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Dr hab. Agnieszka Szplit, prof. uczelni (UJK)  
Wydział Pedagogiki i Psychologii  
Uniwersytet Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach  
Agnieszka.szplit@gmail.com

### **Dissertation review**

Assessment of the Ph.D. dissertation submitted by **Mar Haim Zipora**

**Titled: “The Effect of Exposure to Korczak’s Humanistic Democratic Ideas on the Formation of Educators’ Identities”**

Written under the supervision of dr hab. **Malgorzata Kabat**, prof. uczelni (UAM)  
and the auxiliary promotor Dr **Ewa Johnsson**

Education based on Janusz Korczak's ideas has become an important element of modern pedagogy, both in theoretical and practical terms. In recent years, there have been many excellent publications exploring his educational innovations and humanistic ideas. Even though Korczak's ideas could constitute not only inspirational, but also practical guidelines for pedagogical activities, still not many schools and educational institutions fully apply them. The Author of the dissertation decided to investigate whether Korczak’s pedagogical legacy is present and visible in the school environment. She described the experiences of two contemporary schools in Israel that implemented Korczak’s ideas and concepts into their principles. The question she asked is whether Korczak's ideas can modify contemporary education and teacher identities. The answers will have a great significance for future generations of learners and teachers building humanistic-democratic societies.

## **Introduction**

The dissertation comprises 400 pages and is divided into six chapters, followed by a summary, the list of references (11 pages) and five appendices. It starts with a short abstract and an acknowledgement. There are 12 figures carefully listed (p.391) and numerous diagrams and tables that are not listed and even not numerated.

**The title** of the dissertation is too narrowed as I have found much more in it than the discussion on the formation of teacher identities.

**The introductory part** presents the main topic and context of the dissertation. The Author emphasizes the importance of Korczak's contribution in the field of humanistic and democratic education. However, the introduction should have also defined the general objectives of the dissertation and provided an overview.

## **The theoretical part**

**The first chapter** describes the historical conditions leading to the development of humanistic-democratic education and the importance of the approach for teachers and schools. The Author starts with the explanation of key terms and some historical overview of the most significant publications on democracy. She presents a huge amount of information in a concise way by providing a table with several definitions and a list of important features of the concept of democracy (pp. 16-19). The development of such a list seems beneficial for further studies in which the Author finds main categories for data analysis. I also highly value the maps provided for the discussion of historical conditioning of humanistic-democratic education (pp.22-24), principles of democracy (pp.38-39), and the development of humanistic – democratic education (p.59). At the end of the chapter the PhD Candidate provides a summary of it. It is a useful tool to give a clear idea of the contents; however, the Author does not provide any similar summary in any other chapter. What caused the decision of including the summary here? How is this chapter different and more significant than others?

**The next chapter (2)** clarifies the uniqueness of Korczak's legacy, his educational approach, and the principles of his republic of children in Jewish and Polish orphanages. The PhD Student is well acquainted with and has a wide knowledge of the topic, so the literature review

successfully delineates the concepts and key areas that are of relevance for her further study. She presents Korczak's life, his democratic principles and educational approach, the possibility of application of his ideas into modern education, and limitations of it set by children's lives, bureaucracy, or technological development.

The final sub-chapter (2.5) makes a great contribution to the pedagogical literature, as the Author presents the education in Israel through the lens of Korczak's ideas. The literature review is lucid and pertinent, and the sub-chapter is well-structured and certainly inspiring for Polish educators.

**The third chapter** identifies the term teachers' identity and shows possibilities of its construction during teacher education and in-service practice. I personally do not like the expression "*learning to build identity*" (p.132), as identity formation is not a process that we can learn.

The PhD Candidate provides theoretically informed insights into existing research findings concerning teacher identities and the processes that govern their formation and development, and she critically analyses the passages quoted from several sources. It would be better; however, if she compared the theories and concepts and tried to build a map such as in Chapter 1. This tool would help her organise the main ideas and expose the main features of teacher identity. It would support her in finding the analytical categories or variables in the further research.

In the introductory part of Sub-chapter 3.4. the PhD Student mentions two kinds of discourse: democratic and management, though in the subsequent parts of the dissertation, it is extremely difficult to understand which paragraphs refer to what kind of discourse. It should be clearly stated.

The chapter plays a great role in the whole dissertation as it helps the Author integrate all the most important themes: Korczak's ideas, democratic-humanistic education, teacher identity and the possibility of its development "*through personal and professional experience*" (p. 151).

