

## REVIEW

of a dissertation entitled: "MEASURING STUDENTS' FINANCIAL LITERACY LEVEL AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR FINANCIAL BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS"

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**Purpose of the review:** The review was submitted by Prof. Stoyan Prodanov, PhD on the grounds of Order No. 394 of 07 June 2022 of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov regarding the procedure acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Area of Higher Education: 3.8 Social, economic and legal studies

**Teaching Department:** Department of Finance and Credit at the Faculty of Finance

**Form of doctoral studies:** free doctoral program

**Scientific advisor:** Assoc. Prof. Aneliya Radulova, PhD from Department of Finance and Credit, Faculty of Finance at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

**Doctoral programme:** „Finance, Money Circulation, Credit, and Insurance (Finance)“

### I. General characteristics of the dissertation thesis, evaluation of the format and structure of the dissertation

This review has been prepared in accordance with the sample review structure for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". It corresponds to the normative requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the internal regulations applicable in the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

The dissertation submitted for evaluation is prepared in a classic structure of three chapters, in a volume of 224 standard pages. It is structured in an introduction, a main text, divided into three chapters and a conclusion, a list of literary sources, a declaration of originality. In the introduction, the problem area of the research is developed as follows: topicality, object, subject, thesis, aim, tasks and methodology. The restrictive conditions of the study are also outlined. 16 tables and 9 figures are attached. The bibliography contains 270 sources. In the conclusion, the main results of the dissertation work, the author's proposals and the achievement of the set goals and research tasks are presented.

Three publications were made on the topic of the dissertation work. The bibliography is in APA style. The main content and the bibliographic reference provide grounds for establishing correct compliance with the requirements for bibliographic citation and bibliographic description. A declaration of authenticity and authenticity is attached.

The dissertation submitted for review examines the problems of measuring the level of financial literacy of students in Israel and its impact on their economic behaviour. In the introduction, the topicality of the researched problem is justified, its scientific foundation is justified.

The subject of the research is the level of financial literacy among young people aged 15 - 18 in Israel.

The object of research are theoretical problems in acquiring specific financial knowledge for managing personal cash flows and the need for a system for measuring the degree of financial literacy.

The research thesis defended in the present study is formulated as follows: the availability of a system of indicators and criteria for measuring the level of financial literacy among young people will support the process of acquiring specific skills and knowledge for managing personal financial flows and will ensure financial prosperity of the personality in the future.

The purpose of the dissertation is to measure the level of financial literacy among high school students in Israel and its impact on their economic models.



Tasks of the research:

To realize the main goal of the scientific research, the following tasks are set:

1. Measuring and analysing the level of financial literacy in Israel among students aged 15-18, by examining their level of financial knowledge, financial attitudes and financial behaviour.
2. Deducing the interdependence between financial knowledge, financial attitudes and financial behaviour patterns.
3. Comparison between levels of financial knowledge, attitudes and behaviour among students from schools that participated in the financial education program and those that did not.
4. A survey among the respondents, subject of the present study, to establish the level of financial knowledge, financial behaviour and financial attitudes based on various background variables, such as socio-economic and demographic factors.
5. Determination and analysis of the impact factors and formation of effective and responsible financial behaviour among adolescents.
6. Justification of the need and scope of financial education curricula in schools.

The aim of the dissertation work has been achieved and the research tasks of the work have been fulfilled.

## 2. Methodology

The research method is based on an electronic survey through social networks to a large number of learners. The sampling method is random. The study participants were located via the Internet, according to a secure segmentation in the social network Facebook using the criteria of gender, age and country of residence.

The surveys were completed in full by 618 students from Israel. The questionnaire contains many questions represented in many articles and studies around the world, documents and publications of government

bodies and ministries of various countries, the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, the World Bank, the OECD, etc.

The difficulty and complexity of measuring and assessing the level of financial literacy in the world, as well as in Israel, stems from the fact that there is no methodology and generally valid indicators for unified measurement and assessment, which necessitates the creation of a unique questionnaire to assess the degree of financial literacy of adolescents in Israel. The study is also aimed at evaluating the impact on students included in financial education programs in schools on their financial knowledge, attitudes and patterns of economic behaviour.

Limitations of the study. A majority of respondents to the survey were Jewish, excluding respondents from the Arab, Christian and Druze minorities living in Israel, who make up about 25% of the country's population for logistical reasons.

### 3. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results

The research is on a topic with a marked relevance and a scientific-applied orientation. The obtained results of the empirical research generate important conclusions from the dissertation work, which are categorized as scientific and applied:

The main contribution of the scientific research is the successfully conducted comprehensive survey among 618 high school students aged 18-15 across the country, giving a true indication of the financial literacy of students in Israel. In this context, the dissertation research attempts to adopt a broad descriptive and conceptual infrastructure for the area of financial literacy measurement and evaluation in Israel, relying on broad definitions and theories adopted by the OECD.

