

by Assoc. Prof. PhD Magdalena Stoyanova

member of a scientific jury, approved by Order No. 3039 of 12.07. 2024 of the Rector of Thrace University, Stara Zagora, in connection with the opening of a procedure for the acquisition of the ONS "doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program "Theory of education and didactics", of full-time doctoral student *Zhana Plamenova Koleva*, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of Pedagogical and Social Sciences

on the topic *"Formation of social competence through Bulgarian folklore 1.-4. Class"*

with supervisor Prof. Rumyana Ilcheva Neminska, Doctor of Science

scientific consultant Assoc. Prof. PhD Milen Valchev Dimitrov

General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

By order No. 3039. dated 12.07.2024 of the Rector of Thrace University, I have been appointed as a member of the jury to ensure a procedure with an opinion for the defense of a dissertation work on the topic "Formation of social competence through Bulgarian folklore 1.-4. class", developed by for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy., doctoral program "Theory of education and didactics". The full-time doctoral student was dismissed with the right to defense by Order No. 1117 of 21.03.2024 because she completed the activities in the individual study plan, successfully passed the exams and covered the minimum number of credits.

The doctoral student has attached six publications on the subject of the dissertation - 5 in Cyrillic and one in Latin. It presents evidence of achieving the minimum national requirements according to a group of indicators for ONS "Doctor" - a total of 80 points (indicator A and indicator D), exceeding them by 50 points. Therefore, the participation of Zhana Plamenova Koleva in the procedure for the defense of the doctoral thesis meets the minimum national requirements for the scientific activity of the candidates for the acquisition of the scientific degree "doctor" from the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and I can assess that the presented documentation is complete and reliable.

Biographical reference for the doctoral student and evaluation of the procedure

According to the requirements for an opinion, I will also provide brief biographical information about the doctoral student in connection with the procedure.

Zhana Plamenova Koleva was born in 1995. She completed her higher education "Bachelor" in 2018, and in 2019 - Master's in Thrace University - Stara Zagora, majoring in "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy".

From 2015 to 2013, he participated in four qualification and methodical courses at Tr.U. Stara Zagora: for methodical training of students from 1st - 4th grade on the problems of traffic safety, computer modeling; in a course on teachers and their leadership; in two practical trainings under the "Student Internship" project. In 2021, he acquired the fifth professional-qualification degree at the University of Tr.U, Department for Information and Teacher Qualification (DIPKU).

The doctoral student participated in the Doctoral School at the Faculty of Education (June 28-30, 2021), as well as in three scientific projects (2016 - 2017 - "Investigation of communicative and social competences in education as a phenomenon of the environment"; 2017 - 2018 - Scientific project "Research on models of inclusive education and a supportive learning environment with transfer in the academic training of student teachers"; Project "Untrodden paths to open doors"), as well as in a discussion forum - "Civic education in the modern multicultural environment".

In addition to the publications on the topic of the doctoral dissertation, Zhana Koleva has five publications in the Yearbook of the Faculty of Pedagogy of Thrace University and four more publications on teaching methods in the initial stage of education, printed in the magazine "Kindergarten. School" for the period 2018-2019.

Participated in the VI and VII international student congresses held in the city of Istanbul, Turkey on the topics of global problems of the 21st century and possible solutions in education (April 17-19, 2018) and creating a better future through education (4- April 5, 2019), as well as in a student scientific session "May 24 - day of Slavic writing and Bulgarian education and culture" - May 22, 2018. It is also included in the XII International Balkan Educational and Scientific Congress, held in the city of Nessebar on theme: "Education for life, professional realization and well-being" (September 28-29, 2017).

Actuality of the issue

The dissertation is in a volume of 366 standard pages, of which 181 pages are the main text with literature and 185 pages are appendices with a presentation of the toolkit of the research results.

It is illustrated with 32 graphs and 14 tables.

In terms of content, the work is structured in a good ratio between the theoretical (73 pages) and research-empirical part (112 pages).

The main text is differentiated into three chapters, conclusion, conclusions, contributions of the dissertation work and appendices (15 in number).

This structure is subordinated to the goal "to study the possibilities for the formation of social competences in the process of integrating Bulgarian folklore in the various subjects of primary school, as well as to develop and approve technology for the formation of these competences in the learning process".

The centre of work is the developed experimental pedagogical model with technology - three-aspect, two-way-transposition, five-line including: three aspects, four subjects and three constructs based on Bulgarian folklore (p.103).