The conclusion at the end of the part offers a clear and informative summary of the content of the chapters and their relevance to the research project.

In my opinion, **the theoretical part** is well written and provides a good background for understanding the rest of the dissertation.

## **The methodological part**

**The methodological chapter** (4) discusses the main foundation of the research and is supposed to show its structure and procedure.

There is a noticeable lack of clarity in description of the research methodology and no integration of various methodological issues. The Author does not clearly illustrate the research procedures used, as she refers to different goals and research problems in various parts of her dissertation.

In the final part of the dissertation, the Doctoral Student states that she “*used the procedures of Grounded Theory*” in the research (p. 329). The selection of the research paradigm and methodological procedure should have been the first steps of the research project and therefore, there is a need to clarify these issues at the beginning of the dissertation. If the goal of the PhD Candidate was to build a theory, why is it not articulated in the chapter devoted to the objectives of the research? Why does the PhD Student not explain her assumptions concerning the process of collecting various data and generating theories in the methodological chapter?

The Candidate claims she has been conducting the grounded theory research, but by putting the information at the end of the dissertation, she rather seems to use the idea as a “rescue strategy” applied after the research is done and a trial to justify her choices and actions. The grounded theory approach does not justify the methodological chaos that is seen in the dissertation. On the contrary, it requires a careful reconstruction of a research scheme after the research is done, to clarify its procedure to the readers. The Author should have carefully considered how to present the different steps of the research to show how they fit together to form a coherent whole.

**The choice of a multimethod approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods is one of the strengths of the study and results in thorough investigation of the topic.**

However, the main weakness of the study is the lack of methodological clarity and chaotic description of the research procedure. There are several caveats pinpointed below.

1. The dissertation should specify the general intent of the project in quantitative and qualitative terms and indicate a specific strategy which was used to collect the data of a mixed nature. The PhD Student tries to illustrate the research with a visual model (p. 163), but it is not clear enough. She should have explained the complementarity of the

obtained qualitative and quantitative kinds of data and the possibility of their combination or consolidation. This description should have been very precise and clearly indicated the types of sources and ways of their use in the conducted research. What is more, the basic argument explaining the decision to apply research of a mixed nature is to gain “*greater objectivity*” (p. 179). This is an insufficient argument. Does the PhD Candidate suggest that conducting research of a homogeneous nature does not ensure research reliability?

2. In Chapter 4.2 (Research Objectives), the PhD Student explains the three (3) main research objectives. The first two of them are logical and accurately explain the aims of the research (*Examining the contribution of Korczak's writing to humanistic-democratic education and educators' professional identities*). The wording of the third is redundant, because it overlaps the other two (*Recognition of Korczak's works and their influence on humanistic - democratic ideas, as seen in contemporary education and the creation of teachers' identities*). In the case of the sub-objectives, there is again an unclear subject separation of goal B (*Finding which of Korczak's educational ideas are helping to shape the identities of teachers in humanistic, democratic educations*) and objective F (*Examining the impact of Korczak's approach, principles and ideas that influence educators in Israel who are forming their professional identities*) which are identical. Objective E, in which the PhD Candidate mentions the study of her “*own academic program for identifying the most important ideas that stimulate teachers' thinking about their professional identities*”, is also unclear. There is no explanation what program the Author refers to.

What is more, if the Doctoral Student intends to conduct her research to build a grounded theory, it is necessary to formulate a clear goal referring to the construction of such a theory.

3. The basic mistake noticed in the dissertation is the inconsistency of the main problem (and the title of the dissertation) both with the selected research objectives and with the main contents of the dissertation. Incorrect formulation of the research problem (Sub-chapter 4.3.) clearly makes it difficult for the Author to further operationalize the problem and make further methodological decisions, as well as disturbs the clarity of the analysis of the obtained research material. This is evident in almost all of my

comments presented below. Reformulation of the research problem would significantly increase the substantive and methodological value of the dissertation.

The formulated problem (*How Korczak's humanistic-democratic approach and ideas contribute to the adoption of humanistic-democratic foundation of teachers' identities?* - p. 169) suggests the research concerning the formation of teachers' identities inspired by Korczak's thoughts and ideas. Similar information appears in many other places of the dissertation, for example on page 179, where the Author states again that she has conducted the research concerning teachers and forming their identity (*I chose the field of education to determine the impact of Korczak's humanist-democratic ideas on teachers, and on the formulation of their professional identities.*). Nevertheless, the aforementioned problem, as reflected in the dissertation, is only a part of the conducted research. I will enlarge on the idea later again.

