REVIEW

regarding the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Psychology"

of a dissertation on the topic : " The influence of stereotypes and prejudices on the aspirations and status of women in Arab society ."

Professional field: 3.2. "Psychology"

Doctoral Program: "General Psychology"

Doctoral student : Lulu Baluos , VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar", Department of Psychology

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Vanya Hristova and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miglena Ivanova-Krusteva

Reviewer : Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Petrov Petkov, in accordance with Order of the Rector of VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar" No. 594 of 29.09.2026.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation examines the influence of stereotypes and prejudices on the aspirations, professional realization and social status of women in Arab society in Israel. The main emphasis is placed on the interaction between three factors – gender, ethnic minority and cultural tradition, whose joint action creates specific limitations and prerequisites for social marginalization. The author justifies the need to analyze these factors in a complex way, and not in isolation, as is often observed in previous studies.

Lulu Balwos' research interests are shaped by more than two decades of academic and professional work, including direct work with women and girls from Arab communities and serving as the Women's Adviser in the Rama Municipality since 2016. The practical experience gained was used in the development of the interview, the identification of the main thematic directions and the interpretation of the participants' narratives. The theoretical framework also draws on Simone de Beauvoir's understanding of femininity as a socially constructed phenomenon.

In the dissertation, personal professional experience is presented as a basis for a deeper understanding of the problem – from the influence of family and community expectations on educational and professional choices to the institutional constraints on women's equality. The discrepancy between educational progress and the achieved social and professional status of Arab women is highlighted as a significant research problem. In this sense, the empirical study aims to complement the theoretical analysis presented in the first four chapters and to offer a more integrated understanding of the factors that hinder their realization.

Lulu Balwos's dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, methodology, conclusion, bibliography and appendices. The total volume is 183 pages, includes 3 tables and 3 figures that illustrate the main theoretical models and the discussed empirical findings. 100 sources are cited in Hebrew, Arabic and English.

The parameters necessary for the dissertation research are defined, namely the object and subject of research, the main goal of the dissertation work and the tasks set to be solved. The sources are used correctly with precisely formatted references.

II. CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF THE CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION THESIS

The content of the dissertation demonstrates in-depth knowledge of theoretical and empirical research in the field of social psychology, complemented by gender psychology and cultural psychology.

The structure is logically constructed and subordinated to the overall development of the research problem, the verification of the research hypotheses and the research questions arising from them.

In the " **Introduction** " of the dissertation work, the relevance and personal significance of the research problem are justified. The object and subject of the study are defined, the main thesis, the goal and specific research tasks are formulated, as well as the methodological framework and limitations of the dissertation research.

The presentation of the research is tied to the author's personal and professional experience, gained over more than twenty years of work in the field of social services and women's rights protection. This practical experience represents a significant source of knowledge and expertise, which influences the development and organization of the empirical research.

The first chapter, **" Stereotypes and their influence, "** is entirely theoretical and contains five paragraphs. It is dedicated to the theoretical overview of the scientific literature on stereotypes and their influence on people's perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. The attributional approach, the mechanisms of formation and impact of individual and group stereotypes, as well as their role in maintaining social inequalities and hierarchies are examined .

Particularly valuable is the systematization of the various theoretical approaches and the tracing of the relationship between stereotypes, self-esteem, motivation and the social position of the individual. The theoretical foundation built supports the understanding of the research problem and creates prerequisites

for the subsequent analysis of the influence of stereotypes and prejudices on the aspirations and social status of women in Arab society in Israel.

In the second chapter, **" Stereotype Formation "** , the author examines the mechanisms of stereotype formation and assimilation, focusing on cognitive, emotional and social factors. The role of education and teachers' expectations in the transmission and reinforcement of stereotypical attitudes is traced, as well as the influence of stereotype threat on the behavior and achievements of the individual.

The chapter's strength is **the comprehensive examination of stereotypes** - from their emergence in childhood and the influence of the social environment to their manifestations in education and the consequences for the individual's performance. Particularly valuable is the connection of theoretical statements with research that shows how stereotypes are transmitted, reinforced and can limit people's opportunities and realization.

In the third chapter , " **Arab Society in Israel and Its Stereotypes,"** the doctoral student examines the social and cultural characteristics of Arab society in Israel and the stereotypes that influence relations between the Arab and Jewish populations, as well as perceptions within the Arab community itself. It discusses traditional values, family and societal hierarchies, Jewish stereotypes of Arabs, and stereotypes maintained within Arab society.

