



## REVIEW

from

**Prof. Dr. Petya Yordanova Karaivanova,**

**University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"**

member of a scientific jury, appointed by order No. RD-38-305 of 26.06.2023 of  
the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

**REGARDING:** defense of a dissertation for the award of the educational and  
scientific degree "Doctor"

in the field of higher education: **1. Pedagogical sciences**

professional direction: **1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy)**

**Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts**

**Department of "Preschool and Media Pedagogy"**

**Author:** *Assistant Professor Gabriela Plamenova Valentinova-Metodieva*

**Topic:** *Model for optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of parents of 6-9-  
year-old children*

**Doctoral program:** *Preschool pedagogy*

**Research supervisor:** *Prof. Dr. Radoslav Ivanov Penev*

## **1. DATA ON THE DOCTORAL DEGREE, DISSERTATION, AUTHOR REFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **DISSERTATION DATA.**

Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva is a graduate from the faculty of "Studies of education and art" at "Kliment Ohridski" where she graduates bachelors degree in "preschool and middle school pedagogics" (2016-2021) In 2018 she gets her masters degree in "Management of education at preschools"

Her professional work as a preschool teacher is involved at “Veda” (private German speaking school) located in Sofia where she was employed in the period 2016-2021.

The data from her autobiography shows that she is purposeful in her choices and professional steps in improving her expertise in the sphere of education.

## **DATA ON THE DOCTORAL, DISSERTATION, AUTHOR REFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS.**

Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva is a regular postgraduate in the cathedra of “Preschool and media pedagogics” enlisted with rector’s order number rd-20-483 from 15.02.2019 with topic of her work “model for optimising the lifestyle and educational culture of parents of 6-9 year olds” with supervisor professor Radoslav Ivanov Penev. The duration of her studies stands for three years ,from 15.02.2019 to 15.02.2022. Due to her wining a contest for academic position “assistant” in education unit , her studies transform the in distance studies with rector’s order number rd-20-2089 from 13.10.2022. There is a deadline for completing her education- 28.03.2022. After the deadline day the postgraduate is deducted with the right for defence - rd-20-1111 from 24.06.2022. Based on the application ,together with the completion of all postgraduate work her dissertation is discussed in the cathedra of “Preschool and media pedagogics” and there is a fixed date for her defence.

It is evident from the attached documentation that throughout the entire period of her training, Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva promptly and accurately reports the fulfillment of her obligations arising from the IUP (Certificate No. 6 dated 11.05.2023). It is clear from the provided documentation that no procedural violations were committed and the formal requirements of the laws and regulations in force in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Sofia University were correctly fulfilled.

### **Actuality of the topic**

The PhD student focuses her research efforts on an interesting and dissertable topic. Its relevance stems from the need for the modern family to receive the necessary professional support in order to be able to learn positive models of parental behavior, through which it can effectively influence the upbringing of children. The involvement of parents in the current values for education and upbringing is a prerequisite for their committed participation in the process of forming the growing individuality in a constructive partnership with preschool and school institutions. Achieving it as a priority of pedagogical counseling requires development and justification of expedient models for

technological provision of this complex and delicate process in its phenomenology. It is in this direction that the research ambitions of Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva are oriented, who finds in this problematic field chances to offer educational-applied solutions, presupposing "the change in the attitude of the parent towards his own child and humanizing his educational life orientations' (p. 11).

They are technologically protected as a model system for optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of parents of 6-9-year-old children. Their importance in the context of preschool and school education is connected with the implementation of the positive parenting strategy, which determines the nature of the partnership between the significant educational subjects. Their applied assurance categorically defends the ambition of the doctoral student to support the efforts of the teachers who accepted the challenge to purposefully accompany this process.

### **Knowing the problem**

Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva demonstrates in-depth knowledge in the investigated problem area. This is evidenced by the volume and nature of the researched scientific literary sources and documents. Excellent knowledge of their content provides the necessary basis for the analytical interpretation and generalization of opinions and positions related to the selected research field. Their creative submission to the topic of the dissertation work and skillful expression of their own point of view, nuanced by personal and professional commitment to the issues outlined within the research, is impressive.

### **Research methodology**

The chosen research methodology allows achieving the set goals, oriented to the development and testing of an educational model for more positive relationships in the family, through which to optimize the life-pedagogical culture of the parents of 6-9-year-old children. The selected toolkit is described correctly and in detail. It is tailored to the theoretical and applied nature of the research and it contains: theoretical analysis, pedagogical modeling, pedagogical experiment, survey, expert evaluation, mathematical-statistical methods.

Their complex application ensures obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation work, since the use of various methods guarantees obtaining valid, relevant and representative information.

### **Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions**

The dissertation was developed in a volume of 205 pages, of which 170 pages are text-exposition, and the remaining pages systematize the used literature

(a total of 115 titles, including 76 in Cyrillic, 20 in Latin and 19 in ternet-resources) and included applications.

The work is structured in INTRODUCTION, SIX CHAPTERS AND CONCLUSION, LITERATURE AND APPENDICES. Its content includes 1 table, 47 diagrams and 7 images. It is accompanied by 4 appendices with evidentiary materials: 3 survey cards - 2 for parents (one the author's work of Prof. Dr. Rados-lav Penev) and 1 for students and teachers, as well as a presentation to present the "Step by Step" model aimed at optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of parents of 6-9-year-old children. In their unity, they prove the precise implementation of the research program and its effectiveness.

In *the introduction*, the doctoral student specifies arguments in support of the chosen topic of her dissertation work. They are presented on a professional and personal level and testify to the meaningfulness of the problem chosen for research.

In *the first chapter*, Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva presents the program orientation of her research. It convincingly substantiates the relevance of the issue in the discourse of the constructive partnership between the family and educational institutions and the potential of adequate pedagogical education for the assimilation of positive models of parental behavior, through which the communication "parents - children" can be improved. It correctly specifies the content of the conceptual research parameters, which it skilfully connects with the leading research goal - "studying and stimulating educational orientations in the modern Bulgarian family" (p. 8). In this part of the development, the necessary conceptual systematicity was introduced by defining the conceptual and terminological apparatus used by the doctoral student. The stated ambition is to precisely implement the research program in five logically linked stages: analytical, preliminary, ascertaining, formative and concluding. The results are achievable in the context of the set goal and the chronological time for achieving it, the expected results, listed in three aspects: optimization of the subject of the pedagogical education of parents in various forms of partnership cooperation with them; development of professional-practical competencies necessary for the teacher to effectively work with families and effectively increase the life-pedagogical culture of Bulgarian families for the positive upbringing of children (p. 11-12).

In the *second chapter*, the doctoral student focuses her attention on establishing the theoretical foundations of the chosen problem area. It structures this part of its development appropriately, placing three main emphasis: the family as a factor for socialization and education of the child; childhood development

and family influence; the interaction between educational institutions and the family. In connection with the first substantive focus, he skillfully characterizes the family as a socializing factor, bringing out the specific features, stages, directions, target, paradigmatic and applied aspects of the educational process in a family environment. On this basis, he concretizes models of parental behavior and their influence on children. In connection with the second substantive focus, it thoroughly analyzes classical and modern theories of cognitive, mental and emotional-social development in childhood, bringing arguments in support of the developmental functions of the family in preschool and primary school age. The delineation of the realities and perspectives in the interaction "family - educational institutions" was achieved on the basis of detailing the problematic characteristics of the relationship in the discourse of the used strategies and forms for its achievement, based on the existing normative regulation, strategic direction, content and technological assurance of pedagogical education of parents.

In this part of the development, the doctoral student shows a good knowledge of significant publications and documents. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the essence, dimensions and effects of positive cooperation with the family and its projections in the current pedagogical reality in the context of the positive upbringing of the child. He is able to successfully integrate cognitive and research resources for the needs of his own research and to bring out the advantages of pedagogical education to parents. The methods and procedures used allow her to thoroughly understand the multi-aspect and interdependence of the problems identified at the theoretical level. In this part of the development, the author convincingly defends her ambitions for precisely setting the general theoretical conceptual framework of her research.

In the *third chapter*, Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva presents the methodology and organization of the research. They have already been commented on and evaluated in a previous component of this review. Here I share my excellent impressions of the precise presentation of the staged implementation of the experimental research and the punctuality in the detailed description of each of its components (chronology, target group, methodology, etc.).

In the *fourth chapter*, the doctoral student analyzes the results of the ascertainment experiment in detail. Here, the emphasis is logically linked to the criterion framework of the research in the direction of: life priorities and behavioral characteristics of children, development projects, specifics of educational orientations and interactions, parents' ideas about the relevance of education and training, and attitudes towards school. The data is summarized and displayed in a purposeful manner. The analysis is accurate and correct.

Through the content of the *fifth chapter*, Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva convincingly defends her ambitions for a precise professional composition of her author's model for optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of parents through the punctual derivation of its conceptual parameters and a meaningful presentation of its thematic highlights . The vision is clear, the goals are achievable, the structure and the theme are logically linked to the specifics of the "parent-child" relationship. An impression is made by the slender thematic determination in the block composition of the model. Here, the author demonstrates a visionary culture and competencies for precise pedagogical modeling. An interesting technology has been developed that allows achieving the specified expected results. The systematized original technological elements are expedient and have the capacity to guarantee a complex developing effect. Their educational and applied potential meets the requirements for good pedagogical practice and convincingly proves the skills of the doctoral student to develop and defend effective in the modern educational context innovative technological solutions that have their results in relation to the chosen research challenge.

In the *sixth chapter*, Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva presents the formative experiment and analyzes the user evaluation of the model. The obtained data are expressed visually by suitable graphic methods. Their interpretation is correct and allows deriving trends to prove the research thesis. The general analysis made convincingly defends the ambition of the doctoral student to promote the final educational product of her work, which has an emphasized applied significance and the advantage of a scientifically based conceptuality and statistically protected performance regarding the capacity of the model to increase the life-pedagogical culture of parents.