I can confirm with conviction that there is a good hierarchy of the research objective, hypothesis and related tasks.

Knowing the problem

Zhana Koleva knows the state of the problem and this is proven by the presented volume of the used literature, which contains 117 sources of Bulgarian and foreign authors, as well as Internet sources, of which 104 - in Cyrillic, and 13 - in Latin. Zhana Koleva's analysis of normative documents and curricula affecting primary school education shows: social competence is widely advocated as a personality quality that students need to possess (Regulation 5 on general education with an emphasis on the group "social and civic competences"); options for adapting curricula for subjects in the initial stage are expedient for the purposes of the research in the achievement of competences.

The research centers of this study cover:

- theoretical presentation of an in-depth analysis of the main concepts in the dissertation: when considering a differentiated and integrative approach – folklore and Bulgarian folklore; competence and social competence; integration and technology in a pedagogical context;
- analyzing educational content to reveal the practical possibilities for forming social competence through Bulgarian folklore and developing technology for its presentation in primary school education;

- establishing and tracking the degree of formation of students' social competence through Bulgarian folklore in the learning process in a comparative analysis between classes in which the model is implemented in comparison with others in which the resulting technology for the formation of social competences is not presented ;
- substantiation of conclusions when outlining trends for the formation of competences, by including an integrative technology of presentation of Bulgarian folklore;
- tracking the achievements in the control and in the experimental group to establish the effect of the application of the experimental model with statistical reliability;
- increasing the competences of teachers and the pedagogical culture of parents, linked to game forms of organization.

Thus, the PhD student uses a building stage research program to test her folklore-based experimental technology model in BEL. In my opinion, this has influenced the successfully formulated and logically goal-bound hypothesis, related to the use of integrative technology in education, which will contribute to the formation of social competences in students, including Bulgarian folk art, containing the educational content with the necessary prerequisites of the educational subjects (Bulgarian language and literature, Fine art, Music, Physical education and sport).

Research methodology

Zhana Plamenova Koleva demonstrates the skills of a researcher who, based on the overview of Bulgarian and foreign research, lays a good methodological foundation on her own experience for developing an appropriate research model. This allows her to structure an experimental program and obtain adequate results on the tasks of the dissertation work.

Here I consider as the most significant the pedagogical experiment, realized precisely in its stages, in the unification of the forms for the organization of the interaction.

For the objective analysis of the results obtained from the conducted research, Zhana Plamenova Koleva uses research methods by which she reports the degree of social skills of the students before and after the applied integrative approach of teaching through Bulgarian folklore according to the developed and approved model. In order to highlight the influence of the integrative technology for presenting Bulgarian folklore on the social competence of students, the results of control and experimental groups were analysed and compared.

The experimental results of the research argue the effectiveness of using cross-curricular connections and the integrative basis of Bulgarian folklore through them in education. As a result of the conducted research, it was established that the integral approach develops the students' potential, motivates them to study the subjects more deeply and influences the successful building of social competence.

The dissertation examines example games with integrative links included in them, which can be used in any part of the lesson for each of the educational subjects from the initial stage in the conditions of competence-oriented learning. It represents a combination of "different forms of independent work in the course of a system of activities".

I confirm the application of an expedient system of complex methods for proving the hypothesis and related goals and tasks: content analysis (analysis of normative documents, educational content, content of textbooks, curricula), Eysenck's questionnaire; pedagogical experiment; observation, situation modelling, expert assessment. I also admire the statistical verification of the hypothesis by processing the data obtained from the conducted observation - correlation analysis - Pearson-Brave coefficient.

An appropriate system of 4 criteria, 20 corresponding indicators and graded qualitatively presented measures (high, moderate, low) related to the formation of social competence through the integration of Bulgarian folklore was used.

I can summarize in general that the methodology used is analytical, adequate and effective for the processing of the data in the direction of solving the tasks and proving the hypothesis.

Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The centre of work is the developed experimental pedagogical model with technology - three-aspect, two-way-transposition, five-line. (p.103) including: three aspects, four subjects and three constructs based on Bulgarian folklore.

The PhD student has my admiration for the objective presentation of the statistical results of the experimental study and the developed model through the inclusion of experimental and control groups. I welcome the use of expert assessment to objectively verify the achieved degree of social competence after experimental work in connection with the comparative analysis between control and experimental groups. In terms of contribution, I can confirm the following positive achievements in the doctoral work:

1. Contributions of a theoretical and methodological nature:

1.1. Empirically-substantial concepts related to the formation of social skills and competences and increasing the cognitive abilities of students through the integration of Bulgarian folklore have been derived, with which the study can be characterized as a successful model in theoretical-methodological terms.

