

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Stoil Mavrodiiev, Ph.D., D.Sc., South-West University "Neofit Rilski",
Blagoevgrad

on a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional direction 3.2. Psychology

doctoral program "Cultural and Differential Psychology"

Author: Lyubomira Ivaylova Tsvetkova

Topic: "Personal and Professional Determinants of Alexithymia"

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Irina Zinovieva, Ph.D., D.Sc., Sofia University "St. Kliment
Ohridski"

General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

The set of paper materials presented by Ljubomira Tsvetkova is in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Implementation, as well as with the normative base of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", and includes a dissertation, an abstract, an autobiography, a list of publications, etc. The procedure is legal.

Actuality of the topic

The question of the relationship between emotions, cognitions and behavior is complex and multifaceted. Awareness and management of one's own emotions, recognition of emotions in others is a matter of emotional and social competence, integrity of mental functions, and personal maturity. The construct "Alexithymia", as the doctoral student well notes, has different dimensions. Examining the relationship between alexithymia and personality patterns, as well as establishing occupational determinants as predictors of alexithymia, is the subject of the dissertation research. The study of these interrelationships has not only theoretical but also marked practical significance.

All this gives me reason to evaluate the concept of the dissertation work as original, especially since such research has not been carried out in our country. The topic is relevant and significant not only for psychological science and practice, but also for other sciences and spheres of life.

Knowing the problem

Lubomira Tsvetkova has in-depth expert knowledge related to the phenomenology of alexithymia. She was able to trace and show through empirical research the causal relationships

between alexithymia and other mental phenomena, and hence its impact on the adaptation and functioning of the personality at different levels. Competently implemented theoretical-empirical research shows the complexity of alexithymia, its determination by personality traits. At the same time, occupational factors have been studied as potential predictors of alexithymia. The research has another focus, expressed in the search for a relationship between the main construct and life satisfaction, and professional well-being.

Research methodology

The conducted empirical research is based on a well-thought-out and clearly formulated theoretical model, also presented graphically. An excellent impression is made by the fact that eight psychological tests were used, some of which were adapted for Bulgarian conditions.

General evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation has a classic structure and is spread over a total volume of 211 pages. In the first chapter, the specifics of the construct "alexithymia" and its relationship with cognitions are clarified. Evidence is presented for the influence of alexithymia on psychosomatics, and hence on abnormal functioning. The neurophysiological foundations of the considered phenomenon are well understood, as well as the types of alexithymia. The study of dozens of diagnostic tools for the study of the construct is impressive, including projective methods.

The question of the prevalence of alexithymia among different populations has been examined in great detail and depth.

Another main paragraph presents links between alexithymia and traits from the Big Five and Dark Triad personality models.

Special attention is paid to burnout syndrome and alexithymia.

The main construct is also examined in relation to life satisfaction.

At the end of the theoretical study, the doctoral student makes her own summaries, which show her analytical abilities. The literature review is thorough, targeted and informative.

The research design reveals a well thought out and original concept. The objectives are clearly stated. The main hypothesis raised is differentiated into four groups of sub-hypotheses, which I find to be a very good approach.

The toolkit is well selected and corresponds to the goals, hypotheses and specifics of the researched persons. The sample is sufficient in number.

The psychometric characteristics of the tests are presented correctly and in detail, including from the procedure for the adaptation of some of them. Lubomira Tsvetkova has excellent skills and knowledge regarding the statistical processing of tests and their interpretation.

Data are presented on differences in the prevalence of alexithymia by gender, age, health status, profession, education, etc.

A major focus of the analysis is the discovery of causality between alexithymia and some of the traits from the Dark Triad and Big Five personality models. Interesting results have been obtained in this regard.

Relationships of alexithymia with attachment styles and also with professional characteristics such as burnout syndrome, perceived stress and professional well-being have been established.

The paragraph in which the predictive capabilities of personality models, attachment style and professional characteristics for alexithymia are proven is of indisputable value.

The influence of alexithymia on life satisfaction has also been investigated.

In a very convincing way, it is shown whether and to what extent the raised hypotheses are confirmed.

The analysis of the results of the conducted empirical research is distinguished by precision of thought and depth. The same is extremely detailed and differentiated.

Contributions:

I accept the self-assessment of the contributions formulated by Lyubomira Tsvetkova. With her work, she enriches existing knowledge, sets new angles of research and for the first time presents data on the Bulgarian population.

Assessment of the PhD student's publications and personal contributions

The publications are directly related to the topic of the dissertation and are placed in scientific publications (Yearbooks and Proceedings of scientific conferences). They cover the required 30 points in scientometric indicators.

The dissertation is the work of the doctoral student. The work is monotonous, the contributions and the results obtained are her personal merit. No plagiarism data detected.

Abstract

In terms of structure and content, the abstract correctly reflects the text of the dissertation. The main theoretical statements, the design and the results of the own study are presented.

Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

I recommend the author to publish the present research in the form of a monograph.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation work was carried out at a high scientific level and meets the established standards for similar work; contains original scientific-theoretical and scientific-but-applied results. It meets the national minimum requirements.

Lubomira Tsvetkova has excellent research competences and psychological training.

In view of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, and I will vote FOR awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Lyubomira Ivaylova Tsvetkova in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2 . Psychology; scientific specialty "Cultural and differential psychology".

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Prepared the opinion:

Assoc. Prof. S. Mavrodiev, Ph.D., D.Sc.