The dissertation is the original work of the author. The content of the dissertation does not violate copyright and intellectual property rights. This has been proven by testing with a software product to detect plagiarism and use of incorrect practices. The results of the performed inspection are reflected in a protocol attached to the documentation, accompanied by an opinion of the scientific supervisor.

The language of the dissertation is academic, the style is appropriate for this type of work, and the structure of the text is well organized with the necessary logical completion of each component.

The abstract is structured according to the requirements. It has a volume of 47 pages and clearly presents the content characteristics and structural parameters for the dissertation work.

## **Assessment of the PhD student's publications and personal contributions**

As. Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva presents a total of 3 scientific publications. They were realized during her studies in the doctoral program and were applied in defense of the necessary scientometric indicators. The developments testify to her skills in popularizing the results of her scientific research. All publications are on the topic of the dissertation work. They meet the requirements for scientific articles and reflect the staged results of the research conducted within the framework of the work on the dissertation project. They are devoted to current problems related to the model determination of parental behavior and its influence on the growing individuality, parental ideas and attitudes towards school education and training, the interaction between the kindergarten and the family in the context of the Bulgarian experience. Their content reflects the author's personal contribution to the issues she researches, related to the topic of her dissertation.

The above proves that Assistant Professor Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva has complied with the quantitative requirements of the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the number of publications and participation in scientific forums. The attached materials confirm that the minimum national requirements listed in relation to the educational and scientific degree "doctor" have been met. The duly certified scientometric report counts 50 points for G "A" and 30 points for G "G" .....

## **2. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS.**

The main achievements in the dissertation work and the contributing moments in the non-go can be systematized as follows:

### *A. Scientific-theoretical aspect:*

1. I positively accept the realized scientific and analytical-comparative analysis of the problems of the family as a socializing factor and an environment for upbringing in current theoretical studies, on the basis of which the specifics of family interactions such as deficits and positives of communication and communication between parents and children are deduced.
2. I positively evaluate the systematized principles of the family system and the argumentation of the goal orientation and technological support of family

education in the context of the procedural features of the educational process. I find it an advantage to bring out approaches to solve problem situations in communication and communication between parents and children.

3. I confirm the complementation of existing theoretical concepts of the child's cognitive, mental and social-personal development with new nuances related to the factorial importance of the family for the vector determination of these dynamic processes in preschool and primary school age.

4. I confirm the contribution in the analytical disclosure of strategic and technological parameters of the cooperation between the kindergarten and the family. I believe that they are significant in relation to the achievement of complex results, both in terms of the subjective equality of the educational agents, and in relation to the improvement of the life-pedagogical culture of Bulgarian families and their commitment to the positive upbringing of children.

5. I admire the presentation of strategies for positive parenting and their argumentation, characterization, model integration, content and technological provision with a view to achieving effective pedagogical education of the modern family.

#### *B. Experimental-research aspect:*

1. I positively evaluate the experimentally approved "Step by Step" model and find its advantage to be its statistically proven importance for optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of parents of 6-9-year-old children.

2. I positively accept the systematized toolkit for studying the effectiveness of the author's formative system. It is easy to apply and with sufficient reliability provides an opportunity to follow the dynamics of communication and interaction in the modern Bulgarian family as a function of positive communication between parents and children.

3. I confirm the contributing moments regarding the author's content and technological options for optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of modern parents, which provide opportunities for their effective application in pedagogical everyday life.

#### *C. Practical-applied aspect:*

1. I positively admire the protected in an applied plan and statistically proven example of innovative practice by testing the thematic block model "Step by step" in a real educational environment. I find that it can be successfully used and built on in the professional daily life of the innovative teacher who has the ambition to

provide support to parents who strive to optimize their life-pedagogical culture and appreciate its importance for the prosperity of their children.

2. I positively accept the applied enrichment of the teachers' methodological arsenal with technological elements to optimize the parents' life-pedagogical culture, the effects of which are statistically protected. I appreciate the opportunity to achieve progress in the quality of educational interaction through them in the conditions of a positive family environment.

The contributions correspond to the content of the development and objectively reflect the achievements of Gabriela Valentinova-Metodieva.

### Questions

What deficits in "parent-child" communication and in the interaction between the family and the educational institutions did you find when carrying out your research? How can they be overcome by implementing your author's model in practice?

### Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

The topicality of the issue and the professional engagement of the doctoral candidate with the topic of the research probably set impulses for the implementation of future scientific projects through which the results of the conducted research will be popularized among a wider audience. I recommend the more recent preparation and publication of a monographic work oriented to the target audiences engaged in optimizing the life-pedagogical culture of responsible parenthood.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law* on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the **relevant** Regulations of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". The author **Gabriela Plamenova Valentinova-Metodieva** has in-depth theoretical training

in the field of preschool pedagogy and confidently demonstrates competences for independently conducting scientific research in this problematic field.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research, the achieved results and contributions, and offer to the respected members of the Scientific Jury my positive vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to **Gabriela Plamenova Valentinova-Metodieva**, in the field of higher education *1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool pedagogy)*.

20.07.2023

Veliko Tarnovo

**Prepared the review:**

(Prof. Dr. Petya Karaivanova)