What is more important and valuable in the chapter is the examination of stereotypes in the specific historical, cultural and social context of Israel. Of particular importance is the distinction between external stereotypes formed by the majority and internal traditional attitudes in the Arab community. Thus, the chapter shows how stereotypes are intertwined with cultural values and social relations, reinforce social inequalities and create prerequisites for a more in-depth analysis of the situation and opportunities for the realization of Arab women in Israel.

Chapter four, " **Stereotypes of Women in Arab Society in Israel,"** examines the situation of women in Arab society in Israel and the influence of stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes on their roles, opportunities, and social realization. It includes three main areas: paternalistic ideology and benevolent sexism, women's participation in the labor market, and the role of women's organizations and opportunities for change.

The most important thing in **the methodology** is the choice of a qualitative approach, which allows to reveal the personal experiences and perspectives of women regarding the influence of stereotypes and prejudices on their aspirations and social status. With the help of the chosen methodology, the opportunity was realized to deeply explore the subjective experience of women and to reveal the interaction between traditional gender stereotypes, public attitudes and individual aspirations. The convenience sample is indicated as a limitation, since the acquaintance between the researcher and the participants may influence their answers due to the pursuit of socially desirable behavior.

The **conclusion** emphasizes that the aspirations and social fulfillment of Arab women in Israel are limited by patriarchal norms, family expectations, economic hardship, and stereotypes related to both gender and ethnicity. At the same time, the study highlights their resilience, capacity for resistance, and desire for change, identifying education, economic independence, and support for future generations as important prerequisites for greater autonomy and equality.

Overall, the content of the dissertation is characterized by logical consistency, scientific validity and clarity of presentation. The work has both theoretical and practical value. It addresses a significant and insufficiently researched problem by integrating theoretical analysis and empirical research.

III. ABSTRACT AND PUBLICATIONS ON THE DISSERTATION

The abstract for the dissertation truly and accurately reflects the dissertation, and the publications on it are sufficient and include essential aspects of the doctoral student's work.

The author's participation in obtaining **the contributions** in the dissertation work is adequately reflected, both from a scientific and practical perspective:

- The dissertation research fills a specific theoretical gap related to the international study of stereotypes and gender inequality in Arab minority communities in Israel;
- Based on the study of existing theoretical views on the issue under consideration, a systematic theoretical analysis of attribution theory and stereotype-content models is presented, and an original conceptual framework is proposed regarding the understanding of stereotypes as functioning simultaneously as cognitive, social and institutional mechanisms, this framework being specifically adapted and applied to the context of Arab women in Israel ;
- By systematizing existing theoretical perspectives in combination with original empirical data, the dissertation enriches the author's interpretation of the relationship between stereotype internalization, stereotype threat, and limited aspirations among Arab women, identifying internalization and threat as analytically distinct but empirically interacting mechanisms;
- Empirical evidence based on qualitative research is presented, which provides in-depth conclusions about the underlying mechanisms through which stereotypes are transmitted throughout the life course;
- The results highlight the importance of policies regarding the development of targeted educational, social and political programs aimed at reducing stereotype-based barriers to the advancement of Arab women. A multi-level intervention model was developed, encompassing structural reform,

institutional changes and psychosocial support with a practical focus formulated by the study subjects themselves;

- The results of the dissertation research are systematized and adapted for application in educational processes and social work, gender studies, psychological intervention, educational policy programs, providing an evidence-based basis for developing teaching materials and professional development resources for practitioners working with Arab women and girls in Israel.

There are four publications listed for the dissertation work, in which essential parts of the work are presented.

IV. CRITICAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

I have no critical remarks on the essential aspects of the main theses and their proof in the dissertation. The only things that can be noted as such are the limitations of the sample, the transparency of the qualitative analysis and the distinction between the influence of stereotypes and the influence of other social and economic factors. They are methodological, constructive and do not devalue the contribution of the dissertation.

V.CONCLUSION :

The presented dissertation work of Lulu Baluos has the character of an independent scientific study. With it, the author reveals her in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills in conducting and interpreting empirical research. The dissertation contains contributions in both theoretical and practical aspects.

Based on the above, I propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Lulu Baluos in "General Psychology" professional field 3.2. "Psychology".

city of Varna
19.10.2026

Reviewer:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tsvetan Petkov)