1.2. The carried out content analysis of the educational content from the primary school in the aspect of Bulgarian folklore and its role for thematic integration in the formation of social competence among students.

2. Experimental-applied contributions:

2.1. A diagnostic toolkit has been developed for the formation of social competence through the application of the integrative technology for the presentation of Bulgarian folklore in the process of learning specific subjects at the initial stage of the basic education level.

2.2. Game and creative-creative technologies, which have an experimental-empirical significance with an innovative character, were used in extracurricular activities. I rate them as having valuable practices for good practice in pedagogical interaction in primary school.

3. Contributions of a practical nature:

3.1. A learning environment was organized, within which an integrative technology for the presentation of samples from Bulgarian folklore was tested, through which social competences were formed in the students in the learning process.

3.2. Pedagogical technology for the formation of social competences of students in the initial stage of a basic educational degree has been constructed, based on the integrative approach, which translates Bulgarian folklore into specific educational subjects.

In summary of all this, I appreciate the contributions of the PhD student positively. They refer to new facts arising from her experimental research, which can be applied in the practice of pedagogical interaction in the educational direction "Bulgarian Language and Literature".

Assessment of the PhD student's publications and personal contributions

The doctoral student presents six publications on the issues of the dissertation, presented in four reference documents accompanying the doctoral work.

In the publication on the integrative trends of Bulgarian folklore in primary education (Students' Almanah, Volume 8), she presents a theoretical comparative analysis of educational content in various academic subjects, reflecting the essence and importance of Bulgarian folklore in the conditions of institutional and family education for the construction of social competences in unity with the acquisition of cultural experience.

In another publication (Students' Almanah, volume 10), dedicated to the projections of Bulgarian folklore in a game form, Zhana Koleva dwells on the education of seven competencies by testing example games used in each part of the lesson of the educational subjects from the initial stage in the conditions of competence-oriented training.

The necessity of value-oriented education is proved through the issues of two other publications of his in a relationship (Student Almanah, Volume 9 and Volume 7). The author examines each of the students' social skills that are essential for their successful socialization. In the publications, a dependence is found between them for the improvement of communication between students in a school environment.

I would like to pay particular attention to a publication in the magazine Pedagogy (issue 5 2020), where the cross-curricular areas and Bulgarian folklore in music education in primary school are characterized. She has my highest rating regarding the contribution character of the PhD student in her publication activity on the issues of the dissertation. I find this important in relation to linking the personal competencies of the doctoral student, who has a diploma in music education at the secondary level, upgrading them in the bachelor's and master's degree with the methodical competencies in the subjects in the primary school and integrating them through Bulgarian folklore in the education of Bulgarian language and literature - the centre of Zhana Koleva's research. Of course I also applaud the conclusions from about the integrative functions of folklore in the English publication.

I would like to add additionally that, in my opinion, the PhD student presents evidence of her impeccable methodological training and research pursuits, presented schematically above in the second section of the opinion with brief biographical data on qualifications, projects and scientific forums, but also on a different topic from that of her doctoral thesis. For example, she has three more publications in the Faculty of Education's Student Almanac (2018-2019) related to technology preparation and entrepreneurship at the primary stage, primary teacher qualities and one publication in English also on technology and economic skills. This gives me grounds to conclude that her presence as a young researcher in the Faculty of Education convincingly extends her personal contribution as a PhD student.

Abstract

The abstract presents the essence of the doctoral work in a synthesized way and, in my opinion, reflects its content, quantitative and qualitative analysis of its contributions according to the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Stara Zagora and contains the main results achieved in the dissertation.

Recommendations for the PhD student

The contribution nature of the work is to be further confirmed by a larger contingent of children involved in the further research of the doctoral student and her publication of the work.

Conclusion

I justify an unequivocal position as a member of the National Academy of Sciences by preparing an opinion containing my clear positive assessment of the dissertation work, i.e. I procedurally support the acquisition of the scientific degree by the candidate. The dissertation contains theoretical, experimental-applied and methodological-practical results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff composition of Tr.U, Stara Zagora.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, represented by my opinion on the presented dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions.

That is why I propose to the honourable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Zhana Plamenova Koleva in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program "Theory of education and didactics".

15.08. 2024.

Prepared the opinion:
(Assoc. Dr. Magdalena Stoyanova, SU "St. Kl. Ohridski")