

OPINION

from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gencho Vassilev Valchev

about a dissertation on a topic

"PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SEN IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF EDUCATION (AGES 7-11)"

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy,

Doctoral student: Vanya Kuzmanova Avramova

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Maria Alexieva, Assoc.prof. Dr. Itska Derizhan

Administrative tags

By order UMO 108/16.03.2021 of the Rector of the Burgas Free University, I have been appointed as a member of a scientific jury in the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and preparing an opinion for a dissertation work on the topic "Pedagogical model for inclusive education of children with SEN in the initial stage of education (7-11 years)" of Vanya Kuzmanova Avramova, doctoral student of independent training in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, with scientific supervisors - Prof. Dr. Maria Alexieva and Assoc. Dr. Itska Derizhan.

In addition to the dissertation work, 3 publications on the subject of the dissertation research, an Abstract, a report on the implementation of the scientometric indicators, a curriculum vitae, and administrative documents on the procedure are attached.

The set of materials presented for evaluation and drafting of an opinion is in a format and with content that corresponds to the RSASR and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Burgas Free University".

My opinion is based on information from the administrative documents provided to me (on electronic media), evidentiary materials and publications of the candidate.

Actuality and dissertationability of the problem

Ensuring optimal conditions for social and educational integration of children with special educational needs is fundamental not only for the children themselves, but also for the entire complex of professional and personal relationships in the field of support for personal development (general and additional). The polyvalence of the needs of children with special educational needs, determined by the specificity and volume of their personal resources, requires complexity of approaches and coordination of strategies for inclusion and education of this group of children, not only as part of the educational system, but also as part of the resource of society in general. In this sense, the role of adapted and optimized educational models, as part of the pedagogical toolkit of developing, adapting and integration strategies, is significant. In this context, the topicality of the topic and its dissertability are beyond doubt.

Knowing the problem

The content of the First Chapter of the dissertation work "Theoretical Foundations of Inclusive Education" is a demonstration of good awareness and knowledge of the basic and current scientific issues in the two areas on which the research concept is built:

- 1) Inclusive education as a European and national educational strategy;
- 2) Peculiarities in the development and education of children in the initial stage of education with an emphasis on the psychophysical development of 7-11-year-olds and the social adaptation of children in primary school;
- 3) The subject-object area of the inclusive process, with an emphasis on the typology of children with special educational needs;
- 4) Pedagogical interactions in the inclusive environment (the role of parents and teachers in the inclusive process).

Good knowledge of educational approaches and principles of learning in the inclusive process of children with special educational needs, determined by the specifics of their educational resource, is tied to sufficient competencies in the field of the typology of children with special educational needs and the specifics of pedagogical interactions in an inclusive environment, taking into account the learning difficulties of children with SEN.

The approach to selection, systematization and analysis of scientific information shows knowledge of the specific issue, as well as formed skills for working with sources of scientific information.

Parameters of dissertation development

The dissertation has a classical structure and includes an introduction, four main separate parts, conclusions, a conclusion, a list of the used information sources (114 titles in English, Bulgarian and Russian - 92 in Cyrillic, 11 in Latin, 11 normative documents). The paper is supplemented with 4 appendices that include a research toolkit (2 survey cards, 1 questionnaire, 1 environmental assessment tool). The dissertation has a total volume of 204 pages, with the main text being 195 standard pages. Statistical data are presented in three tables, and the information in the dissertation is illustrated with 8 figures and 53 diagrams, which is an additional plus to the merits of the development. Structurally, the dissertation is logically constructed and well balanced.

Research methodology and organization

The research program is presented in the Second Chapter of the dissertation. The work has a clearly formulated objective, disaggregated into 5 specific tasks. The purpose and tasks of the research fully correspond to the declared four research hypotheses and determine the emphasis of the research program. The subject-object area of the research is correctly defined.

