

REVIEW

Of a dissertation

About obtaining the scientific and educational degree “Doctor”

Field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences,
professional field 1.1. Theory and management of education,
doctoral program “Management of Education”

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Topic of the dissertation: **THE INTEGRATION OF ACADEMICALLY EDUCATED
PEOPLE AFTER PROFESSIONAL RE-TRAINING FOR TEACHING IN THE
SCHOOL SYSTEM**

PhD student: Ruth Rozenshtrom

1. Basic review of the dissertation and the dissertation summary.

The dissertation has 234 pages with 175 of them being main author’s text. It includes three chapters, a reference list, and appendices. The reference list holds enough scientific sources in English and Hebrew. The appendices reveal the research tools.

In the **Introduction** the PhD student logically sets the foundation of the research by arguing the relevance of the topic. The questions about recruitment, retention, and development of teachers are significant for any educational system and Israel is no exception. Searching for paths not only to raise the quantity, but also the quality of educational specialists, the dissertation calls for the creation and implementation of various training paths and models for specialists from different areas, who are willing and can join the school system.

Research object and aspects are clearly stated and define the starting points of the research framework. The research objective is somewhat unclearly stated although it reveals the main results the student aims to achieve in her work. There is a main research question which is

decomposed to several separate sub-questions, related to motivation for teaching, the characteristics of school integration process and the level of attainment of different specialists in the system.

The chosen research methodology is adequate to the research objective and tasks and with the research results the PhD student claims that “research aims to design and to produce an optimal model for the absorption of teachers after vocational retraining, a model that will allow training institutions and the education system to train teachers and absorb them in unique pathways that will address their unique needs” (p. 6).

First chapter of the thesis sets the theoretical parameters of the research by outlining main questions and paradigms in which the research question and research topic are interpreted. Different aspects of re-training and integration in school system of academically trained people are presented with proper understanding and in proper scope. The student shows a clear systematic approach toward the issue and a good understanding. The chapter reveals questions related to the shortage of teachers in Israel and abroad and different approaches for tackling such a shortage. Special attention is paid to models, presenting the so-called “short-path” for gaining pedagogical qualification for people with previous academic background and experience in other social sectors.

The well-done and meaningful analysis of teacher’s position raises the interest of the reader. It is done through the lenses of two different approaches: one – seeing teaching as a profession, with a long-term commitment, stable characteristics, and sustainability in teachers’ training and preparation; the other – claiming that teaching is a role/position, seeing it as a set of functions and responsibilities. Upon this analysis the student presents, adequately and with understanding, the main controversies between “traditional” way for teacher trainings (especially in Israel) and the “alternative” models, which provide shorter and quick (sometimes – not good enough) re-training.

Special attention in the chapter is paid to the question of quality of teaching staff, which emerges along with the quantity problem. The question that student raises is not only for providing enough teachers, but also for providing such teachers, who have high social and cultural capital and who are capable to inspire, motivate students, and to achieve higher results.

The second chapter of the dissertation is too short (only three pages) and describes the research design and methodology. It would be suitable for this chapter to be part of the present

Chapter Three, which presents the empirical results, and the thesis would not lose credibility from such restructuring. The approach chosen for the empirical research is suitable for the stated tasks and research questions as it combines quantitative and qualitative research methods. The student has done 5 interviews with re-trained teachers. Based on those interviews she developed a questionnaire with the main parameters of preparation, activity, and motives of re-trained teachers in the school system and used it for a survey with 100 respondents. Interviews with 5 school principals were also implemented as part of the research process.

Research design would have been clearer and would benefit if, in this chapter, the main variables of the research were stated. Those variables can be implicitly drawn from the information in the third chapter where the results are presented. If they have been set here this would significantly improve the research design.

In Chapter Three of the dissertation the PhD student thoroughly presents the results of the empirical study. Data is presented with graphs, which can be improved so they can properly visualize the main tendencies in the responses. The presentation of the results starts with the survey among re-trained teachers, the questions in the questionnaire are presented in a consecutive manner with a very detailed presentation of the statistical data of each question and response. Such an approach is more like enumeration or creating a short list and does not present student's point of view and her analysis of those results in the context of the research questions. Similar approach is adopted when the results from the interviews with 5 re-trained teachers are presented later in the chapter. The logic of the research process described in Chapter Two leads to the expectation that those interviews will be presented first, and some conclusions would be drawn from them for the parameters of the survey.