Based on the applied research methodology, it is possible for researchers and policy makers to conduct frequent measurements and evaluations every few years and to compare the findings obtained based on the evaluation and measurement tools as reflected in the questionnaires and the survey I conducted.



## **II. Evaluation of the dissertation and its contributions**

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Based on the applied research methodology, it is possible for researchers and policy makers to conduct frequent measurements and evaluations every few years and to compare the findings obtained based on the evaluation and measurement tools as reflected in the questionnaires and the survey I conducted.

The results and findings help educators and policymakers understand the differences and gaps that exist in financial literacy levels in Israel among students based on personal factors, socioeconomic characteristics, and demographics, and allow them to tailor specific curricula to them.

All sources are correctly used. I rate the development as authentic and without elements of borrowing from foreign authors. I consider the requested tasks successfully completed.

In the evaluation of the dissertation it is established that the PhD student has explored a large number of sources - books, scientific articles, documents, has conducted empirical analyses based on specific empirical data. He worked in compliance with the highest ethical academic standards, with conscientious use of the mentioned literary sources. The results from the use of anti-plagiarism software are very good, which shows the independent

efforts of the PhD student and the results achieved in the developed dissertation.

The abstract submitted by doctoral student Yaakov Itach is 45 pages long. The abstract presents qualitatively and quantitatively what was achieved in the voluminous dissertation work, accurately and fully reflects the content of the dissertation research. Through it, the author confirms the ability to synthesize and systematize by deducing accents and conclusions of a scientific-problematic nature.

### **III. Scientific and practical contributions of the dissertation**

The contributions requested in the abstract have been accepted and are evaluated as original and scientifically substantiated, as follows:

First. The relevance of the issues related to the need to increase the financial literacy of young people and the formation of models for effective management of personal cash flows has been proven.

Second. The main characteristics of the models of financial behaviour of individuals from the positions of classical and neoclassical synthesis are derived.

Third. On the basis of a comparative analysis of carried out scientific studies on the degree of financial literacy among the population of a number of countries of the world, the main problems caused by the unsatisfactory level of financial literacy of the population in them have been identified. Based on these findings, guidelines are outlined and recommendations are made for taking specific actions to increase the financial literacy of the population and, in particular, of students in Israel.

Fourth. In order to establish the level of financial literacy of Israeli students, a unique questionnaire was developed covering all possible aspects and factors influencing financial behaviour patterns.

Fifth. Based on the analysis of the results of the conducted research on the degree of financial literacy of 618 students from Israel, views on the scope of educational programs to increase financial literacy and ways of conducting effective training for managing personal financial flows are derived.



Conclusion: The author uses a professional and pragmatic scientific approach for his research hypotheses. It applies a logically sound scheme for structuring the dissertation, supported by modern methodology and up-to-date empirical evidence. The rules of scientific ethics have been followed, which is confirmed by a Declaration of Originality. The assessment of established scientific contributions is positive.

I accept that the main thesis of the dissertation is definitely proven.

#### **IV. Evaluation of the compliance with the minimum requirements for acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy and the author's publications**

Yaakov Itach is the author of 3 publications on the topic of the dissertation work. The PhD student meets the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". 35 points were collected from publications with a required 30 points, as can be seen from the reference for fulfilment of the minimum national requirements, according to Art. 1a, para. 1 of the Regulations for implementation of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

#### **V. Critical notes**

Despite the positive overall evaluation of the development, there are weaknesses and omissions that do not diminish the importance of what was achieved in the dissertation, as follows:

- Despite the stated difficulties in obtaining survey information on the level of financial literacy among minorities in Israel, the question of the large differences in these levels between the main ethnic group and the minorities, as well as the reasons for them, remains unresolved.
- There is a tendency to overlook the problems and challenges associated with not measuring changes in financial literacy, mainly as a result of the political cycle/elections and bureaucracy. What is the doctoral student's view of the relationship effective financial literacy - an ongoing

process of review, evaluation and redesign of high school financial literacy programs?

## **VI. Conclusion**

The presented dissertation under the title "Measuring the financial literacy of students and its impact on their economic behaviour patterns" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" has the required by the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff in D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics quantitative and qualitative characteristics. It contains scientific and applied scientific results, which in my opinion represent an original contribution. The dissertation development shows that the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge of the value of a scientific specialty and the ability for independent scientific research. The support from the research supervisor is categorically positive.

Therefore, I express a positive conclusion about the awarding of doctoral the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Therefore, I recommend that the doctoral student Yaakov Itach, Department of Finance and Credit at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov should be awarded with the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field: 3.8. Economics; Doctoral program "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance (Finance)".

28 July 2022  
Sofia

Prof. Stoyan Prodanov, PhD