

OPINION

by

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Ref. conferring the educational and scientific degree “DOCTOR” in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty: “Theory of Education and Didactics”, **entitled:** “Formation of Social Competence through Bulgarian Folklore in 1st-4th Grade”, submitted by **Zhana Plamenova Koleva**, full-time PhD student at the Department “Pedagogical and Social Sciences” at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, **Scientific Supervisor:** Prof. Romyana Neminska, PhD, DSc and **Scientific Consultant:** Assoc. Prof. Milen Dimitrov, PhD.

- **Overall Presentation of the Procedure and Dissertation**

This Opinion is elaborated according to Order No. 3059 dated 12.07.2024 of the Rector of Trakia University, Stara Zagora and Decision of the Scientific Jury, in compliance with the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations on its enforcement and the Regulations on Development of Academic Staff at Trakia University, Stara Zagora.

The structure of the dissertation submitted for an opinion includes an introduction, three chapters, key findings and conclusions, contributions of the dissertation, bibliographic references and enclosures. The dissertation main body consists of 168 pages, and its total volume is 366 pages. The bibliographic reference contains a significant database of scientific information which includes 117 literature sources in Bulgarian and in English, and demonstrates Zhana Koleva’s high level of bibliographic knowledge.

The structure of the submitted dissertation fully complies with the requirements referring to this type of scientific paper and leaves the impression of a thoughtful approach towards the research problem. The entire text contains all the required elements of an independent and unique research, moreover arranged in an orderly and logical manner.

1. Relevance of the Research Topic

The introduction of the dissertation presents the relevance of the research topic and the reasons for conducting the research. The choice of the topic is explained by the increasing

significance and the persistency of the problem, and as the PhD student points out “in the previous years, the possibilities for the formation of social competence through the application of a technology for integration of the Bulgarian folklore in education were not researched”. This sparks Zhana Koleva’s inspiration for researching the contemporary social, cultural and educational trends which could be associated with the increasing expectations and needs of the society for the formation of confident and responsible citizens.

2. Knowledge on the Topic

The dissertation treats a relevant and significant problem referring to the formation of social competence through integration of educational content with elements of the Bulgarian folklore in different fields of study in primary school. A pedagogical concept is elaborated in the dissertation based on a thorough review and analysis of theoretical sources, as well as on conducting an experimental study with an analysis of the obtained results. Hence, the presented scientific research has also an empirical nature, being structured in three main sections: theoretical, conceptual and empirical-resultative.

In the first chapter of the dissertation, the author draws our attention to the theoretical basis of the conceptual apparatus. Thoroughly discussed are folklore as a term, the Bulgarian folklore, social competence, including also in the context of the legislative documents, the nature and specifics of the formation of social competence through integration of the Bulgarian folklore in the 1st-4th grade study programmes and educational content in Bulgarian Language and Literature, Physical Education and Sports, Man and Society, Man and Nature, folk art in the educational content in Visual Arts, folk art in Music, as well as the possibilities for implementing the process of formation of social competence through Bulgarian folklore.

As I have already mentioned, from the selection of the bibliographic apparatus and the way it is handled, one could see the high level of knowledge of the PhD student in the scientific literature and scientific achievements in the research field. This allows the PhD student to critically systematize and reflect on the existing scientific theses, and adopt a reasoned position on each of them.

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology is presented in Chapter 2. The main objectives and tasks are correctly formulated, suitable research methods and means are selected, the research criteria and indicators are specified.

The research objective is to explore possibilities for the formation of social competences in the process of integration of the Bulgarian folklore in the different primary school subjects, as well as to develop and approbate a technology for the formation of these competences in the learning process.

The dissertation diligently and logically presents the research methodology and organization, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, conducting of the pedagogical experiment and modelling of situations, the pedagogical observation, expert evaluation, content analysis, criteria and indicators for evaluation of the research results, as well as an integrative technology for presenting the Bulgarian folklore.

The wrap-up of the results from the experimental research are presented and summarized in a quantitative and qualitative aspect. For this purpose, tables are used, supported by the relevant diagrams.

4. Generalization and Evaluation of the Dissertation and the Contributions

The style of the dissertation main body is scientific and precise. On the basis of the analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new concepts, the PhD student upgrades the existing knowledge, focusing herself on exploring problems whose solution leads to results which can be qualified as a scientific contribution.

The PhD student has classified the contributions of her research in two groups – contributions of theoretical and methodological nature, and contributions of practical and empirical nature.

5. Abstract

The Abstract has been elaborated according to the requirements of the Regulations on Development of Academic Staff at Trakia University, Stara Zagora, and correctly reflects the essential results from the research.

6. Questions and Recommendations

I have no particular comments except that the student should continue her work through analyses, publications and new experiments in this field of concern.

My question: What changes in the primary education would you make for the formation of a sustainable social competence through the Bulgarian folklore?

7. Conclusion

The dissertation contains scientific-theoretical and empirical results which constitute a scientific contribution in Pedagogy and comply with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, and the Regulations on its enforcement.

In the context of the elaborated dissertation thesis, six publications are presented dedicated to particular topics related to the dissertation topic, published in the period from 2019 to 2024.

The dissertation paper shows that the PhD student Zhana Plamenova Koleva possesses profound theoretical knowledge and professional competence in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, demonstrating first-rate research qualities and skills for independently organizing and conducting a profound scientific research.

Due to the above, I am confidently granting my **positive evaluation** with regards to the conducted research presented in the dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions reviewed above, and I am proposing to the Honorary Scientific Jury to confer the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Zhana Plamenova Koleva in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty: “Theory of Education and Didactics”.

18.08.2024

Opinion prepared by:

Assoc. Prof. Milena Ivova Ilieva, PhD