Due to the mixed nature of the research, the PhD Student should have unequivocally formulated such a research question which would simultaneously refer to the quantitative and qualitative topics or identify separate problems emphasizing the dual nature of the research. For the grounded theory research, a better solution would be to formulate separate questions for the qualitative research stage and supplement them with a question or a detailed quantitative hypothesis.

Another methodological mistake is the formulation of specific problems which do not derive directly from the main research problem. By creating seven specific research problems, the Author assumed identifying the characteristics of the contemporary humanistic-democratic education in selected schools (problem 1) and determining the influence of Korczak's ideas on the education system (problems 2 and 3). Only the next four problems (4-7) relate directly to teachers and their identities. The PhD Student presents her research much more broadly than it is suggested by the research problem. This is understandable because, as she explains in the theoretical part, the teacher's identity is formed in the educational space occupied by the teacher during the performance of their professional duties and in relations with other people (pp. 126-128). Thus, the Author investigates the entire educational process and not only teachers' identities. This broad approach to the topic should be appreciated, though from the methodological point of view, it should be stated that the inconsistency of the research problem and the resulting detailed problems is a mistake.

What is more, the formulated hypothesis is not consistent with the research problem either. Firstly, because it does not answer the question stated in the research problem

(How..?). Secondly, as it refers to the contemporary school and not only to the process of forming of the teachers' identity. The hypothesis is: *It is probable that Korczak's humanistic - democratic ideas are relevant to today's school and teacher identity formation.*

It is extremely important to verify hypotheses in the theory-building process. At first, they may have the status of untested relations between categories or properties, but they are gradually verified. In formulating a hypothesis with the explicit purpose of theory generation, the Author should have carefully described the generation and verification of hypotheses that should eventually form the core of the emerging (grounded) theory. Unfortunately, the PhD Student does not indicate whether there are more "working" hypotheses (Glaser, Strauss, 2017) and whether they are accepted or rejected. Such a statement should be included in the chapter with the interpretation of the research results.

Moreover, the additional question should be asked: why does the Author use the term hypotheses (in a plural form) in the title of the sub-chapter if she formulates only one?

4. There are some doubts concerning the presentation of the variables (Sub-chapter 4.4.). Based on the table on page 173, it can be concluded, in line with the research problem, that the subject matter of the research is the process of teachers' identities formation, which depends on their exposure to Korczak's democratic and humanistic ideas. Both the independent and dependent variables are described in detail, but a huge amount of information makes it impossible to understand in what way they are expressed in the research tool (which survey questions relate to the mentioned ideas and concepts). For example, in the column with the dependent variable the Author mentions "*the formation of teachers' identities*" (p.173). Why does the PhD Candidate also mention several terms such as *1- the creation of a personal identity, 2-forming identities, and finally 3- the creation of a professional identity* in the description of the variable? It is totally ambiguous.

The dependent variables are not precisely described in the chapter even though the Author provides a huge table (p.173) to characterize them.

There are three "*meta-categories of the characteristics of democratic-humanistic education*" (p. 207, paragraph 1): freedom, action, and tolerance. "*These categories are the three variables*" (p. 207, the last paragraph). The Author uses the categories to

describe the films (p. 207, 209) and to examine “*the existing reality*” (p.337) in schools. (pp.337-341)

In a different place, the PhD Student assumes that these are the characteristics of identity: “*These features are characteristic of the teacher's identity*” (p. 129), “*The categories in this research are based on dependent variables such as: freedom, activity and tolerance symbols and components of professional identities*” (p. 186). But she does not use any scientific sources to support her assumption. And they are not considered components of identity in any of the publications quoted in the theoretical part. They are only described in detail and characterized as values expressed in Korczak’s legacy. In addition, when describing the theoretical foundations regarding the variables, the PhD Candidate lists several types of variables (pp. 171-172), including the mediating variable, although she does not specify what it is in the context of her own research. The Author too rarely refers the theoretical contents to her own research. The arrows above the table indicating the mutual influence of the variables are also confusing and misleading.

5. Further doubts arise in the chapter describing the research method (4.5). I would remind the mistake in the formulation of the research problem, recurring on several occasions and being a cause of various further methodological shortcomings. In the discussed context, it results in a lack of consistency between the research problem (indicating only the study of the teachers’ identity development process) and the indicated research method (monographic), where the essence is the characteristics of schools and the educational process organized in them.

