

## OPINION

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As part of the procedure for obtaining the Doctoral Degree (PhD)

**Field of higher education:** *1. Pedagogical Sciences*

**Professional field:** *1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in ...*

**Doctoral Program:** *Technology and Entrepreneurship Education Methodology*

**Topic of the dissertation:** **"FORMATION OF WORK READINESS IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL"**

**Author of the dissertation:** Diana Stankova Sevdalinova, doctoral student in independent training at the Department of "Aesthetic Education" of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski"

**Scientific supervisor:** Prof. Marina Spasova Ivanova, PhD - Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski"

### 1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

By order No. RD-21-2351/17.12.2024 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski", I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for conducting a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic **"FORMATION OF READINESS FOR WORK IN TRAINING IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF STUDENTS IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL"** for obtaining the Doctoral Degree (PhD) in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional field: 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ...

The author of the dissertation is Diana Stankova Sevdalinova - a doctoral student in independent training at the Department of Aesthetic Education with scientific supervisor Prof. Marina Spasova Ivanova, PhD - Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The set of materials on paper presented by Diana Stankova Sevdalinova is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv, and includes the following documents:

1. A sample application to the rector for the initiation of a procedure;
2. CV in European format;
3. Statement of the preliminary discussion in the department;
4. Abstract of dissertation;
5. Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
6. Certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
7. List of publications;
8. Dissertation;
9. Copies of publications on the topic of the dissertation.

The study of the documents provided to me showed that there were no violations of the procedure. D. Sevdalinova has attached nine publications, of which one publication in a collection of DIUU, an article in the journal "Preschool and School Education", 2 studies in the yearbook of the "St. Konstantin Preslavski" University and reports at conferences and other scientific forums. The minimum national requirements for acquiring the Doctoral Degree (PhD) have also been met – a presented dissertation work - 50 points., studies, articles and reports with scientific review and in edited collective volumes. The total number is more than the required minimum of 80 points.

Diana Sevdalinova has a rich professional career, mainly in the field of education. She has over 20 years of work experience, starting as a primary school teacher at the "Hristo Smirnenski" Primary School in the village of Rogozche (2005-2023). Since 05.09.2024, she has been the director of the "Happy Childhood" preschool in the town of Djebel. She holds master's degrees in "National and Regional Security" and "Psychology of Social Activities" from the "Paisiy Hilendarski" University, as well as a bachelor's degree in PNUP from the same university. In addition, she has completed various qualification courses (PKS) at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", including a specialization in "Integrative Interactions in the Educational Process". In 2019, she received a certificate as an external expert at the National Inspectorate of Education. Sevdalinova is a recipient of the Honorary Award of the Ministry of Education and Science "Neofit Rilski" (2017) and the National Award "Stoyan Mihaylovski" - Best Teacher (2021). She has excellent communication skills, teamwork and independent work skills, as well as experience in organizing conferences and working on projects.

## **2. Relevance of the topic**

The dissertation on the topic "Formation of work readiness in technology and entrepreneurship education of students in the initial stage of secondary school" is relevant in the context of modern educational requirements and global trends in the development of key competencies. Technology and entrepreneurship curricula after 2016 aim to prepare students for the dynamic reality of the 21st century by developing skills such as adaptability, critical thinking, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. The problem of forming work readiness is not only scientifically significant, but also particularly relevant for practice, as it fits into the strategy for sustainable development of education systems. The topic contributes to expanding knowledge in the pedagogical field and offers new approaches to solving practical challenges related to improving students' independence and skills.

The purpose of the study – studying the readiness for work in Technology and Entrepreneurship – is clearly formulated and directly responds to the current needs of the modern educational system. The tasks set by the author are logically related to the goal and are developed in such a way as to allow for an in-depth study of the problem. The development and implementation of a methodology for the formation of work readiness adds applied significance to the study.

The dissertation highlights the lack of effective educational strategies for building practical skills, especially regarding work competencies within the subject of "Technology and Entrepreneurship". The author supports this statement by references to some educational policies, such as the National Action Plan "Food and Nutrition" (2005–2020), which adds depth and relevance to the study.

## **3. Knowing the problem**

The doctoral student demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the problem through an extensive and critical literature review, which covers philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical aspects of the phenomenon of work. The analysis of the socializing function of work is particularly impressive, covering its historical development and its contemporary significance. The literature review is well structured and includes key sources that support the main theses of the study. D. Sevdalinova has made a detailed review of the regulatory framework and key educational documents, which testifies to a high level of awareness and ability to integrate theoretical and practical aspects. The creative approach to the interpretation of the literary material is obvious, emphasizing the connection between the play and work activities of students, which further emphasizes the significance of the topic.

