REVIEW
by Prof. Rumen Ivanov Stamatov, D.Sc.
Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"
on a doctoral dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD)

Field of Higher Education: 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences
Professional Field: 3.2. Psychology
Doctoral Program: General Psychology
Author: KHULUD GHADIR
Topic: "The Influence of the School Environment on Achievement Motivation among High School Students in Israel"

1. General Description of the Submitted Materials

By decision of the scientific jury, I have been appointed as a member for the defense procedure of the doctoral dissertation titled "The Influence of the School Environment on Achievement Motivation among High School Students in Israel" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program: General Psychology.

The author of the dissertation is Khulud Ghadir – a doctoral student at the Department of Psychology at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", who has completed her course of study with the right to dissertation defense.

The set of materials presented by Khulud Ghadir complies with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (ZRASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar". It includes the dissertation text, the dissertation abstract, and the accompanying publications.

2. Relevance of the Topic and Appropriateness of the Set Goals and Objectives

The topic of the doctoral research is highly relevant from both a scientific-research and a practical perspective. As a psychological construct, achievement motivation is of paramount importance not only for academic success but also for the development of academic capabilities and lifelong learning.

Numerous empirical studies reveal a concerning trend: a progressive decline in learning motivation over time, which carries severe consequences not only for academic achievement but also for continuing education, future professional realization, and overall life satisfaction. Within this context, research into motivation and the mechanisms for its enhancement underscores the significance of this dissertation.

In the proposed study, achievement motivation is examined within the framework of a set of variables and their collective impact on its effectiveness. This highlights the originality of the research design: rather than tracking the influence of isolated variables, it observes their integration, thereby outlining a broader research horizon. I believe that the core thesis, which attempts to link the development of school achievement motivation to the integrated effects of distinct variables, lends distinct originality to the study itself.

3. Knowledge of the Problem

The author successfully and logically addresses the main goal of the dissertation, systematically pursuing the established objectives through appropriate methods of theoretical and empirical research.

The theoretical analysis is structured around three core themes: achievement motivation, the school environment, and the effects of the school environment on motivation, academic achievement, and engagement in the learning process. Each of these themes, which collectively form the framework of the empirical study, is presented in depth through an exhaustive review of key concepts, constructs, and empirical literature.

The first thematic area – achievement motivation – is examined through the lens of various motivational theories. The author traces the effects of motivation on

emotional, cognitive, and academic development, as well as on classroom engagement and school satisfaction. The analysis of motivation is comprehensive and strictly aligned with the research goals.

The second and third thematic areas address the models used to conceptualize the school environment. This construct is operationalized through diverse variables encompassing the school context, interpersonal relationships within the school, curricula, teaching methods, instructional practices, institutional policies, technology, and artificial intelligence.

The examined constructs are effectively linked to factors such as acceptance, trust, support, understanding, safety, discipline, and cooperation, which are decisive for the development of academic capabilities and success. The provided analysis offers an in-depth look at how the school environment influences emotional safety, mutual respect, clear behavioral expectations, and positive peer interaction. It demonstrates how these factors cultivate higher levels of intrinsic motivation, academic engagement, and achievement, while simultaneously mitigating academic anxiety and the fear of failure, ultimately encouraging and supporting students to take intellectual risks and actively participate in their education.

Given the multitude of empirical studies documenting a decline in academic motivation, identifying pathways to reinforce motivation is of critical importance. This serves as one of the central thematic directions of the study, which attempts to determine the individual and relative strength of these variables on achievement motivation.

I would like to note that the presented analyses are exceptionally thorough and lend strong coherence to the theoretical framework. The empirical section is similarly distinguished by rigorous statistical analyses conducted using a custom-designed, author-constructed questionnaire. This instrument exhibits the necessary psychometric properties, and the resulting data consistently support the research hypotheses.

The findings of the study reinforce the perspective that achievement motivation is not generated by isolated variables, but is rather the product of the combined, synergistic influence of multiple elements within the school environment. The study demonstrates that an integrated and supportive environment enhances

students' self-esteem, sense of belonging, and academic engagement, whereas a fragmented environment can limit motivational outcomes, even when individual positive components are present.

4. Research Methodology

The methodology reflects the primary logic of the study and its conceptual framework. The research design utilizes an original questionnaire constructed based on prior research by Ghadir (2021), comprising 57 items distributed across six dimensions:

1. Physical school environment (10 items)
2. Teacher-student relationship (10 items)
3. Classroom climate (10 items)
4. School leadership (10 items)
5. Curriculum and teaching methods (10 items)
6. Technology and artificial intelligence in the school environment (7 items)

The psychometric characteristics of the questionnaire are strong, demonstrating a reliability coefficient of 0.85.

5. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation

The main body of the dissertation spans 161 pages, including 10 tables and an appendix. The structure consists of an introduction providing an entry into the research topic, four chapters, conclusions and practical recommendations, a conclusion, a bibliography, and appendices. The bibliography comprises 60 sources in English and Hebrew.

The study itself is well-structured into two main parts: a theoretical component that maps out the foundational concepts underpinning the research, and an empirical component outlining the goals, objectives, hypotheses, and research instruments, accompanied by a detailed description of psychometric properties and various data analyses aligned with the formulated hypotheses. The presented analyses and

conclusions are representative of the doctoral student's rigorous efforts and validate the reliability of the obtained results.

6. Contributions and Significance of the Work for Science and Practice

The contributions of Khulud Ghadir are substantively summarized and fully correspond to the conducted research. Overall, I would like to highlight the following positive merits:

-A holistic conceptual framework has been proposed, which conceptualizes achievement motivation as a dynamic outcome resulting from the interaction among multiple dimensions of the school environment. By integrating diverse constructs within a single analytical model, the study complements existing motivational theories that traditionally emphasize individual or isolated contextual variables.

-Original empirical evidence has been provided regarding the impact of the school environment on achievement motivation among high school students in Israel. The study identifies the relative strength and integrated influence of these dimensions within a complex cultural and educational context. Furthermore, the specific patterns, dependencies, and mechanisms of influence exerted by individual variables have been delineated.

-An original questionnaire has been developed for assessing contextual influences on achievement motivation.

-Empirical evidence regarding the specific impact strength of individual variables on achievement motivation has been presented: classroom climate emerges as the most influential factor, followed by curriculum content, teaching methods, and innovative interactive instructional practices that connect learning to real-world contexts. These are followed by teacher-student relationships, and finally, school leadership, which underscores the vital importance of administrative support, effective communication, and the recognition of student effort in shaping a positive school climate. Notably, the "technology and artificial intelligence" variable, despite registering the lowest mean score among the six variables, still demonstrates a statistically significant positive effect. Students perceive digital tools and AI-based applications as enhancing engagement and academic achievement, although some express reservations regarding their contribution to deep conceptual understanding.

-Actionable guidelines have been formulated for developing a supportive school environment that enhances achievement motivation and academic diligence among high school students, thereby serving educational policymakers, school administrators, and teachers alike.

The findings of this empirical research enrich the understanding that achievement motivation is not generated by isolated variables, but rather by the combined, synergistic influence of multiple elements within the school environment. I would particularly like to highlight the empirical conclusion that an integrated and supportive environment enhances students' self-esteem, sense of belonging, and academic engagement, whereas a fragmented or uneven environment limits motivational outcomes, even when individual positive components are present.

7. Evaluation of the Publications Accompanying the Dissertation

The publications on the topic of the dissertation are formatted as articles and fully meet the institutional requirements. Three publications have been presented, all of which are directly related to the subject matter of the doctoral research.

8. Personal Contribution of the Doctoral Student

Khulud Ghadir is a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychology. The dissertation research was carried out entirely independently. The text, the obtained results, and the scientific contributions are the personal work of the doctoral student.

9. Dissertation Abstract (Autoreferat)

The dissertation abstract contains the foundational propositions of the dissertation, the results, and their respective analysis. I consider it to be entirely adequate to the dissertation text, objectively reflecting the theoretical analyses and the primary results presented in the body of the study.

10. Personal Impressions

I would like to note that Khulud Ghadir possesses profound knowledge in the field under study, combined with a strong sense of responsibility and an original approach to the empirical investigation of the topic, which enriches current understandings of the school environment's influence on achievement motivation.

11. Recommendations for Future Implementation

I suggest expanding the core text of the dissertation in future research by placing a specific emphasis on tracking the influences of the family environment on achievement motivation.

Conclusion

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral student, Khulud Ghadir, possesses in-depth knowledge of the dissertation topic. I consider that the candidate meets the terms and criteria for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) pursuant to the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Varna Free University. Based on the arguments presented above, as well as the overall positive evaluation of the conducted dissertation research, I propose that the scientific jury vote favorably and award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) to Khulud Ghadir, for which I cast my affirmative vote.

October 10, 2026

Reviewer:
/Prof. Rumen Stamatov, D.Sc./