Results from the interviews with school principals, stated in the Introduction and in Chapter Two are not presented in Chapter Three.

The actual analysis of the empirical results can be seen in the **Conclusions**, which is almost 30 pages long. In this part there is a logical and deep summary of the motives of re-trained teachers for choosing the teaching profession as a second career, as well as a description of intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Based on the interviews with re-trained teachers there is a summary of the main difficulties and challenges in the process of school integration and attainment of such specialists

in the educational system. At the end of the dissertation some factors for teachers' retention in school system are outlined such as – inclusion in organizational culture, providing proper feedback and support, creation of better work conditions and better salaries, along with development of sense for professional autonomy and participation in decision-making in the school.

The PhD summary reflects the structure and the content of the dissertation except for the fact the in paragraph 3. Research results in the summary there are conclusions and summarizations which are part of the last part of the Dissertation – Conclusions. This, however, does not obstruct the clear perception of the main benefits of the thesis.

2. Scientific contributions.

I accept the scientific contributions stated in the thesis and the summary. When it comes to the theoretical-practical contributions they arise from the practical character of the researched topic and present a well-done systematic framework of practical guidance for improvement of attraction, re-training and attainment of academically trained teachers in educational system. I believe that if that guidance were presented within the context of the stated research questions, this would provide the students with an opportunity to develop a clearer and more scientifically-based framework for the future development of this sector for teacher training.

3. Publications.

In accordance with the requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “doctor” the student has presented three publications. One is in the annual collective work of South-West University and two are in Journal of Business and Social Science Review. The publications reflect some parts of theoretical framework of the dissertation and can be used in further research on the topic.

4. Conclusion.

The dissertation reveals a significant problem in educational management. The question of teacher shortage on every educational level is nor new, neither unknown to the researchers and professionals in the field. The thesis convincingly interprets and presents the question in the

context of Israeli school system and outlines possible ways for improving the process of attraction and retention of academically trained people with previous experience in different fields.

Some *main positive characteristics* of the dissertation are:

- The choice of a relevant research topic and its detailed and systematic interpretation through different lenses in the theoretical part of the work.
- The quality and engaged analysis of teacher's work in the context of two contradicting paradigms – profession or position.
- Good understanding of career development, planning and re-training in the context of modern dynamic life conditions and changing requirements and expectations for teachers.
- Clearly outlined understanding of the need for raising not only the quantity, but also the quality of teaching staff.

Some *critical remarks* can also be made, as follows:

- Firstly, statistical data presented in the work for teaching profession in Israel are old and does not provide opportunity for the reader to develop an actual view for the current labor market for teachers.
- The same remark could be made for significant part of the reference list, in which publication are mostly before 2012. The development of scientific thought in the field of teaching profession and human resources management in education provide an opportunity for research and analysis of new paradigms as strategic management of staff, motivational management, mentorship, and supervision in school system, any of which would significantly benefit the dissertation.
- Presentation of survey results in Chapter Three is mostly fragmented and is separated from the actual quality analysis and interpretation, presented in Conclusions. This makes the understanding of student's positions harder and hides her abilities and skills for scientific work, which she undoubtedly has.
- Interviews with school principals, stated in Introduction and in Chapter Two are not presented within the results of the empirical research.

- The model for re-training of academically trained people, stated in the research object is also missing.

Considering all the above I have some **questions** for the student:

- At what stage is the development of the model for re-training of academically trained people for teaching profession, which model is stated in the Introduction of the thesis, what elements that model includes and in what way the student can use such a model in her professional work?
- In what way the results in the dissertation can promote a quality strategic management of human resources in education? What is the opinion of school principals and what challenges they face when such re-trained teachers enter the school system?
- At the end – what is the personal opinion of the student about the so-called “alternative programs” for re-training, compared to the traditional ones, provided by the universities? Should such alternative programs become part of the training practice with government support, or should they preferably serve the individual motives and interests of people who are willing to change career and enter school system as teachers?

In conclusion it can be said that the presented dissertation work has the characteristics of a thorough and wholesome scientific research on the topic. Presented theoretical aspects and practical implication of the issue for re-training of people with academic background for teaching profession benefit the field in terms of better understanding of the topic. Conclusions and guidance can be useful not only for the education system in Israel, but for other countries, including Bulgaria.

As a result, the dissertation shows the skills of Ruth Rozenshtrom to plan and implement a quality scientific and research activity and provides the reason to award educational and scientific degree “doctor” to her in professional field 1.1. Theory and management of education.

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