#### **4. Research methodology**

The methodology of the study is carefully selected and well-founded, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The conducted entrance and exit tests, surveys and experimental work are consistent with the set goals and objectives. Doctoral student Sevdalinova has applied an interesting approach, having developed a new system of tasks for the formation of work readiness, which is different from standard teaching practices. The study includes experimental activities conducted in real learning conditions, which adds a high degree of practical applicability of the results. The methodology of the study is comprehensive, covering the main aspects necessary to achieve reliable and significant results.

The chosen research methodology is adequate and allows achieving the set goals. Quantitative and qualitative methods were applied, which provide reliable data for the analysis. The structured approach to the study, including surveys and tests, is effective for assessing students' readiness for work.

The mixed methodology used – an appropriate combination of quantitative (tests, surveys) and qualitative methods (document analysis). The methods described (p. 97 onwards) constitute the basis for achieving the set goal. In order to improve methodological precision, it would be desirable to include in the dissertation more detailed explanations of the sample selection (volume, representativeness), a detailed description of the data processing methods used and a justification of the statistical methods used.

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

The dissertation is structured in three main chapters, which are logically connected and complement the main thesis of the study. The introduction is detailed and well-structured, clearly outlining the problem, objectives and scope of the study. The first chapter offers a theoretical analysis of the socializing function of work, examining work activity in a historical and contemporary context. This part of the work demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the problem and the ability for critical analysis. The second chapter is dedicated to the regulatory framework and specific aspects of work readiness in children of primary school age. This part includes an analysis of existing educational standards and their possibilities for implementation in practice. The third chapter focuses on the design of the study, including a detailed review of the methods used, analysis of the results of the experimental work and interpretation of the empirical data. The conclusions and recommendations are supported by the available evidence and are based on real observations and measurements. The content of the work is analytical and structured, avoiding unnecessary retelling. Every aspect of the research has been carefully analyzed, which highlights the quality of the scientific work.

The dissertation follows a logical structure with clearly defined sections – from the theoretical framework, through the methodology, to the analysis of the results and conclusions. The chapters are organized sequentially, with each one building the foundation for the next. However, the emphasis on theoretical aspects (especially philosophical views on work) is too great compared to the analysis of the results, which is shorter. Some subchapters, such as those on physical and mental readiness, could have been better integrated into the main line of argumentation.

Each section is related to the main thesis of the study and builds on the previous one. The transitions between the main sections are clear, but some abrupt changes are observed within the subchapters, such as between “Motivational Factors” and “Physical Readiness Factors” in Chapter 1. Connecting these sections through a discussion of their combined role in work readiness would improve the logic of the presentation of the information.

The literature review is extensive, covering theoretical perspectives, historical context, and pedagogical frameworks.

## **6. Assessment of the doctoral student's publications and personal contribution**

The presented studies, articles and reports in yearbooks, scientific journals and conference proceedings are related to the results of the research work and are a visible reflection of the author's contribution. They are dedicated to various problems of the research and are a successful attempt to popularize the results.

## **7. Abstract**

The abstract fully and correctly reflects the content of the dissertation work. All requirements of the regulations have been met and it completely objectively reflects the main results.

## **8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results**

In the interest of the future work of the doctoral student, some recommendations and critical remarks should be made:

- It is advisable to enrich the discussion and conclusions in the dissertation, to compare the results of the study with data from other similar studies. It is also necessary to detail the analysis of the data from the surveys and tests.
- The developed model for assessing work readiness can be adapted for other age groups. Further research is needed to validate the proposed methods and tools in other educational institutions.
- expanding the study to include students from different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds in order to test the applicability of the methodology in different contexts, as well as to examine the long-term effect of using the proposed tasks on the development of students' skills.
- I would also recommend exploring the possibilities of integrating digital technologies into tasks for forming readiness for work.
- Despite the wealth of sources, the literature review suffers from a lack of balance between classical and contemporary research. Outdated sources limit the ability to apply the findings in the context of contemporary educational practice.
- sample size and scope - only students from two 4th grade classes were included, there is a lack of data on their socioeconomic context or diversity, which may limit the validity of the conclusions. Future research could expand the scope to include students from different backgrounds.
- There is a lack of clear discussion of opposing perspectives. The review presents established ideas about work and socialization, but does not delve into critical or alternative perspectives, such as the challenges of work education in the contemporary digital context.
- and last but not least - converting the test score into grades on the six-point scale is unacceptable from the point of view of precision in the statistical processing of the results.

The critical notes presented do not significantly reduce the quality of the work, but above all provide the main guidelines for improvement in the future work of the doctoral student.

## **Conclusion**

The dissertation contains scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet the on the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ADASRB and the relevant Regulations of the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski". The presented materials and dissertation results comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" for the Implementation of the ADASRB.

The dissertation shows that Diana Sevdalinova has theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Technology and Entrepreneurship Education Methodology", demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I give my *positive statement* of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and *I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award* Diana Stankova Sevdalinova with Doctoral Degree (PhD) in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of education in..., Doctoral program "Methodology of education in technology and entrepreneurship".

3.02.2025

**Prof. Dr. Nikolay Tsanev**