The group of researched persons (338) was correctly selected, according to the purpose and tasks of the research (174 teachers in primary school classes, working with children with SEN (I - IV grades), 102 specialists - psychologists, social workers, special pedagogues, art therapists etc., working with children with SEN in social service centers in the community, 62 parents of children with SEN). My only concern is in the direction of statistical inference: To what extent, based on the regularities established with this sample size, global conclusions can be made.

The research program has been developed in detail and in terms of construction it is a structure of three stages:

- 1) Preparatory stage, which includes: Research and analysis of literary sources on the subject; Preparation of research tools and technology - questionnaires, surveys, inclusive environment assessment tool; Defining the target groups.

- 2) Research stage: Conducting the empirical study; Data collection.

3) Final stage: Processing, analysis, summarization of the obtained results; Drawing conclusions and recommendations for practice; Preparation of a generalized model of inclusive policies in the educational environment.

The toolkit has been developed precisely and includes four tools: Survey for teachers in the primary education stage, Questionnaire for parents and teachers of students with SEN (the questionnaire for parents is author's), Survey for specialists in the social services system, Tool for evaluating the inclusive environment. The research procedures are described correctly and in detail. The methods for the empirical research are correctly selected and directly correspond to the conceptual framework of the research.

For the purposes of primary data processing, a basic set of statistical methods was used (primarily derivation of relative shares and comparison of data). The methods were used correctly and as appropriate, but the primary data obtained give the opportunity to apply more accurate and complex methods for the purposes of statistical analysis and statistical inference, which would enrich the analytical part.

The analysis of the research results is presented in the Third Chapter of the dissertation. The method of statistical analysis was applied, which is a prerequisite for correct conclusions. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results was performed. The differentiation of the focus areas of the analysis is in accordance with the purpose and the set hypotheses. Statistical data allow for variational analysis. The data interpretation was performed competently, the generalizations and conclusions made are a basis for future work.

The Fourth Chapter presents a Pedagogical Model for inclusive education of children with special educational needs in the initial stage of education (ages 7-11). The model is of a theoretical-empirical nature. Its structure includes five components presented in separate paragraphs. The model requires the coordinated involvement of all sides of the school community in four main areas: School Governance, Pedagogical Practices, Child Protection and Partnership with Parents and is "...applicable in any school that is open to the principles and philosophy of inclusive education and is motivated to works to implement them," as the PhD student declared. I agree with the PhD student that the model is complex and practical, but I am skeptical that it is applicable in every school (at least at this stage of public relations maturity).

Dissertation Contributions

The contributions of Vanya Avramova's dissertation work are of a complex nature: 1) contributions to the scientific theory on the problem of inclusive education of children with special educational needs in the initial stage of education (7-11 years) and the strategies and educational technologies related to this process ; 2) contributions of a practical-applied nature - application of a specific educational model in the pedagogical process for inclusive education of children with special educational needs in the initial stage of education.

I accept the validity of the contributions that the PhD student formulates. I want to note that in presenting the contributions of the dissertation work, the doctoral student was objective and did not exaggerate the merits of the dissertation.

Publications on the subject of the dissertation

3 publications are presented on the topic of the dissertation work (all three articles are independent developments of the author). The content of the publications is consistent with the problem areas covered in the development. According to this indicator, the regulatory requirements are met.

Assessment of the Autoabstract

The author's abstract is in a format and with content that meet the requirements of ZRASRB and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of BSU. Its content accurately reflects the presented dissertation work.

Conclusion

My assessment of the submitted dissertation is based on the following markers:

1. Compliance with the regulations of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff of BSU - The submitted work and publications fully comply with the regulatory requirements.

2. Contributions. - The scientific results achieved in the dissertation work are significant for pedagogical theory and practice.

3. Design. – Content structuring and layout are done precisely and competently.

Doctoral student Vanya Avramova possesses the necessary theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of Pedagogy and demonstrates qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research. This gives me reason to propose to the respected scientific jury to give a positive vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Vanya Kuzmanova Avramova in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, Professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy.

07.12.2023
Stara Zagora

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gencho Vassilev Valchev