The PhD Student decides to combine the qualitative and quantitative research, which has its substantive justification. After reading the whole dissertation, I understand that the Author applies a parallel immersion strategy (Creswell, 2014), although she does not specify and name it herself, and collects quantitative and qualitative data at the same time. She also distinguishes the main method which is a guidance for her project (monographic method) and a secondary database acting as an auxiliary base (survey results). Such an approach is demonstrated both by the method of conducting the research and the analysis of its results, as well as by locating a clearly defined theoretical perspective supporting the interpretation of the results. From this point of view, the choice of the method is adequate, but it is highly crucial to present a logical research scheme and indicate the integration of qualitative and quantitative research within it.



On the other hand, the description of the method is debatable. The aforementioned lack of a clear research scheme affects the logic of the argument. On pages 180-181, the Author presents a set of theoretical information regarding the monographic method, though she does not relate the discussed contents to her own research project. She lists the types of data, elements of the monograph, the structure of the school description, etc.; nevertheless, she does not indicate which of them are adequate for the planned research. As a result, not only Sub-chapter 4.5. is of little value, but also the visible shortage of this information reduces the value of the next analytical chapter. The list of data sources is missing in the dissertation, and the fact of their use is often announced only at the stage of the actual analysis of the research material (chapter 5). The Author refers to a wide variety of source materials (e.g. minutes on staff meetings - p. 225, advertising brochures - p. 224, letters written by students' parents - p. 227 or the headmaster - p. 238, statements by members of various Korczak organizations - pp. 239, 246, students' written tasks done during lessons - pp. 229, 240 or their statements - p. 257, teachers' written works collected during the training - pp. 232, etc.), and sometimes also makes too general reference (e.g. "*In the different documents...*" - p. 224).

What is more, the quantitative research directly related to the formulated research problem, treated by the PhD Candidate as part of the monographic research, is carried out using the survey method, but the Author does not build a theoretical basis for the use of this method. She also does not include it in the diagram illustrating the methodology (p. 163). It is again visible that the Author conducts the research more intuitively than on the basis of her methodological knowledge. However, the survey is carried out relatively correctly, even though it is neither discussed from a theoretical perspective nor does the Author present its procedure.

6. Sub-chapter 4.6 is clearer and more logical. The Author describes theoretical background of various research techniques, but poorly shows the reference of the theoretical information to her own research procedure.
7. The description of research tools (Sub-chapter 4.7) is prepared more appropriately. I would like to draw attention only to two technical aspects: the layout of the chapter and the definition of the terms used in it. Since the Author distinguishes *the mapping tool section* with a heading, why does she not do it in the case of the survey and the film?

While describing the film, the PhD Candidate lists its various scenes and provides their special names (p. 193). Unfortunately, she does not explain all of them precisely (as she does with number 6 and 13). It would help the readers understand the further parts of the analyses where these terms appear regularly. Perhaps the Doctoral Student, who works in the school where she conducted her research, understands these terms, but defining them would improve the comprehension of the analyses. The term “*mixed observation researcher*” should have also been explained in detail (p. 192), as it is a term created by the PhD Student and is unclear.

8. I have important critical comments in relation to Sub-chapter 4.8 and the target group description. An obvious limitation of the quantitative study is a very small sample. A very limited number of teachers has unwanted consequences for the statistical analysis and might result in poor reliability of the research.

The target group is composed of teachers from two schools, a total of 22 people. In the dissertation, there is no accurate description of the group, the Author mentions it very vaguely (*Each of the groups had its own characteristic of the population.*). Moreover, the PhD Candidate mentions the sample selection method - through a “*multistage procedure*” but does not explain it at all. These 22 people do not constitute the whole population and there are more schools in Israel that apply Korczak’s ideas (p.76). So why did the Author decide to conduct the research on such a small group? It seems not to be a representative group. And the additional problem appears when we look at the applied statistics and see that one person accounts for 11% of the target population. In such a case I would recommend leaving in the dissertation only the number of respondents, as the information is sufficient to strengthen the conclusions resulting from the qualitative research.

Did such a group provide theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), based on the widest possible scope of data relating to all categories? The PhD Candidate should formulate her statements with caution given the limitation of the sample size.

Another recommendation I have concerns the extension of the target group to other members of the school community. In addition to the teachers’ opinions collected by the survey, the PhD Student analyses teachers’ statements collected during their training (e.g. p. 232), the opinions of the students’ parents (quoted letters e.g. on p. 227), statements of members of various Korczak’s organizations (e.g. pp. 239, 246) and of the learners themselves (written assignments, e.g. pp. 229, 240). The decision of using

these additional sources is highly beneficial for creation of a reliable grounded theory, but it is anyway necessary to characterize these groups, and specify their numbers, the method of sample selection and data collection.

