

## **OPINION**

**by Assoc. Prof. Doncho Donev, Ph.D.**

Thracian University - Stara Zagora

for dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

Field of higher education: Social, legal and economic sciences Professional

field: 3.2. Psychology

on the topic:

**Parental attitudes towards the language development of children with communicative disorders in preschool age /3-7 years/**

**Doctoral student:** Elena Peneva Kortezova

Research supervisor: Prof. Dr. Yonka Baltadzhieva

Burgas Free University, Center for Humanities, doctoral program in Pedagogical and Age Psychology.

### **Structure and content of the dissertation**

The main text of the dissertation has a contents of 210 pages. It is structured in an introduction, three chapters and conclusions. There are presented the main scientific contributions. A list of the PhD student's publications is provided. The list of literary sources included 163 topics, of which 100 are in Bulgarian language, 4 are in Russian language and 59 are in English language. In their description and their introduction in the text have been observed the APPA standard. The presented applications are directly related to the conducted research.

The rationale for the choice of the topic is clearly argued. The significance of the problem is deduced from direct observations. There are presented the results of research in Europe, and the lack of appropriate diagnostic tools in Bulgaria is outlined. In this way, a definite request is made for empirical research with high applied relevance.

The text in the first chapter of the dissertation is an skillful theoretical analysis. The main constructs, postulated as variables in the study, are addressed in a clear and coherent manner. Both classical and contemporary concepts of social attitudes are presented. An analysis of the problem of measuring attitudes was carried out, and in parallel, the variable "Social Attitude" was operationalized. The author's clearly stated and reasoned position can also be taken as a justification for the subsequent choice of instrumentation and method, when conducting the empirical research. Social attitudes are placed in a specific

context, paying particular attention to the parental attitudes of children with developmental disorders. The general logic of the theoretical analysis follows the principle of deduction (from the general to the particular), demonstrating a high degree of knowledge and understanding of the problem under consideration.

In the second chapter, the concept and organization of the empirical study are presented in a coherent and clear way. The specified stages are precisely formulated and justified. There is constructed a model of the relationships between the components of parental attitudes. This model serves as a starting point in formulating the research objective. Formulated research tasks are linked in a clear and coherent way to the objective. A specific research hypothesis and seven additional hypotheses are stated. All stages of the construction and testing of the instrument for the study of parental attitudes, have been followed. The related activities are described with high precision and. The actual study was conducted with 270 subjects. 127 completed the paper questionnaire and 143 used the electronic version of questionnaire. The analysis was carried out on the basis of 234 surveyed persons. The structure of the sample is described in detail according to predefined demographic and social criteria for the parent and the child, as well as the type of communication disorder of the child. IBM SPSS Statistics 26 specialized software was used for statistical processing of the results.

The third chapter presents the results of the actual study of the attitudes of parents of children with speech disorders towards speech therapy. Characteristics of the created diagnostic tool have also been established through appropriate statistical methods. The established coefficients for structural validity and reliability are above the minimum required for questionnaire-type instruments. The clear differentiation between the positive and negative attitude scales indicates the discriminative validity of the instrument.

A cross-sectional analysis of the sample was carried out using appropriate statistical methods, and the two types of attitudes were considered in the context of the pre-set criteria for describing the sample. Through regression analysis, the items from the "Subjective norm" subscale with the highest potential for influencing each of the components of parental attitudes were determined. By means of the same statistics, the influence of attitudes, the items of "Subjective norm" and "Perceived behavioral control" on the intention to visit speech therapy was investigated. On the basis of the statistical analyses, the main characteristics of the positive and negative parental attitudes towards the visit to speech therapy are presented in the third chapter. In this way, the prognostic aspect of the constructed tool for the assessment of parental attitudes is also set.

15 main conclusions from the conducted research are clearly and correctly formulated. They are directly related to the concept and the results obtained.

The presented thesis is well structured and balanced. Citations and references are correct and in compliance with the requirements of international standards. The author demonstrates in-depth knowledge and skills of analysis and synthesis. More detailed attention could be paid to the possibilities of applying the tool and the model in practice.

No evidence of plagiarism.

### **Publications**

A total of 6 publications of the PhD student are presented. Five of them are independent articles published in the period 2016 – 2022. Four are related to the topic of the dissertation work. One of the publications is a part of a collective monograph co-authored, published in 2017.

### **Contributions**

Three contributions of a scientific-theoretical nature and five contributions of a practical-applied nature are indicated, quite justifiably. The scientific-theoretical contributions are related to the analysis of parental attitudes, the creation of a theoretical model and its justification in the context of the theory of planned behavior. The practical-applied contributions refer to the possibilities of diagnosing attitudes, predicting behavior and more effective planning of work with parents of children with communication disorders.

### **Conclusion**

The presented materials reflect Elena Peneva Kortezova's consistent research interest in parental attitudes and various aspects of speech therapy. The in-depth theoretical knowledge in the field and the practical training of the doctoral student are revealed. The materials also demonstrate Kortezova's skills in planning and conducting complex empirical research, as well as analyzing the results obtained.

I consider that there are sufficient grounds for Elena Peneva Kortezova to be awarded the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, legal and economic sciences, professional direction: 3.2. Psychology.

10.10.2022

Member of Scientific Jury:

*/Assoc. Prof. Doncho Donev, Ph.D./*