

Standpoint for the educational and scientific degree of Doctor

STANDPOINT

By

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Elected a member of the Academic Jury by Ordinance № P-1248/27.05.2022 of the Rector of MU-Plovdiv

Regarding the dissertation work on the topic: *Continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence of medical laboratory technicians* for conferral of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the higher educational area 7. Healthcare and Sport; professional field 7.4. Public Health, scientific specialty “Management of Health Care”.

Author: Katya Stefanova Kichukova, doctoral candidate in independent form at the Department of Management of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, MU-Plovdiv.

Academic advisors: Prof. Biyanka Torniyova, Doctor of Pedagogy,
Assoc. Prof. Tanya Taneva, Doctor of Psychology

1. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE PROCEDURE AND THE DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

The set of materials presented both on paper and digitally complies with the requirements for the procedure for the acquisition the educational and qualification degree of Doctor at the Medical University – Plovdiv and the Rules of MU-Plovdiv. It includes all necessary documents for the defense of the dissertation work. The doctoral candidate has presented three publications, related to her dissertation work.

From August 1989 to February 2001 Katya Kichukova worked as a medical laboratory technician at the Clinical Laboratory of the Municipal Hospital in the town of Kotel; from March 2001 to August 2009 she was a medical laboratory technician at the Central Clinical Laboratory within the Multi-profile Hospital for Active Treatment “Prof. Dr. Stoyan Kirkovich” AD – Stara Zagora. Since September 2009 she has worked as a lecturer in the specialty “Medical Laboratory technician” at the Medical College of Trakia University – Stara Zagora, and since August 2016 to the present day she is a senior lecturer. She participates actively in the training of students from the specialties “Medical Laboratory Technician” and conducts practical trainings with students in their first, second and third year on the disciplines: practical trainings in “Clinical Laboratory” and the elective “Quality Control in Laboratory Practice” with third-year students. She supervises the clinical practice of students of the same specialty.

In 1989 she graduated the Zahary Stoyanov Secondary School of Western Languages – Sliven with distinction, and afterwards the specialty “Medical Laboratory Technician” at the Professional Training Complex at the Institute for Preparation of Healthcare Specialists with Semi-higher Education – Plovdiv. Between 2004 and 2007 she acquired a Bachelor’s degree in Management of Health Care at the Medical Faculty of Trakia University – Stara Zagora. From 2011 to 2012 she earned a Master’s degree with professional qualification “Manager of Health Care and Practice Lecturer” at the Medical University – Plovdiv.

2. PERTINENCE OF THE TOPIC

The dissertation work *Continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence of medical laboratory technicians* is dedicated to a particularly important and global problem in the contemporary training of specialists – medical laboratory technicians.

The topic is pertinent and practically oriented towards increasing the awareness on the problem and the ideas for adult education, as well as life-long learning as a means to increase the professional competence of medical laboratory technicians.

The specifics of the study require the formation of motivation for learning and continuing training. Adult education occupies an important place in medical education – both basic and post-graduate. One of the main aims of the life-long learning programme is to make it contribute to the personal development of the specialists.

Under the current conditions, the requirements for highly professional preparation, qualification and acquired personal and professional qualities of medical laboratory technicians are increasing. The new diagnostic and medical technologies in healthcare have asserted the role of continuing training of medical laboratory technicians as a continuous process of increasing their professional competences and qualification.

The development of laboratory diagnostics today is impressive. Its fast implementation in healthcare necessitates the use of new diagnostic methods and equipment, and the introduction of new laboratory indicators. This defines continuing training of medical laboratory technicians as a constant process of acquiring new knowledge and skills, one that compensates the information deficit and prevents professional illiteracy among in-service medical laboratory technicians. Time is needed to train highly qualified specialists who will provide effective and ready clinical services to patients.

This reveals the need for achievements in the professional preparation of medical laboratory technicians, for doing research and introducing innovations in continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence of practitioners. The importance of the dissertation work stems from the studied and analyzed problems concerning continuing training as a means to improve the vocational skills and knowledge of medical laboratory technicians.

In this sense, the topic interpreted by Katya Kichukova is actual, suitable for research and has its scientific value.

3. KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROBLEM

The doctoral candidate has very good knowledge of the problem she is researching. The studied literature is evaluated creatively, which allows the author to make a critical analysis of the theoretical formulations. The literature review through which Katya Kichukova has thoroughly studied the problem of continuing training as a means of increasing the professional competence of medical laboratory technicians is very exhaustive. Her theoretical reasonings are the result of a comprehensive analysis of 221 literary sources, of which 122 in Cyrillic, and 119 in Latin. This allows me to conclude that the doctorate candidate is very well acquainted with the studied problems.

The literary sources date from the last 10 years and meet the requirement for currency and actuality.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

To achieve the aim of the dissertation work, the author has used original research methodology that contains sociological and statistical methods. The conducted study ends with mathematical and statistical processing of data. The used sociological method uses direct group survey for the

three studied groups with specifically developed survey cards. The survey cards are a system of questionnaires and standardized psychological tests adapted for the population in Bulgaria, as well as questionnaires developed for the specific study. The methodological tools are organized provisionally in 3 modules: 'Social and psychological', 'Personal and psychological', and 'Professional and educational'.

It is evident from the aim and tasks of the study, the volume and type of data that the candidate has used statistical methods, main statistical analyses: Student-Fisher T-test, correlation analysis, factorial analysis, Cronbach α reliability coefficient, percentile analysis of the distribution of answers.

The study has been approved by a Standpoint of the Commission of Academic Ethics at the Medical University – Plovdiv.

