

REVIEW

by **assoc. prof. Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD**

Plovdiv university "Paisii Hilendarski"

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 in Educational and Age Psychology

Author: Lazar Stefanov Atmadzhov

Topic: Risky behavior in adolescence

Research supervisor: Assoc. Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova - University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski"

1. General description of the presented materials

By order No. PD-21-569/16.03.2023 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 of Risky behavior in adolescence for 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 Lazar Stefanov Atmadzhov - a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychology, supervised by Prof. Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova.

The set of paper materials presented by Lazar Atmadzhov is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU and includes the following documents:

1. request to the Rector of the PU to open the procedure;
2. resume in European format;
3. protocol of preliminary discussion in the department;
4. abstract;
5. declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
6. certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
7. list of publications;

8. dissertation work;
9. copies of the publications on the topic of the dissertation.

- Doctoral student L. Atmazhov has attached eight publications.

2. Brief biographical data for the doctoral student

Lazar Stefanov Atmadzhov was born in 1988. In 2011, he obtained a bachelor's degree in pedagogy, and in 2013 a master's degree in pedagogy (preventive pedagogy) at the Polytechnic. In 2022, he received a teaching license with the qualification "teacher of philosophy" at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". His training as a doctoral student began on March 1, 2019, when he was enrolled in a full-time doctoral course in pedagogical and age psychology at the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education of the PU.

During his studies, he responsibly carried out all the activities set out in the individual study plan for the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and successfully passed all the exams specified in the plan. In 2022, L. Atmadzhov was dismissed with the right of defense. For the period from 2012 to 2022, he has professional experience as a social worker, as a member of a decision-making committee regarding the educational measures of minors and juvenile participants in educational cases. From September 2022 to the present, he is a philosophy teacher at the Vocational High School for Transport and Construction Technologies "Gotse Delchev" in the city of Plovdiv.

The presented autobiography shows the doctoral student's consistent interest in pedagogical, social and psychological topics in childhood and adolescence, which is also reflected in his approach to choosing the topic of the dissertation research - an effort to search for the main social factors for risky behavior in adolescence.

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

Lazar Atmadzhov's dissertation is devoted to the study of parent-child relationships in the context of deviant behavior in adolescents. The problem is topical in a scientific and scientific-applied sense.

The relevance is expressed in the attempt to expand scientific knowledge in the field of relationships between adolescents and parents and in practice to propose ways to reduce the risk of behavioral deviations in children. L. Atmadzhov aims to study the risky behavior of adolescents in relation to the social factor - the role of the family, parents and the role of

parentification in the family. In this aspect, it is interesting and challenging to empirically investigate basic characteristics of parentification in the family and the relationships between children's roles in the family and the tendency to take risks in adolescence.

3. Knowing the problem

Lazar Atmadzhov knows the state of the problem, in the literature review he has included sources in Bulgarian, English and Russian languages.

2. Research methodology

The methods that L. Atmadzhov chooses to apply in his empirical research are:

- Parentification Questionnaire PQ (Parentification Questionnaire) by Jurkovic and Thirkield (1998). The instrument was developed to clinically measure three dimensions of parentification experienced in the family: instrumental, emotional, and received justice. PQ allows for a distinction between emotional and instrumental parentification.
- RCADS (Child Anxiety and Depression Scale-Revised) with child version (Child RCADS) and parent version (Parent RCADS). Six factors were internalized in the RCADS for children: separation anxiety, social phobia, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, major depressive disorder.
- Questionnaire on perceived benefit of PI parentification; Hooper 2009 used to answer two questions: the extent to which perceived benefits of parentification are positively related to self-esteem and the extent to which the quality of sibling relationships mediates the relationship between perceived benefits of parentification and self-esteem.
- Questionnaire for parentification and school achievements PQY - Parentification Questionnaire for Youth with the aim of searching for a relationship between reversed family relations in the parent-child dyad and the motivation to learn and achieve academic results.
- Author's FRA (Family Relationships Assessment) questionnaire, created for the purposes of parentification research. The questionnaire contains 62 items, with three possible answers - "yes", "can't decide", "no". There are nine scales: parental indifference, taking sides, family loyalty, insecurity, parental expectations, doubt, responsibility, norms, uncharacteristic maturity.

6. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation work of Lazar Atmadzhov is structured in several parts: introduction; three heads; summary; contribution; applications; literature. The main text of the dissertation

is 180 standard typewritten pages. The dissertation contains 33 tables and 6 figures. The sources used are 343, of which 24 are in Bulgarian.

The first chapter is theoretical-analytical and presents a literature review on the topic of the dissertation. A review of research on adolescent risk behavior and parenting.

Several parts are distinguished in the exhibition: family and attachment in adolescence; risky behavior; parentification. The following are examined in more detail: the reversed roles in the parent-child dyad; the concepts of parentification of Minuchin, of Boszormenyi-Nagy, etc., the hierarchy of family relationships; "relational dialectics" as a source of parentification; the influence of cultural etc. factors, as well as the impact of divorce and family breakdown on the parent-child dyad. Emphasis is placed on the consequences of parentification. Studies presenting positive and negative consequences of parentification are analyzed.

Basic types of attachments in the conditions of parentification are derived: imitative, adaptive, oppositional, ambivalent, sporadic, infantile and latent.