9. There is no information in the dissertation about the date of the research and the organization of the surveys. In Sub-chapter 5.1., the PhD Student briefly introduces the history of the schools in which the research was conducted. However, she does not state when she conducted her research (... *at the end of a period of their experience in developing new schools' models following Korczak's educational ideas* - p. 219), yet she maintains that the research results are still up-to-date (*Their answers were relevant for that period, but they are still relevant today*- p.219). What authorizes the Author to make such a statement?

Furthermore, the phrase "*the gap in time between both schools*" (p.220) is confusing. What gap in time does the PhD Candidate have in mind?

The value of the methodological chapter is also reduced by the unnecessary repetition of the same contents, based on different theoretical sources. The methodological chapter is very saturated with theoretical contents, but the PhD Student does not subject them to a critical analysis, does not select them logically and often does not relate the discussed contents to her own research project (as indicated in the comments above).

### **Research findings analysis and interpretation**

The basic mechanism for creating a grounded theory in the dissertation, according to the methodological principles (Glaser, Strauss, 2017) is the combined collection, coding, and analysis of the collected data. This procedure leads the Author to generate a middle-range theory and to interpret social realities of humanistic-democratic schools and teacher professionalism. The Doctoral Student manages to describe the process of intertwining of the above-mentioned activities in an efficient manner. Simultaneously, the PhD Student builds a strong theoretical framework (also in the first part of the dissertation) to interpret the research findings.

The theory is built by the PhD student as a mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis. She uses comparative analysis and relates the findings from the qualitative research to the results of a quantitative form, and vice versa (e.g., pp. 273-276 and 295-305). Nevertheless, the PhD Candidate should have discussed more carefully the discrepancies between the teachers' opinions (about Korczak's ideas that help them influence their learners) presented in a descriptive way and the results seen in Figure 4 (p. 295).

The main weakness of the research analysis has been previously introduced as it results from the methodological inconsistencies in the research problems formulation. The Doctoral Student draws readers' attention to the existence of four "*themes components, which addresses the contribution of Korczak's legacy to the teachers*" (p. 217). The Author creates the chart illustrating them (p. 218) and defines as follows: "*The first theme focuses on the ideological component, in other words, on the school vision that is supposed to be based on the thinking of Korczak, the additional themes address the pedagogical and organizational component of the schools and the professional identity of the teachers*" (p. 220).

What is easily seen teachers' identity is only one of the components. The formulation of a research problem focused solely on the creation of teachers' identities somehow excludes the possibility of analysing all those three additional components. The Author does that anyway, which, on the one hand, increases the value of the dissertation, but at the same time indicates incompatibility between the design and implementation of the research process. If the decision to modify the problem was necessary to achieve more reliable grounded theory, it should have been carefully justified.

Looking at the contents, the three first components are described carefully and in details. The Author devotes 64 pages for the themes that do not fully refer to the research problem, and the one that refers directly to the main research problem builds only one-fourth part of the analysis (24 pages).

My other comment concerns the analysis of the variables. As it has been previously said, they are *freedom, action, and tolerance*. The PhD Candidate is expected to describe the variables in the dissertation, and to show their relations, mainly the influence of the independent variable onto the dependent one. Nevertheless, I cannot find any description of the relation in the chapters (5 and 6). What is more, the Author seems to confuse the variables saying in the final part of the dissertation: "*The independent variables were affected by the outcomes: understanding of the individual rights; becoming an autonomous teacher using Korczak's ideas*

*in their classes; the original creation of curricula and their active implementation; using Korczak's ideas; and creative teacher engagement” (p. 360).*

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods and use of various approaches for analysis and interpretation is one of the strengths of the research. The elements that the Author uses to create her grounded theory are conceptual categories and their properties, as well as the generalized relations between them. She should have also presented her working hypotheses and clarified whether they have been accepted or rejected. The categories and their properties are indicated by the data and well-developed by the Author. She can cope with their huge differentiation and describe them widely. What should be highly commented is the Author’s skill in combining the data from such a huge number of sources.