The mathematical and statistical methods for processing and analysis of the collected data are presented correctly. The study includes three target groups: I. 42 students from first and second year in the specialty "Medical Laboratory Technician", trained at the Medical College of Trakia University – Stara Zagora; II. 111 medical laboratory technicians from laboratories in the towns of Stara Zagora, Kazanlak, Sliven, Yambol, Radnevo. The choice of laboratories is random in order to cover such medical structures (private and state) and independent medical and diagnostic laboratories; III. 37 laboratory physicians with different clinical specialties, part of whom are owners of laboratories. Of them 16.22% are men, and 78.38% are women.

5. CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION WORK AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS

The dissertation work fully meets the requirements for a doctoral thesis and is presented in a total volume of 192 pages. The thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters: the professional competence and continuing training as research problems, main applicable concepts, concept of the empirical study, analysis of the results of the study on the attitude of medical laboratory technicians to continuing training; summarized conclusions from the empirical study; recommendations; contributions; bibliography; annexes.

The data from the study are illustrated with 38 figures, 55 tables and 3 annexes. In the introduction (preface) with notable persuasiveness the doctoral candidate outlines the significance of the developed problematics, motivates her choice and points out the issues which are clarified in the separate parts.

In the literature review (51 pages) historical data for the professional activity of medical laboratory technicians as part of medicine and the impact of the changes in the modern world on the training and career choices of laboratory practitioners are presented in sufficient detail. Ideas, regarding adult education and life-long learning have been examined. The doctoral candidate analyzes main concepts applicable to life-long learning. University education is viewed as a generator of the idea of competence on the basis of continuing education, training and career development. A special place is dedicated to professional competence in the European and Bulgarian qualification framework, as well as to the specifics of professional preparation of medical laboratory technicians. The author has adequately reviewed the regulations on the organizational possibilities of continuing training of medical laboratory technicians, their motivation for professional activity and life-long learning.

The analysis of the literary review summarizes the importance of the problem which is defined by the need for continuing training and education within the framework of professional life of medical laboratory technicians. An emphasis has been placed on the possibilities for increasing their professional competence, career and personal development.

The aim and tasks of the study are directed towards studying and analyzing the subjective determinants that define the need for continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence of in-service medical laboratory technicians, students from the same specialty and laboratory doctors. The aim of the submitted dissertation work has been formulated clearly and precisely, and for its achievement the author has suggested seven tasks.

The materials and methods of the dissertation are presented convincingly by Katya Kichukova through research methods described in detail, and the main tools match fully the general concept of the study. In a logical plan, that is subjected to the theoretical study, the doctoral candidate has developed her experimental programme. In the presented dissertation, the object, subject of the study, hypothesis, main aim, and the foreseen tasks are derived logically. In the exposition, amounting to 91 pages, the doctoral candidate Katya Kichukova has presented the results and the discussion on the conducted study. It represents the essential and most important part of the dissertation work and includes the analysis of the results from the study and the attitude of medical laboratory technicians to continuing training.

The data from the extensive study confirm that medical laboratory technicians claim their need for continuing training as a means to increase their professional competence. Their subjective judgments are influenced by their motivation for choosing the profession, as well as their motivation for achievement and the tendency to connect or alienate themselves from the profession. The need for continuing training of students in the specialty “Medical Laboratory Technician” is most strongly influenced by the motives related to the diversity at work and independence in the profession, the possibilities for career development and the feeling for success.

The doctoral candidate has proven that the choice of specialty and the practicing of the profession are related to the needs of specialists for increasing their professional competence. The wish to acquire a higher educational and qualification degree and the readiness to be included in continuing training aim at improving the professional competence and career development of the medical lab technicians.

The in-depth and summarized analysis of the results of the study allow Katya Kichukova to review continuing training as a condition for growth in the hierarchy of the specialty. Medical lab technicians think that opening a profiled specialization is utterly necessary and as a reason they indicate the heightened requirements and the shortage of specialists on the labour market. They are convinced that this specialization would make them more successful and declare their readiness to join it.

The doctoral candidate shares her readiness to test in practice the opening of a profiled specialization.

The dissertation work ends with conclusions and inferences, which are a result of the study, the obtained results and their interpretation.

6. EVALUATION OF THE PUBLICATIONS AND THE PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

The three presented publications have appeared in international research journals. To one of the publications the candidate is the sole author, to the second – the first author, and to the third – the third author. Katya Kichukova has three participations in scientific conferences, 2 of which in Bulgaria and 1 abroad. The number and quality of the publications fully meet the requirements of MU-Plovdiv for public defense and to a great extent reflect her results and the core of the dissertation work.

The thesis and its contributions are the result of years of work and the research interests of the doctoral candidate, which allows me to state that in their entirety they are her personal work.

7. THESIS ABSTRACT

The thesis abstract fully matches the content and the structure of the dissertation and underlines its most prominent aspects.


CONCLUSIONS

The dissertation work of the doctoral candidate Katya Stefanova Kichukova is distinguishable for its merits of theoretical, experimental and applied character. The author has reached her goals and presents convincing results to prove the research hypothesis.

I believe that it fully meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rules for its application and the Rules of MU-Plovdiv.

The above reasons allow me to give my POSITIVE EVALUATION and to urge the honorable Academic Jury to confer to Katya Stefanova Kichukova the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the doctoral programme "Management of Health Care".

10.06.2022 year
Varna


Reviewer:.....
(Prof. Elena Zheleva, Doctor of Pedagogy)

Заличено на основание
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