

## OPINION

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for acquiring the scientific degree "PhD" in professional field 3.2. Psychology

PhD student: Vladimir Vladimirov Marinov

thesis titled "Role of early maladaptive schemas and attachment styles for conflict resolution in intimate relationships"

Scientific supervisor: Prof. D.Sc. Irina Zinovieva

This PhD thesis is prepared in English. An abstract in English and an Abstract in Bulgarian are presented.

The introduction of the PhD thesis concerns the importance of intimate relationships for the quality of human life. Accordingly, the presence of conflict in intimate relationships affects satisfaction with intimate and romantic relationships, and according to the PhD student, the strategies for dealing with conflicts in intimate relationships are likely to be influenced by attachment styles, emotional expressiveness, and early maladaptive schemes, revealing the significance of the issues studied.

The first chapter of the PhD thesis concerns attachment styles, their classifications, how they are represented in romantic relationships, and how they relate to infidelity.

The second chapter of the PhD thesis concerns Jeffrey Young's theory of early maladaptive schemas, which is applied in schema therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy. The basic needs and coping styles in maladaptive schemes are described. The PhD student's experience from completed training in cognitive-behavioral therapy contributes to his focus on this issue and its detailed clarification.

Chapter Three of the PhD thesis concerns conflict resolution styles used by the married couple, their classifications, including the application of violence, emotional dependence on the partner, sexism, forgiving, etc. The results from some previous studies concerning their prevalence frequency and the characteristics with which they are associated are presented.

The fourth chapter of the PhD thesis concerns emotions and emotional expressiveness. Emphasis is placed on a variety of definitions of emotions by different authors and according to different theoretical concepts.

Chapter Five deals with the satisfaction with relationships between romantic and intimate partners, its dimensions and the factors on which it depends. The good theoretical training of the doctoral student to clarify the nature of phenomena, the interrelations between them and his familiarity with previous studies related to the issues under consideration is evident.

The next section of the PhD thesis concerns research design. A theoretical schematic research model is presented in Figure 1, according to which four attachment styles directly influence four styles of conflict resolution, but also the interrelationship between them is moderated by five early maladaptive schemes and three aspects of emotional expressiveness, and in turn, conflict resolution styles directly influence three types of relationship satisfaction. Six hypotheses have been formulated and to speak of a correlation relationship between variables in the first three hypotheses does not contradict the theoretical schematic research model in Figure 1, but in hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 the Phd

student speaks of mediator variables, while in the theoretical schematic research model in Figure 1 some moderating variables (early maladaptive schemas and emotional expressiveness) are included, and any mediator variables are not present in the theoretical schematic research model in Figure 1, which means some discrepancy between the hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 on the one hand and the theoretical schematic research model in Figure 1 on the other hand. Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 correspond to the mediator models illustrated in the study results section.

The PhD student adapted several questionnaires in Bulgarian for the purpose of Phd thesis (the Attachment Style Questionnaire Short Form by Chui & Leung, 2016; the short version of Young's questionnaire of early maladaptive schemas by Young & Brown, 2005; Conflict Resolution Styles Questionnaire by Kurdek, 1994; Relationship Assessment Scale by Hendrick, 1988 applied for study of satisfaction with romantic relationships), which is his scientific contribution. The PhD student used the Bulgarian adaptation of the Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire designed by Gross & John, 1995. In his Phd thesis, the doctoral student states that he uses a questionnaire for satisfaction with romantic relationships authored by Hendrick, 1988, but in the Abstract in Bulgarian he presents it as a questionnaire for satisfaction with romantic relationships with authors Hendrick & Hendrick, 1988. In fact, this Relationship Assessment Scale was published initially in the following source, which is not quoted in the PhD thesis:

Hendrick, S. S. (1988). A generic measure of relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50(1), 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.2307/352430>

There are some discrepancies between the literature sources cited in the text and those in References. For example, in the text on p.89 a source by the World Health Organization (1947) is cited, which is missing in References. In the PhD thesis on pp. 116, 124, 130, 143 a source Milusheva, 2020 is cited, which is missing in References, and the source that is included instead in References is in Bulgarian with the year 2018:

Милушева, Ж. (2018). Адаптация на Въпросник за когнитивна емоционална регулация (CERQ) в българския социокултурен контекст. В: Герчева, Г. (ред.) Приложна психология и социална практика, 17-та международна научна конференция., Университетско издателство на Варненския свободен университет, 2018, 521 – 535. ISSN 1314–0507

When citing some sources, some inaccuracies are made, for example, some omitted authors. Thus the source

Hendrick, S. S., Hendrick, C., & Adler, N. L. (1988). Romantic relationships: Love, satisfaction, and staying together. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 980–988. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.980>

is cited in the PhD thesis as

Hendrick, S., (1988). Romantic relationships: Love, satisfaction, and staying together. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 54(6), 980.

And the source

Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., & Dicke, A. (1998). The Love Attitudes Scale: Short Form. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(2), 147–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407598152001>

is cited in the PhD thesis as

Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., (1998). The love attitudes scale: Short form. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(2), 147-159.

A good impression of the scientific knowledge of the doctoral student is made by the citation of 426 sources, as indicated in the Abstract in Bulgarian (they are not numbered in the PhD thesis).


There were 308 participants in the study who responded in terms of their current or past romantic relationship. The psychometric characteristics of the applied questionnaires are described. The results were processed statistically, but there is no section listing the applied methods for data analysis – T-test, ANOVA, regression analysis, mediator analysis, facto analysis. I recommend following the style of the American Psychological Association, where results of processing with statistical software such as sig = .000 are reported as  $p < .001$  (see for example Table 13).

The dissertation lacks formulated scientific contributions of the doctoral student, but such contributions are formulated in the Abstract in Bulgarian and in the Abstract in English, which content I accept.

The PhD student has enough publications that bring him the required number of points in accordance with the minimum national requirements for acquiring a PhD degree.

Despite some omissions mentioned in this opinion, the PhD student demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the subject matter of the dissertation, originality of the research design, enough skills for statistical processing and interpretation of research results, enough skills to adapt to Bulgarian conditions some psychological questionnaires, which gives me reason to support the acquisition by Vladimir Vladimirov Marinov of the educational and scientific degree "PhD".

Date: 21 July 2023

Signature.....  
Prof. St. Stoyanova