

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Mihail Nikolov Prodanov, PhD

For the dissertation work of PhD student Irina Petrova Boykinova, for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) on topic: "*Predictors of parental stress affecting the parenting style toward children with disorders (5-10 years old)* ", field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, PhD program in "Pedagogical (Educational) and Developmental Psychology" – Faculty of Humanities – Burgas Free University. The PhD student studied in individual form, with a scientific supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Diana Tsirkova, PhD.

The opinion was prepared according to Art. 20 and Art. 21 of the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of BFU. By order UMO-18/03.10.22 of the Rector of BFU, I have been designated as a member of the Scientific Jury according to Article 18 of the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of BFU, concerning the procedure for evaluation the above-mentioned doctoral dissertation. As a member of the jury, I received a copy of the dissertation work and it's abstract written by PhD student Irina Boykinova . In the abstract, there is a "*Reference to the contributions of the dissertation work* " and "*List of publications* " .

1. Volume and structure of the content of the dissertation.

The dissertation is structured in three main chapters. In Chapter One - "Theoretical framework", the main constructs (parental stress, "resilience", parental efficacy, and parental style) are defined, and relevant concepts of the structural-functional aspects of child development are examined, as well as the factors that have effect on these processes - in Norma and Pathology. The second chapter - "Setting up the empirical research", presents the theoretical model, the object and the subject, the goals and tasks, the hypotheses and the tools used for the empirical research. The third chapter - "Analysis of the obtained results" is the largest part of the content and includes a detailed description of the results received by various methods for statistical processing of the relatively large data set. The dissertation consists of 207 pages, together with the literature and appendices. A total of 216 sources are listed as used and cited – 33 are in Cyrillic, 183 are in Latin and 3 are internet sources. The dissertation is illustrated with 73 tables, 18 figures and 5 appendices after the main text.

2. Evaluation of the relevance and significance of the dissertation work.

"Parent-child" relationships are studied in the context of the interaction between various demographic characteristics and traits of parents (resilience , parental efficacy, parental stress), on the one hand, and parenting styles (behaviors) - on the other. Undoubtedly, the PhD student has tried to describe important processes for the human development and to reveal the regularities and mechanisms through which the addressed factors have a positive or negative effect on the parents (respectively, on the children themselves). In this sense, the scientific problems that are in focus of the dissertation are contemporary and significant.

3. Scientific and scientific-applied results of the conducted research.

From a theoretical point of view, the dissertation has its value through the theoretical overviews made by PhD student Boykinova and the clear definition of the main constructs relevant to the topic. A structural model of the interaction between the studied variables is presented.

The empirical results obtained after the statistical analyses reveal the importance of certain demographic characteristics for the formation of a certain type of parenting styles in the "parent-child" relationships. These results can serve to improve the activities of psychologists, counselors, therapists and social workers in their work with families of children with disorders.

Adaptations on Bulgarian language of two methods are proposed - "Parental Stress Assessment Scale" (PSS) and "Questionnaire for the sense of parental competence (efficacy)" (PSOC). The Bulgarian versions of these methods show relatively good psychometric characteristics and could be used for research purposes.

4. Plagiarism Check.

PhD student Irina Boykinova submitted a declaration in which she claimed that the results of the dissertation research are "original and not copy-pasted from research and publications" in which she hasn't take part. The text of the dissertation has been checked for plagiarism with the "strikeplagiarism" software. The check found no evidence of "borrowings" from other texts at large or quotations that are borrowed from other authors without mentioning the sources. The design of the empirical study, its results and conclusions present the ideas and implementation of the author of the dissertation herself.

5. Publications of PhD student Irina Boykinova .

PhD student Boykinova has indicated a total of 6 (six) publications on the topic of the dissertation. Five of them are in refereed editions, and one article is in a peer-reviewed collective book. All papers are self-prepared. In this aspect, it fully covers the minimum of the national requirements for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", according to Art. 2b of the Law of development of academic staff.

6. Critical notes.

- My first critical note concerns the use of different terms for the same construct. For example: "parental efficacy" vs "parental sense of competence" (p.81); “resilience“ vs "endurance" (parental) (p. 82). It would be good, once the constructs are defined, to use the same linguistic form throughout;
- There is a lack of sufficient data on the validity of the methods used. It would be good to test the construct validity of the scales and questionnaires on a small samples of participants using another already validated method;

7. A question.

What objective criterion would be relevant for examining the effects of parenting stress, parenting efficacy, and parenting “resilience” on parents' behavior in their relationships with children with disorders?

Conclusion

Based on the brief review of the dissertation work, I believe that PhD student Irina Boykinova has the necessary knowledge in theoretical and empirical terms and can successfully cope with the challenges of scientific research in the field of psychology. The results of her publication activity exceed the minimum national requirements for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Therefore, I give a positive evaluation to the presented dissertation on the topic "" *Predictors of parental stress affecting the parenting style toward children with disorders (5-10 years old)*". Taking into account the presented dissertation work and scientific research I recommend to the

esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to award Irina Boykinova the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in professional field 3.2. Psychology (Pedagogical and age psychology).

20.10.2022

reviewer:.....

(Assoc. Prof. Mihail Prodanov, PhD)