



OPINION

for a dissertation on:

"Development of strengths in childhood and adolescence"

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for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

Field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences,

Professional direction: 3.2. Psychology

Doctoral program "Pedagogical and Age Psychology"

Received materials: dissertation work, abstract

Supervisor:

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1. General description of the presented materials

By order of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic **"Development of strengths in children and adolescents "** for the acquisition of 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 "Pedagogical

and age psychology. The author of the dissertation is Tanya Ilieva - a doctoral student at the Department of "Psychology" with scientific supervisor Assoc. Dr. Kirilka Tagareva from PU "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The set of paper materials presented by Tanya Ilieva is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU.

2. Brief biographical data for the doctoral student

The author of the dissertation is a doctoral student in pedagogical and age psychology at the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Paisii Hilendarski Polytechnic. Tanya Ilieva's professional experience is respectable. Her educational and professional competence includes teaching, expert, project and scientific activity in the field of school education, public administration, as well as participation, evaluation and management of projects, and a number of other activities.

The author is a correct and precise researcher who manages to verify her professional experience in a useful scientific product, providing a tool for practical work.

The deposited documentation is in order and meets all the criteria in terms of the procedure for conducting the present defense. The information from Tanya Ilieva's autobiography testifies to a step-by-step and dignified path to professional realization in the field of psychology.

3. Actuality of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks

The work presented for review undoubtedly falls into the research profile of pedagogical and age psychology, saturated with many achievements, but also with many debatable and still unresolved questions. It is precisely this scientific

status that generates the extreme problem of some topics, among which that of the so-called "strengths" of the character and the algorithm for applying specially developed activities and tasks aimed at their development in adolescence.

The topic is relevant because it is related to the challenge of looking for a reasoned answer both for adolescents in transition, as well as for their parents and the school institution. This answer immanently classifies the measurable aspects of virtues and morals, as well as the development and application of adequate instrumentation for their measurement.

On the other hand, the significance is determined by the lack of scientific research and approaches that deal with the problems of the formation of the so-called "strengths" by conducting a formative quasi-experiment , successfully implemented and described in the dissertation work.

4. Knowing the problem

The research focus is current, interesting and definitely dissertationable . The work responds to an ominous educational and social problem of our time, solved in the specific angle of directing attention to what the child goes through in the transition to adulthood and showing understanding and empathy for the problems he faces.

The dissertation student demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the theory of the issues and undoubted skills for analyzing and summarizing a scientific text. The systematization of theories and measured quantities makes an excellent impression.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation . Research methodology

The dissertation work is volume 214 pages and so on consists of from introduction , three chapters , conclusion , contributions , list on the one used literature and applications . First head presents theoretical analysis on research problem in four directions . In the torus head is described the organization on the empirical research . Third head presents the obtained data , explanation and discussion on the results from the research . The list on the one used literature includes 205 count eastern ca on Bulgarian and English language . The dissertation contains 106 count tables and 40 count figures and .

I assess the theoretical basis of the development as academic, adequate to the problem and sufficiently innovative. Synthesized and intelligent, the introductory text very well reveals the motivation and intent of the doctoral student's research efforts and the need for a deeper study of character strengths as specific, measurable aspects of the virtues, defined as "psychological constituents—processes or mechanisms—that determine the virtues ".

The clearly stated goals, objectives, and guiding hypotheses of the overall dissertation form an early expectation on the part of the reader to actually learn more about the utility of the construct of character strengths in explaining other aspects of human functioning such as well-being, school/academic achievement, positive work experience, life satisfaction.

The first main chapter has an analytical-interpretive character. Tanya Ilieva has understood not only correctly, but also thoroughly the logic of approaches established in the social sciences to explain the strengths of character. The analysis of the theories is distinguished by its complexity , skilfully achieved by revealing the similarities and differences in the vision of the philosophical, psychological and systemic models - with a detailed presentation of their varieties.

The logical conclusion of the analysis presented in the first chapter is the need to create a program that focuses on professional intervention and a program to stimulate students' skills in order to achieve a positive change in the education of children.

