Ph.D. student are from his presentation at the internal defense and the attestations at department meetings over the years. Georgios Tegos always presents and argues confidently and convincingly, showing purpose and clarity in the conduct of the research.

9. Notes, recommendations and questions.

My overall impression of Georgios Tegos' dissertation and work is excellent.

In my opinion, two issues could find wider coverage in the theoretical part and in the questionnaires, and these are 1. The role of distance learning during the Covid-19 epidemic on the application of ICT in the education of children with special needs and 2. Artificial Intelligence and the possibilities for application in special education.

The Discussion paragraph does not live up to its title as content. A more appropriate title would have been "Summary Results and Conclusions". The discussion implies a comparison of the results obtained with those of other scholars and other studies.

I consider it important to highlight the contribution of the results obtained in terms of improving school management based on scientific evidence and the more successful application of ICT in the education of students with SEN in Greece.

My question to the PhD student is the following:

High-tech tools for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) are often used by teachers as a tool for learning, but their main function is for communication. These tools are also part of ICT. How widespread are they among children with communication disorders in Greece and do you have data on their use in educational settings?

10. Conclusion.

The presented dissertation work of Georgios Tegos is distinguished by the focus, thoroughness, quality, reliability and applicability of the results obtained. I strongly support his high evaluation and the award of the degree of Doctor of Education and Science in 1.2. Pedagogy (Special Education).

24.08.2024

Drafted the opinion:

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Anna Trosheva-Asenova