However, the PhD Candidate presents only the main categories (four components) in the table of contents, and their properties are not easily visible in the layout, so the work is therefore less transparent than it could have been. The selected research categories or variables should be the basis for subdividing the analytical and interpretative chapters into sub-chapters/ sub-units and should become the key terms used in the headings of the sub-sections. For example, in Sub-chapter 5.2. the Author enumerates four sub-themes/categories for the ideological component, but surprisingly creates more (five) headings. Generally, the PhD Candidate introduces many headings and terms in bold (not to mention double use of the same term on pages 246 & 247), what causes a chaotic arrangement of the chapters.

The research findings are interpreted in **Chapter six** (6), in which the Author also shows insights from a theoretical discussion regarding democracy. Overall, in this chapter the PhD Candidate shows great ability to critically analyse and synthesise complex data from her research, and to relate concepts and theories to it, demonstrating her skills in integrating findings from different sources.

The study provides valuable evidence on the importance of Korczak’s ideas and concepts for humanistic and democratic education. It also shows in what way the principles are acquired by teachers in their “space of professional development”, how educators broaden their experience and improve their abilities to create a humanist and democratic school environment.

The discussion in the final chapter (6) reflects the Author’s deep knowledge of the topic and personal understanding of the processes she describes.

Despite some weaknesses, the chapters presenting the results of the research and their analysis (**Chapter 5 - Result analysis**), as well as their interpretation (**Chapter 6 – Generalizations and Reflections**), provide critical insights into existing findings, locating with precision the shortcomings that are still in need of further testing.

## **Technical aspects**

### **Language and style**

The dissertation is written in an appropriate scientific style. However, the Author should not have used short forms (*can't, didn't*, etc.) in a formal style. I would also like to advise the PhD Student to use more gender-neutral language (e.g. avoid using *he/his* in the expressions concerning “a researcher”). Despite numerous minor spelling (Cersewell - p. 205) or punctuation errors (such as putting a small letter after a dot, overuse of capital letters, *chosen's quote* - p. 234), some grammar mistakes have been found (lack of verb in the sentence- *According to Nissan...-* p. 129; passive voice mistake in *identity is shape through* - p. 151; *The researchers will be named each of groups..-* p.205; *a Korczak's ideas* – p.201; *by categoric-* p. 206, etc.). Nonetheless, they do not disrupt the communication.

Moreover, there are many very short paragraphs consisting of 2 or 3 sentences (e.g., pp. 40, 49, 67, 87, 109, 165, 172, 174, 212, etc) that slightly lower reading fluency and comprehension of more general ideas.

### **Layout and dissertation structure**

The dissertation should have been prepared more carefully as there are many unnecessary spaces (e.g., p. 90, 243), or the lack of spaces (e.g., p. 137 – the new ideas should start at the beginning of the next line), and, at the same time, some expressions are not separated even though they should be so (e.g., p. 135 & 173 – enumeration).

The structure of the thesis is pertinent, although not very coherent in several places. As mentioned before, the weakness of the work is the division of Chapter 5 into sub-chapters and the way the sub-units are titled. Furthermore, in several places the PhD Student subdivides the chapters without giving any clear information what the arrangement is based on and why it appears (e.g., on pages 71-75, there are many names in bold and it is difficult to understand the division and school arrangement).

## References:

The literature is carefully referenced (899 references) and a comprehensive bibliography contains all the relevant papers for the field. However, some of the sources should be completed (e.g. Kumar- p.203) and some could have been deleted, as they are quite old and of little use (e.g. Kerlinger, 1973- p. 168). Some of the footnotes are not full, e.g., 385 needs the number of the page, and the article from Hed HaChinuch Journal is not included in the footnotes (p. 280).

## Final remark and conclusion

The dissertation offers a significant contribution to education and pedagogical studies in general. Despite some weaknesses, the PhD Candidate managed to provide convincing and valuable results of the study and their interpretation reaches a good scientific level. In my opinion, the shortcomings result mainly from the uncertainty of an inexperienced researcher. The Author is very skilful in mixing numerous approaches, and uses an impressive number of techniques, tools, and sources to gather valuable and reliable data.

I would like to highly praise the Author for a great practical value of the dissertation. It has a great cognitive and practical significance for teachers, practitioners, school shareholders, politicians, and all people responsible for creating school education. The undertaken research enriches and supplements the theoretical knowledge, but also expands the range of educational methods that can be used in various school environment.

**In my opinion the dissertation fully deserves to be accepted as a fulfilment of the requirements of a doctoral degree. I recommend it as a subject of further procedure.**

## Literature:

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles/ London: SAGE.

Glaser, B.G., Strauss, A.L. (2017). *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge (eBook).

Amirzadeh Sazli