A particularly valuable paragraph of the work is the presented developmental program affecting the formation of character strengths in childhood and adolescence. A special formative was conducted to track the relative contribution of the developing program quasi-experiment in which two groups of children participate - students from two sixth grades in a secondary school in the city of Plovdiv: one experimental group (EG) of 18 children and one control group (CG) of 13 children. The EG children were given 13 extra-curricular lessons from a program for developing character strengths, while the CG children continued to study in their regular school program.

The intervention program is of great importance to the practice of child rearing. The development program for character strengths can be used in different cases: to train children in extracurricular activities at school, to train children in a family environment to develop character strengths, to train children with problem behavior. It is constructed by the researcher so that educational staff and parents can share their perspectives.

I definitely believe that the theoretical framework of the dissertation enriches the research model, increasing its heuristic potential. I value this systematic conceptualization as a contribution to the theory, practice, and methodology of psychological science.

The second main chapter presents the doctoral student's work on the empirical research carried out. To test the research hypotheses, a design consisting of two phases is presented. In the first phase, the current level of character strengths of children aged 11 – 17 years is diagnosed , and in the

second phase, a specially developed Strengths Development Program is empirically tested. The main goal is also to evaluate its effect on the studied persons through a formative quasi-experiment .

The study uses integrated qualitative and quantitative methods to describe and explore different character strengths and traces possible effects on adolescent behavior.

My conclusion regarding the methodology of the empirical study is that the research design is described precisely, in detail and comprehensively. The subject, object, purpose and tasks are unambiguously and precisely stated. The verification of the established hypotheses was carried out by means of an adequate methodological toolkit.

The third main chapter verifies the results of the empirical research by deriving descriptive statistics, psychometric processing of the applied instruments and checking their reliability; study the influence of socio-demographic factors on the levels of the studied constructs through a series of one -factor tests analyzes of variance and t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test , sign test (z-test) and Wilcoxon signed -rank test (T Δ test).

Regarding the qualitative and quantitative qualities of the dissertation work, I believe that the dissertation student has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB and respectively according to Art. 24, para. 1 of the Regulations for the implementation of the RSARB. The submitted publications are relevant to the dissertation topic and demonstrate research erudition. The abstract summarizes and accurately reflects the content of the dissertation work.

I believe that in relation to the procedure and the quality of the presented scientific production, no violations are registered. The dissertation is an original scientific work with undoubted merits.

6. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

Accepting the contributions formulated by the doctoral student, I find reason to emphasize the most significant ones:

1. Psychological knowledge on the topic of research traditions, perspectives and approaches to character strengths, as well as their functioning mechanisms, is analytically systematized.

2. Categorically and conceptually, the many factors for strengthening character strengths are specified. A developmental program for strengthening character strengths through a formative experiment was created and tested.

3 . The design of the empirical study was correctly constructed, meaningfully argued and adequately implemented with an appropriately selected methodology for the implementation of the organization and the conduct of the research procedures.

4. A professionally formed high potential has been demonstrated in the application of the diagnostic toolkit for checking the established hypotheses, which is an indicator of achieved scientific competence on the part of the doctoral student.

5. As the most creative aspect and a valuable contribution to the applied side of psychological knowledge, I accept the proposed creatively constructed model for innovative practical solutions when working with children in early adolescence to stimulate the development of the strengths of their character.

6. The developed program for practical classes is a valuable tool for working with children with problem behavior with practical potential.

7. Notes, questions, recommendations.

In order to popularize the dissertation work, I recommend that it be published as a book, as it will be useful to a wide range of specialists in the field of developmental psychology and educational psychology.

Conclusion.

On the basis of the above analysis of Tanya Ilieva's dissertation on the topic "*Development of strengths in children and adolescents*", I give my POSITIVE assessment of the work and strongly recommend the respected Scientific Jury to award Tanya Ilieva, PhD student at the Department of PSYCHOLOGY in PU "Paisiy Hilendarski" the **educational and scientific degree "doctor"** in the Higher Education Department: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction: 3.2. Psychology - Pedagogical and age psychology.

10.07. 2022

Signature:

city of V. Tarnovo

Prof. Dr. Velislava Chavdarova