PhD Thesis Evaluation Review

by Prof. Nikolay Stoyanov Kolishev, D. Sc.

of a dissertation on "Students' expectations towards the teacher of philosophy and civic education as a determinant of his "professional self-image (8-12 grade)" by Katya Rosenova Dimitrova, presented for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in…,

(Methodology of teaching in philosophical disciplines)

I. Biographical Info

Katya Rosenova Dimitrova has a Bachelor's degree in Geology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2018, a bachelor's degree in pedagogy with additional professional qualification as a teacher of philosophy and civic education in 2020 and a master's degree in educational management in 2021 at the same university.

From 2019 to 2020, he worked as a lecturer in geography at Davitoz Ltd., from 2020 to 2021, she is a primary teacher at the Center for Central Education at 112 Primary School "Stoyan Zaimov", Sofia, and since October 2022 she has been an assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

II. General characteristics of the dissertation thesis

The dissertation consists of two parts, an introduction and a conclusion. The first part presents the educational framework and modern training in philosophy and civic education in the context of "Education of the Future", specifies the concept of "professional self-image" based on the psychological concept of "self-image", develops the research conceptual authoring model in the context of age dynamics in students' expectations. The second part is devoted to an empirical study of students' expectations of the teacher of philosophy and civic education. In it

the merits of the dissertation can be summarized as follows:

1. The methodological characteristics of the study (object, subject, goal, tasks, hypothesis) are correctly formulated, allowing the author to accurately outline the study's boundaries and achieve a logical connection between its individual parts.

2. The concept of "professional self-image" of the teacher of philosophy and civic education is convincing in theoretical terms, and this is done on the basis of a thorough analysis of psychological concepts of the self-image of the personality, interdisciplinary concepts of professional self-determination, and pedagogical concepts of the profile of the modern teacher.
3. A model of sustainable "professional self-image" of the teacher of philosophy and civic education is constructed, based on the age dynamics in students' expectations.
4. The empirical study of age dynamics in students' expectations since 8to 12 class of the teacher of philosophy and civic education was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the methodology and methodology of empirical pedagogical research. I would especially like to emphasize the professional manner in which the questions in the surveys were formulated and the detailed analysis of the results carried out.
5. A set of approaches and techniques for sharing mutual expectations between teacher and students has been developed, oriented towards sustainable professional self-determination of the teacher on the one hand, and personal and cognitive development of students on the other.
6. Logically, analytically, comprehensively and meaningfully, the conclusions of the study are formulated, as well as the prospects for future research in the thematic area.

III. Evaluation of scientific and theoretical contributions.

The theoretical contributions stated by the author correspond to the content of the dissertation and speak of a good level of professional reflection. The following theoretical contributions would be particularly significant for pedagogy:

1. Three authorial models of the professional self- the image of the teacher of philosophy and civic education – a meaningful, functional and model of the teacher as a teacher in the "School of the Future" are justified, and this is done on the basis of theoretical and empirical analysis.

- The content model is valued with the emphasis on the relationship between the personal qualities of the teacher and his ability to fully meet the expectations arising from the social role of "teacher", with this orientation being reminiscent of the socio-psychological concept of "individual style for fulfilling the social role". The synthesis between personal and professional (individual and social) is achieved through the hierarchical structure of the model, built from the following four levels: personal identity, psychological competences, professional competences and professional-personal qualities. Thus, the first source of the formation of the professional self-image is justified, namely professional-personal competence.
- The functional model is valuable for specifying the social expectations towards the teacher and reducing them to the expectations of the students as direct users of the results of his professional activity. It is important to note that the author analyzes these expectations not statically, but in the context of age and social dynamics in the development of students. Thus, the second source of the formation of the professional self image is justified, namely the information about the expectations of the students, which is obtained in the survey, but in the practical training is obtained in the process of skillful pedagogical communication. So this source of the formation of the professional self-image can be called communicative competence.
- The model of the teacher as a teacher in the "School of the Future" is valued with the emphasis on educational transformations typical of the 21st century. The model is successfully defined as a reflexive and adaptive system integrating the following key components: humanitarian-technological syncretism, ethical dominance and leadership, functional dynamics (civic mentor), communicative reflection. The meaning that the author uses in clarifying the essence of these components outlines important directions in the professional and personal development of the teacher of philosophy and civic education, namely the teacher as a model of humanitarian thinking, as a bearer of justice, as a social skills advisor, as a dialogical person who

