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REVIEW

**of the doctoral dissertation by Master Vered Azulay, entitled:
„Teacher Burnout in Youth Villages in Israel”,
written under the scientific guidance of prof. UAM Jakub Isański, Ph.D, at
the Sociology Department of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań**

I. FORMAL AND LEGAL GROUNDS FOR THE REVIEW

The formal basis for the preparation of this review is the letter of the Vice-Dean for Science at the Faculty of Sociology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań - prof. UAM Piotr Jabkowski, Ph.D, dated 30 of May 2022, informing about the appointment of my person by the Council for the Discipline of Sociological Sciences of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań as a reviewer.

The legal basis for the proceedings is Art. 190 (point 2) of the Law on Higher Education and Science, dated on the 20th of July 2018 and Art. 187, according to which: *„The subject of the doctoral dissertation is an original solution to a scientific problem, an original solution in the field of applying the results of own scientific research in the economic or social sphere or original artistic deaths”.*

Considering the above, when assessing the doctoral dissertation of Mrs Vered Azulay, the following criteria were adopted as the basis for the assessment: selection and importance of the subject matter; correct formulation of research problems, goals and hypotheses; applied research methods and tools as well as the formal aspect of the dissertation; sources used; structure and content of the dissertation.

II CHOICE AND MEANING OF THE DISSERTATION SUBJECT

I consider the topic undertaken by the author of the dissertation to be relevant, up-to-date and very important. Burnout is a syndrome with many causes, but also with many consequences, both in relation to the individual, organization and society. It is a phenomenon that cannot be analyzed without linking it to others, such as the issues of motivation, commitment, stress, quality or productivity at work. Burnout, as a research category, is not innovative, yet the exploration of the phenomenon is still desirable and fully justified, taking into account, for example, its constantly growing scale in the world. The cognitive attractiveness of the phenomenon opens up wide possibilities in searching for a research gap. The author of the dissertation undertook the effort of analyzing it in a group of teachers of children with special needs. This aspect makes the considerations particularly interesting, as the research assumptions do not necessarily have to provide obvious results, although the group of teachers is indicated as one of the most frequently experiencing professional burnout. The adopted formula for the title of the doctoral dissertation in a rather general way reflects the subject of the discussions conducted in the dissertation, but remains consistent with the substantive content of the dissertation. It also allows for quite a lot of freedom in the selection and presentation of both theoretical and empirical content.

III FORMULATION OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS, GOALS AND HYPOTHESES

As noted earlier, burnout in the group of teachers is not an innovative category. Narrowing the considerations to the group of people working with difficult youth allows, however, to identify a rarely explored research area, thus entitling to indicate it as the subject of research undertaken as part of the doctoral dissertation. The undertaken studies of the literature on the subject and the research gap identified on their basis allowed the author of the dissertation to formulate the main goal of the dissertation, specific goals and research hypotheses.

The main aim of the dissertation was adopted by the Author as follows: „*The main goal of the current research is to explore the burnout experience of teachers in youth villages in Israel*”. For detailed purposes, she included the search for answers to the following research questions: 1/Does the burnout of teachers who work with youths at risk lead to their dropping out from the education system?

2/How do teacher who teach youths at risk perceive the teaching profession and their role as teachers?

3/What is the teachers' attitude towards the boarding school education setting in which they work?

4/ Do the teachers experience burnout and at what level?

5/ In their opinion, what are the factors that cause burnout and can they be prevented?

The adopted structure of research questions is not fully consistent with the content of the main goal. The formula of the main goal assumes the exploration of only the phenomenon of occupational burnout, which is reflected in research questions number one, four and five. Questions two and three go beyond this scope and concern the broader analysis of attitudes in the work environment and the assessment of the teaching profession. The order of the questions was also disturbed. Regardless of the above, it can be concluded that the specific objectives have been achieved, thus enabling the achievement of the main objective.

The consequence of the adopted aims of the dissertation was the formulation of five research hypotheses:

1/ As there are more factors of burnout in the teacher, the teacher's desire to drop out of teaching is higher.

2/ A relationship will be found between the teacher's age and the professional burnout.

3/ A relationship will be found between the support factors and the burnout among teachers.

4/ A relationship will be found between the perception of efficacy in teaching and the perception of the teacher-student connection.

5/ The main factors of burnout will be the management and the number of work hours.

The author of the dissertation did not formulate the main hypothesis. Therefore, its compliance with the adopted formula of the main objective and the title of the dissertation cannot be assessed. The formula of specific hypotheses does not raise any objections. They are complementary and refer to the substantive content of the dissertation. The truth of the research hypotheses has been verified, and the relevant results are correctly presented in the empirical part of the dissertation. In some places Author uses plural form, for instance: „Burnout in teaching can derive from many factors, and therefore **we** hypothesized that in addition a positive relationship would be found between the factors of the departure from the teaching profession and burnout”, or „In the research study, **we** found that there is no significant relationship between any one of the parameters and burnout”, „Another hypothesis **we** examined is whether

there is a relationship between the different factors of support and burnout". This formula is not understandable. In conclusion, all goals were met and all hypotheses verified, although the formula adopted during the construction of specific objectives does not fully accurately refer to the content of the research hypotheses.

IV METHODS AND TOOLS APPLIED AND FORMAL DISSERTATION PAGE

The empirical part plays a significant role in the overall structure of the dissertation, which is worth emphasizing. The research methods used by the author are varied, adequate to the formulated research problem and the type of research conducted. It used methodological triangulation, assuming the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, The author thoroughly explained the essence of each type of method, and then described in detail those that she used in the research process she was carrying out.

