OPINION

On the procedure of Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Regarding the dissertation entitled: “The Influence of Stereotypes and Prejudices on the Aspirations and Status of Women in Arab Society”, Professional Field 3.2. “Psychology”, Doctoral Programme “General Psychology”

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Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yoanna Nedyalkova, Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”, appointed as a member of the academic jury pursuant to Order No. 594 of the Rector of Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” dated 29 September 2026.

This opinion has been prepared on the basis of the submitted dissertation, abstract, and scientometric data concerning the minimum required points by groups of indicators for various academic degrees and academic positions.

1. Relevance of the Topic

The submitted dissertation meets, to a high degree, the stated research objectives. It achieves both theoretical and practical-applied results. The introduction provides the rationale for the choice of topic, the significance of the problem, the object and subject of the research, the aims and objectives, and the contemporary context that facilitates the successful addressing of the identified problems. The doctoral candidate’s interest in the topic of the dissertation has been prompted by her personal involvement in these processes, specifically through direct fieldwork with women and girls in Arab communities. This practical knowledge has influenced the development of the interview protocol and the interpretation of the participants’ narratives. The influence of prejudice on women in Arab society is a complex issue encompassing the intersection of traditional patriarchal norms, cultural expectations, and contemporary processes of modernization. The empirical study and the conclusions and generalizations derived from it lend completeness to the dissertation.

2. Characterization of the Dissertation

In the introduction, the doctoral candidate emphasizes that the choice of the topic was motivated by a deficiency identified by the author: the lack, within existing programme and policy frameworks, of an integrated theoretical approach explaining why measurable progress of women in formal education has not resulted in corresponding progress in their professional and social status. The relevance of the study is reflected in three interrelated aspects—demographic, theoretical, and applied—in relation to the formation

of aspirations, professional pathways, and social status of women affected by prejudice in Arab society in Israel. In this context, women's behaviour, clothing, and social contacts are often regarded as a measure of the honour of the entire family. This establishes the scientific significance of the study and reveals opportunities for overcoming the difficulties involved in realizing its central idea.

A suitable logical plan for conducting a comprehensive study has been adopted, reflected in the adequate scope and structure of the dissertation, which correspond to its topic, subject, and object of research.

The dissertation comprises 183 pages and consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The content of each chapter is divided into separate sections. The text contains 3 tables and 3 figures. The bibliography includes 100 sources in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

Chapter One, "Stereotypes and Their Influence," substantiates the relevance of the problem under consideration. It analyses the theoretical foundations of stereotyping as a socio-psychological phenomenon. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of attribution theory for explaining stereotyping as an ongoing social process.

Chapter Two, "Formation of Stereotypes," pays particular attention to developmental processes, the educational environment, and the phenomenon of stereotype threat. The role of teachers in transmitting stereotypes is examined in detail.

Chapter Three, "Arab Society in Israel and Its Stereotypes," examines traditional values in Arab-Israeli society.

Chapter Four, "Stereotypes of Women in Arab Society in Israel," focuses on women and the labour market. The role of women's organizations is identified as a distinct and significant pathway towards change.

The "Methodology" section presents the design of the empirical study conducted for the purposes of the dissertation, including the methodological framework of the theoretical model under analysis and the research instruments. The object of the study is women in Arab society in Israel and the social phenomenon of stereotyping and prejudice formation, with an emphasis on processes of gender, ethnic, and cultural stereotyping, as well as the processes through which they are formed. Individual profiles are identified in the context of psychological manifestations. The main aim of the study is to investigate and analyse perceptions and the relationship between stereotypes, prejudices, aspirations, and the social status of women in Arab society in Israel. The research tasks have been fulfilled, including the formulation of specific recommendations. The study's findings have been established and the necessary conclusions have been drawn.

3. Recommendations and Conclusions

The submitted dissertation gives the impression of a sound knowledge of the subject matter under consideration. From a substantive perspective, the following major contributions are particularly valuable for practice:

• The dissertation research fills a specific theoretical gap concerning the study of stereotypes and gender inequality in Arab minority communities in Israel.
• A systematic theoretical analysis of attribution theory and stereotype-content models is presented.
• The author's interpretation of the relationship between stereotype threat and limited aspirations among Arab women is further developed.
• The resulting conclusions are relevant to the dynamics of the contemporary world and permit application both in professional practice and in research and studies related to the problem under consideration.
• The findings of the dissertation have been adapted for application in educational processes and social work, gender studies, psychological intervention, and educational policy programmes.
• The study contributes to enriching the scientific literature devoted to the influence of stereotypes and prejudices on the status of women in Arab society.

The abstract accurately and comprehensively reflects the structure, main ideas, content, problems, and results of the dissertation. The scientific and scientific-applied contributions are adequately presented. The theoretical and applied achievements of the submitted work have been disseminated through four scientific papers published in an electronic journal.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I consider the dissertation entitled "The Influence of Stereotypes and Prejudices on the Aspirations and Status of Women in Arab Society" to be a thorough, interesting, and practically valuable work in the fields of psychology and pedagogy.

Based on all of the above, I give my positive assessment of the research presented in the dissertation, the abstract, the results achieved, and the contributions made, and I recommend to the esteemed members of the academic jury that the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional Field 3.2. "Psychology", Doctoral Programme "General Psychology", be awarded to Lulu Balous.

20 November 2026
Varna
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