

OPINION

For a dissertation on:

"ROLE OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IN DEALING WITH EXISTENTIAL CRISES"

Author: Boyko Vasilev Panchev, full-time doctoral student at the Department of "General, Experimental, Developmental and Health Psychology" at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

Field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction: 3.2 Psychology, DP "Cultural and differential psychology"

Research supervisor: Prof. Dr. Irina Zinovieva

1. Data on the doctoral student.

Boyko Vasilev Panchev completed his bachelor's degree in Canada with a rare specialty "French language and Russian literature". There he also received his first master's degree - in the field of training people with impaired vision with the profile "orientation and mobility", later he also completed the MP "Psychology of Health" at SU. In the period 2018-2024 trained as a psychotherapist with a Jungian orientation, Bulgarian Society for Analytical Psychology "Carl Gustav Jung". He has an interesting work route, which probably led to the choice of the targeted problem in the dissertation work. The curriculum vitae indicates proficiency in three languages. Participated in one intra-university scientific project, 6 participations in scientific forums and 6 publications, two of which with his scientific supervisor.

2. Data on the doctoral studies.

From the received documentation of the doctoral student, no violations were found. The abstract is prepared in Bulgarian and English, as required by the regulatory framework. The requirements for scientometric indicators have been met - 105 points.

3. Data for the dissertation and the abstract.

The topicality of the topic is undeniable. Existential crises are an inseparable part of the life of every person and have a double impact on the structure of the Self and affect the psyche of the person in the long term. The way out of existential crises can be both traumatic and constructive and lead to personal growth. The motivation for choosing the topic is dictated by the interest of each of us in self-knowledge, personal growth and going through life in search of meaning.

The dissertation has a volume of 213 pages, of which 193 pages are the main text and 20 pages are literature relevant to the issue. 52 tables and one figure are used. The work with a classical structure - introduction, six logically connected chapters, conclusion, references. In terms of content, the text is

structured according to the requirements for this type of scientific development, all the components of a dissertation project are present.

In the **introduction**, Boyko Panchev laid out the topicality of the problem, its social significance, and the purpose of the development was clearly formulated, namely tracking "the course and results of experienced existential crises, as well as the role of personal characteristics, self-esteem and social support in dealing with the crisis and the eventual emergence of personal gains such as resilience and post-traumatic growth".

Already in the **first chapter**: "Theoretical approaches to the study of existential crises, sustainability and social support", the doctoral student introduces us to the definition of the main concepts related to the dissertation research, as a good impression is made by the fact that the theoretical foundations relating to the interpreted problem. The holistic approach and the emphasis on resilience factors allow the positive direction of the theoretical reading to be outlined.

The **second chapter**: "Post-traumatic growth" is a kind of continuation of the previous one. Here, the interrelationship between PTSD and posttraumatic growth is examined in favor of the latter, noting the comprehensive presentation of the criteria for PTI and the correct presentation of the factors impeding it. Having a discussion at the end of each chapter is an approach I find particularly valuable. In the **third chapter**, "Exploring changes in world and self-attitudes, emotional regulation, and the role of social support in existential crises," as well as in the **fourth chapter**, "Theoretical framework of empirical research on the role of personality characteristics and social support in coping in existential crises" " present a well-composed and executed experimental study. The goal and tasks are clearly, precisely and concretely formulated, the three hypotheses with sub-hypotheses are substantiated, the selected toolset is adequate and rich /6 methods/, the procedure is described in six sections, the respondents are sufficient as a sample.

The **fifth chapter**, "Results of the Empirical Study," presents an analysis of the results that I describe as comprehensive, tabulated, readable, and thorough.

The **sixth chapter** "Discussion of the obtained results" can be said to be a contribution to the dissertation research. The principled approach in discussing the hypotheses testifies to the mature scientific presence of the doctoral student, the comparative analysis between previous studies and the current one allows to discover significant interrelationships and to outline the predictors for successfully passing through existential crises. Future research directions are also outlined in the context of the study.

The **conclusion** is concise, informative, sufficiently summarizing and analytical, presenting the conclusions in abbreviated form, providing opportunities for further development of the topic, which I accept as a request for new research.

The **abstract** fully corresponds to the dissertation development and presents the main points of its content in a synthesized form.

Summary: The work submitted for review is a well-structured, excellently planned and implemented study, with wide possibilities for implementation in psychotherapy practice and with real theoretical-applied contributions.

4. Scientific contributions.

1. Basic theoretical explanatory models for the psychological understanding of the existential crisis and the way the personality goes through it have been systematized and scientifically argued.

2. A model was structured, combining in one study the relationship of personal characteristics, social support and attitude towards oneself with certain coping strategies and the presence of post-traumatic growth.

3. The conducted empirical research is distinguished by its complexity, adequate selection of tools and represents a well-implemented and analyzed study, which is highly ready for applicability in a number of social spheres.

4. A profile of the constructive components for passing through existential crises was created, emphasizing the role of the constructive beginning in the personality, the revealed new possibilities and the positive attitude towards oneself.

5. The obtained data in the result array offer possibilities to the specialists for targeted psychotherapeutic work and the planning of preventive strategies against the occurrence of post-traumatic disorder, both in an individual and in a wider social plan.

6. Focusing on the constructive overcoming of crises makes it possible to highlight opportunities for achieving personal resilience, or the so-called post-traumatic growth.

5. Notes, questions, recommendations.

I have no objections to the work. My main recommendation is: in order to popularize the dissertation work, I recommend that it be published as a monograph or articles and studies, as it will be useful, both for specialists in the field of developmental psychology, for psychotherapists, and for any person seeking ways to deal with existential crises.

6. Publications and participation in scientific forums.

The doctoral student has 6 publications that fully correspond to the topic of the dissertation research and were published in prestigious specialized publications. They are out of print.

7. Conclusion.

Based on the above analysis of Boyko Vasilev Panchev's dissertation on the topic: "ROLE OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IN DEALING WITH EXISTENTIAL CRISES", I give my POSITIVE evaluation of the work and recommend the respected Scientific Jury to give a positive evaluation to Boyko Panchev - full-time doctoral student to

SU "S.Kliment Ohridski" and to award the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, legal and economic sciences, Professional direction: 3.2. Psychology, DP "Cultural and Differential Psychology".

28.03.2024
City of V. Tarnovo

Signature:
/ Prof. Kr. Petrova/