The quantitative data were collected using the following questionnaires:

- Support factors - To evaluate the available support factors for teachers in the youth villages, a questionnaire containing 7 items for self-reporting was used, each presented a factor that might be a support factor for the teacher. For each item, participants were asked to rate the level of assistance they received during their work on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).
- Factors leading to leaving the teaching profession - In order to assess the factors that may lead to retirement from the teaching profession, as well as their extent, participants were given a questionnaire containing 28 items for self-reporting, each presenting a possible reason for retirement from the profession. In relation to each statement, participants were asked to rate the importance of the cause of retirement from the profession in their opinion on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).
- Teacher-student relations: In order to assess teacher-student relationships, a questionnaire was used including 7 self-reporting statements. Each statement described how a teacher-student relationship was conducted. For each item, the participants were asked to rate the degree of agreement based on the Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
- Ability to teach students with special needs - In order to assess the teaching ability of teachers with regard to students with special needs, a questionnaire containing 16 items for self-reporting was presented, each item presenting a certain type of students. For each item, the participants were asked to rate the extent to which they think they are able to cope with students with special needs based on the Likert scale, ranging from 1 (unsuccessful) to 4 (with great success).

- In order to assess teachers' burnout, a questionnaire was used containing 14 self-report items that shew different conditions of burnout in relation to the teaching profession. For each item, subjects were asked to rate the degree of agreement with the above on the Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

All the data collected in the mentioned above research were processed using the SPSS software program version 23. The reliability of the research instruments were examined using internal consistency, when for every questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was calculated. A total of 277 teachers who work with youths at-risk in the youth villages in Israel participated in the research study. Despite the quantitative methods, also the qualitative research methods have been used. Thirty one teachers who teach in seven youth villages around Israel were interviewed.

The construction of the research tools used does not raise any objections. Their content is fully consistent with the adopted structure of objectives and the formula of research hypotheses. The research procedure was carried out in accordance with the diagnostic procedure corresponding to the standards provided for this type of procedure. The doctoral student used a number of research methods and tools in her work, which indicates that she is well prepared to conduct research.

Some doubts are raised by the way of presenting the discussed content. The formula of the hypotheses adopted in different parts of the work takes a slightly different wording. The content of the work often includes numbering, that does not appear in the table of contents, which significantly hinders the understanding of the logic of the message. On page 167, the author introduces the point: "Additional Hypotheses", which is incomprehensible in the context of the discussed considerations and the initially adopted classification of research hypotheses.

When assessing the formal side of the dissertation, it should be stated that it raises some reservations.

V STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION AND SOURCES USED

The doctoral dissertation presented for review is theoretical and empirical in nature. In the initial part of the work, there is a list of figures, tables, charts, an abstract and an introduction. The theoretical part covers 100 pages and has been divided into three chapters. The empirical part consists of 78 pages. At the end of the dissertation, the final conclusions, list of bibliographic items and appendices are included.

The entire work consists of 238 pages. The number and timeliness of bibliographic items do not raise any significant reservations, although the list is dominated by works published before 2015. When carrying out a systematic review of the literature, it was also worth taking into account the most recent works. The dynamics of changes taking place in the contemporary world significantly determines the phenomena occurring in organizations, also significantly affecting the structure of factors determining the level of occupational burnout. The structure of the thesis does not raise any significant reservations, although the structure of the thesis content is more appropriate for scientific articles than for doctoral dissertations. It is also more legitimate to include all the lists in the final, rather than initial, part of the work.

The abstract and introduction provide a synthetic approach to the actual content of the dissertation, specifying the key aspects of its content. The author justifies the choice of the subject of the study, presents problems, goals and research hypotheses, characterizes research methods and a research sample.

The first chapter consists of six subchapters. The content of this part of the dissertation is devoted to the presentation of the definition of burnout, selected causes and effects of burnout, additionally relating these aspects to the group of teachers of difficult youth. The structure of this chapter does not raise any objections, although the scope of literature studies could have been expanded and better organized.

The content of the second chapter is devoted to youth at risk. This chapter consists of five subsections, in which the key group of young people and their problems have been characterized in turn. The scope of the conducted discussions allows to largely outline the background for further exploration of the problem of professional burnout of teachers working in the described work environment, with the simultaneous indication of key research areas.

The third chapter is the part that presents the system of boarding schools in Israel. This chapter consists of four sections, which describe the historic development of the boarding school system in Israel, youth villages in Israel and the role of the educational instructor in the youth village. The structure and content of this chapter are satisfactory.

The three chapters above form the theoretical part of the dissertation. The doctoral student correctly uses terminology falling within the scope of the conducted considerations. The second part of the work is devoted to the presentation of issues related to the author's research, presenting in detail the research methodology, research results and formulating final conclusions. The analysis of the factual material collected by the doctoral student allowed her to answer the formulated research questions, thus achieving the set goals. It also made it possible to verify the truth of the research hypotheses. The research results provide a lot of

important information of significant importance from the point of view of management theory and business practice. They prove that burnout is a very important problem not only in the group studied by a PhD student. The author of the work finally cites examples of many countries around the world where teacher burnout is a problem of special importance, also an important factor determining the final decision to leave the industry related to education. The real risk of this phenomenon intensifying raises serious concerns about the further shape of the education system, not only in Israel, it seems.

VI CONCLUSIONS

The doctoral dissertation by Master Vered Azulay, entitled: „*Teacher Burnout in Youth Villages in Israel*”, written under the scientific guidance of prof. UAM Jakub Isański, Ph.D, at the Sociology Department of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, meets the requirements of a doctoral dissertation specified in the Law on Higher Education and Science, dated on the 20th of July 2018, Art. 187. While preparing the doctoral dissertation, the doctoral student showed knowledge of the subject matter of her scientific research and proved that she has the ability to conduct empirical research. Taking into account the above opinion, I recommend admitting the doctoral dissertation of Mrs Vered Azulay to the public defense at the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań.

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