knows how to diagnose students' expectations and comply with them. These are essential characteristics in the profile of the teacher of the future, which means both a professional who prepares for life and activity in the future. Thus, the third source of the formation of the professional self, which consists in the ability of the teacher to change in accordance with the progress of society, or a source that can possibly be called the innovative competence of the teacher, is justified.

2. A concept for effective acquisition of civic competences in the process of teaching philosophy and civic education has been developed, based on the idea of "civic mentoring", understood as a professional model of behavior in which the teacher is a mediator who translates abstract philosophical categories (freedom, justice, responsibility) into pragmatic social and civic skills. The main argument for the theoretical justification and practical applicability of the concept is the real possibility of synchronization between the self-reflection of the teacher and the current social expectations of the students.

IV. Evaluation of the practical and applied contributions.

As particularly significant for pedagogical research and for the practice of teaching philosophy and civic education, I evaluate the following practical and applied contributions of the dissertation:

1. A reliable toolkit has been developed and tested to diagnose the expectations of students in grades 8-12 towards the personality and professional activity of the teacher of philosophy and civic education. I especially want to note the scale of the survey and the precise way in which the results have been analyzed. 75 teachers from all over Bulgaria are surveyed. From the first high school stage (8-10 grade), 1,355 students were surveyed, and from the second high school stage (11-12 grade) – 754 students. The sample size guarantees a high degree of statistical significance of the results and a high degree of credibility in terms of established professional and educational attitudes in secondary school. The basis for comparison of teacher and student responses is provided by the inclusion of 14 questions, which are equivalent in the questionnaires for teachers and students. The quantitative

analysis was carried out using the means of descriptive statistics by calculating frequency distributions and percentage ratios. The qualitative analysis was carried out through a thorough content analysis, which allows to establish specific attitudes in the motivation for career choice, the role of chance in the professional path and the emotional dimensions of the teacher's authority. In addition, a detailed comparative analysis was carried out between the attitudes of the students from the two studied educational stages, as well as a comparison between the teacher's self-image and the expectations of the students, which allows to identify the points of synchrony and asynchrony in the pedagogical interaction.

2. A methodical communication toolkit has been developed, including a set of approaches and techniques (verbal, reflexive, empathic) to share the mutual expectations of teachers and students, aimed at improving the organizational climate in the class and at preventing and counteracting occupational stress. The toolkit is logically divided into five groups depending on its focus on monological or dialogical, including interactive, verbal influences and interactions, reflection, empathy, regulation of behavior,

3. It has been proven through competent quantitative analysis that fairness in the relationship between teachers and students is the main building block of the authority of the teacher of philosophy and civic education, which makes the principle of fairness in training both an indicator of the quality of professional activity and an important content emphasis in basic pedagogical education and in the postgraduate qualification of teachers. The author successfully notes in one of the conclusions of the survey "The professional self-image of the philosophy and civic education teacher is built on justice and principle, while students seek a combination of justice, humor and emotional self-control. The teacher is perceived as a "moral judge", but students also want him to be a "charismatic interlocutor". I can reasonably assume that this conclusion also applies to the learning process in other subjects.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, I can state that **I positively evaluate** the theoretical value of the justified models of the professiona self-image of the teacher of philosophy and civic education, the research correctness of the conducted survey, the professional analysis of the results, the conclusions drawn, as well as the educational and scientific value of the work as a whole.

The scientific-theoretical and practical-applied contributions of the dissertation are at a level that fully meets the legal requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy of teaching in… (Methodology of teaching philosophical disciplines).

prof. Nikolay Kolishev, D.Sc.