In the second chapter, the research design is presented. The research problem is outlined, six goals are set, the object and subject of research are specified, six hypotheses are raised. This chapter also presents the psychometric properties of the four questionnaires: the PQ parentification questionnaire; RCADS questionnaire; parentification and school achievement questionnaire PQY - Parentification Questionnaire for Youth; FRA questionnaire.

The third chapter is dedicated to the results and analysis of the results of the conducted research with the author's FRA (Family Relationships Assessment) questionnaire. Calculations were made, realized with Benford's Law. Regression analysis was used. Calculations presented on the main nine scales:

1. Parental indifference.
2. Taking sides.
3. Family loyalty.
4. Uncertainty.
5. Parental expectations.
6. Doubt.
7. Liability.
8. Norms.
9. Uncharacteristic maturity.

In summary regarding the raised hypotheses, it turns out that, contrary to the assumption that the process of parentification has a negative impact on adolescent behavior and is the cause

of asocial and delinquent behavior of adolescents, in the conducted research no significant statistical correlations were found between parentification in the family and taking at risk in adolescence. Regarding the second hypothesis, suggesting that in incomplete families /a family represented by one parent/, the child always occupies and fulfills part or all of the functions of the absent parent, it is found that the process of parentification is more common in complete families.

The third hypothesis refers to risky behavior in adolescence and it is assumed that it is a sign of protest against the demands and recommendations of parents. In the conducted research, it is concluded that punishments and restrictions are a desired result, only to be violated and to show superiority on the part of the adolescent to the parental authority and to disrupt the family dynamics and hierarchy. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed: adolescents who are raised in families with both parents are less likely to be involved in age-uncharacteristic activities or parentification. But here, L. Atmadzhov points out that in families where there is domestic violence, in 92% of the cases, the child takes sides with one of the two parents. The fifth hypothesis, assuming that parentification and risky behavior lead to children's anxiety and depressive states, turns out to be partially confirmed, since there are no statistically significant results, but some of the studied adolescents experience a state of anxiety and depressive states, apathy, disinterest and alienation. The sixth hypothesis assumes that parentification has a significant impact on the events of rapprochement, competition, rivalry in families with more than one child.

The conducted research found that there is a certain competition between the children, in view of the fact that one child is preferred over the other, which creates conditions of dissatisfaction and non-preferred by one or both parents.

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

The scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation work consist in applying a new approach to studying the relationship between parents and children in the family with a view to the processes of parentification and risky behavior in the period of adolescence. Contributions are:

1. On the basis of a theoretical analysis, modern concepts of child-parent relations, parentification, risky behavior during adolescence have been interpreted.
2. The FRA (Family Relationships Assessment) questionnaire was created and tested for studying parentification processes in the family, and the psychometric characteristics of the PQ

parentification questionnaire were additionally confirmed; RCADS questionnaire; parentification and school achievement questionnaire PQY-Parentification Questionnaire for Youth; FRA questionnaire.

3. An overview of empirical studies related to risk behavior, the family, and parentification in the family is presented.

An original empirical study was carried out in the scientific field of the investigated problem in our country regarding the processes of parentification in the family and the attitude towards risky behavior. The obtained results enrich the existing models of parentification, confirming that parentification is not strongly related to the probability of engaging in risky behavior in adolescents.

5. The results of the research can become the basis for defining a special educational course on the importance of good child-parent relations for reducing the risky behavior of adolescents.

6. Empirical data provide grounds for establishing an opportunity to examine and diagnose family relationships. This will support the work of school psychologists, social workers, pedagogues, educators, etc. regarding the intervention and prevention of adolescent risky behavior.

8. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation work

The publications of L. Atmadzhov, which reflect the results of the dissertation, are a total of 8. All are independent articles and are in Bulgarian.

Four of them were published in the journal *Balkan Scientific Review*; two of the publications are reports from participation in the Student Scientific Forum of the Faculty of Education of the PU in 2019 and 2021; one publication is a report from an international scientific conference in Veliko Tarnovo and one is published in a collection of the University of Veliko Tarnovo. In terms of content, the publications address various aspects of the dissertation research topic: divorce and parental separation, risky behavior, family and family relations, gender identification, etc.

9. Personal participation of the doctoral student

The dissertation is the personal work of Lazar Atmadzhov. In the conducted empirical research, he has applied five tools, one of them is author's.

10. Abstract

The abstract gives an idea of the dissertation work.

11. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks that could have a significant impact on the review made. My recommendations are related to L. Atmadzhov continuing to work as persistently in the field of pedagogical and child-adolescent psychology.

12. Personal impressions

I know L. Atmadzhov as a student at PU. He now mentors psychology students during a practicum at the high school he teaches. My impressions of him are positive: he is responsible, organized and loyal.

13. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

I recommend the publication of scientific studies and a monograph on the subject. Possible future research could study the positive consequences of parentification in the family system.

Within the scope of my competence, I did not find texts that could be defined as plagiarism, and during the period of my work on the review, I did not receive such signals.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation shows that Lazar Stefanov Atmadzhov possesses theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of pedagogical and age psychology, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Lazar Stefanov Atmadzhov in the field of higher education: Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction Psychology, doctoral program Pedagogical and age psychology.

19/04/2023 Reviewer:

Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD