

OPINION

**by DSc.. Krasimira PETROVA Koleva-Mineva, Professor in the Department of Psychology,
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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 Educational and Developmental Psychology

Author: Antonia Georgieva Traykova

Topic: AGGRESSION AND ANXIETY IN TEENAGERS WITH PROBLEMATIC INTERNET
USE

Scientific supervisor: Prof. PhD. Kirilka Tagareva - Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

1.General Presentation of the Procedure and the Doctoral Candidate

Antonia Traykova holds a Master's degree in Primary Education from PU (Plovdiv University) and later completed a Master's degree in Law at VTU (Veliko Tarnovo University). She also holds a Master's degree in Positive Psychology. In her resume, she has listed over 10 certificates and attestations for various qualifications oriented towards psychology. She is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Positive Psychotherapy. She has participated in projects in the educational sector, mainly focused on working with children with special educational needs (SEN). She has worked as a lawyer, a school psychologist, and currently serves as a psychologist in a kindergarten. From her biographical data, it is evident that there is consistency and progression, a drive for improvement and development, complementing different specialties with an orientation towards working with people.

From the documentation received from the doctoral candidate, I state that the proposed documents for review are meticulously prepared and no violations have been identified according to the normative base for acquiring scientific degrees in Bulgaria and at PU, and she has fulfilled the activities set out in the Individual Development Plan (IDP). The scientometric requirements have been met.

2.Relevance of the Topic

The relevance of the dissertation research is indisputable – all of us, both as parents and specialists, are fully aware of the newly emerged phenomenon of "problematic internet behavior," which affects various aspects of children's personality development. Adolescence is sensitive to various influences, and one of the threats is addiction to digital technology use. Anxiety and aggression are accompanying problems in this age group, but when combined with the influence of the internet environment, they take on new dimensions and become a threat to the development of teenagers' personalities. This new social phenomenon requires different approaches to manage and support the growth of young people. Therefore, I fully share the concerns expressed by the doctoral candidate and believe that she has quite reasonably focused on a socially significant problem for psychological theory and practice.

3.Knowledge of the Problem

From the text presented for review, it is clear that the author possesses skills for working with theoretical frameworks, presenting detailed explanations of known and less popular models for anxiety, aggression, and problematic behavior in adolescence. The doctoral candidate demonstrates developed abilities for analyzing, summarizing, and synthesizing scientific data and facts, showing excellent knowledge of the interpreted issues. The text is readable, strictly scientific, and citing sufficient literary sources indicates competence and commitment to the problem.

4. Research Methodology

A well-thought-out, constructed, and executed study has been conducted, which is robust in its implementation, including all necessary components – clearly formulated objectives, tasks, subject, object, hypothesis, ranked into three sub-hypotheses, adequate research tools, and appropriate statistics. Impressive is the scope of the study – 399 individuals aged 14-19 years. The realized study has a complex nature and is a balanced combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses. It can be confidently stated that, besides good theoretical preparation, the doctoral candidate possesses developed skills for interpreting data and summarizing them.

5. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation and Contributions

The dissertation consists of 185 pages, of which 151 pages are the main text. The bibliography includes 12 pages containing 117 bibliographic entries – 39 in Cyrillic, 67 in Latin script, and 11 web sources relevant to the topic. There are a total of 3 appendices occupying 20 pages. The main text includes 6 figures and 17 tables. The structure of the work is classical – comprising an introduction, three chapters, a list of used literature, and appendices. The first chapter represents a theoretical overview and conceptual framework, precisely defining concepts such as aggression, anxiety, problematic behavior, reasons for their emergence, impact on personality, conditions, and prerequisites. The second chapter covers the design of the empirical study, including methods, stages, sample, instruments, and procedures. The third chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the study results, appropriately presented and excellently analyzed.

Regarding the contributions formulated by the doctoral candidate, I fully accept them and find grounds to comment on them as follows:

I. Theoretical-scientific contributions:

1. Concepts related to anxiety, aggression, and problematic behavior in the digital environment within a specific age period have been systematically organized, enriched, and presented in relation to each other, analyzed, and summarized through the prism of the research objective.
2. Significant factors for the manifestation of the interpreted phenomena, such as age, gender, etc., have been identified, while different behavioral models of teenagers have been typologized concerning constructs like social engagement, self-regulation, and self-reflection in the digital environment.
3. Problematic internet behavior has been integratively analyzed, including cognitive and emotional components, allowing its study in a broader context, demonstrating the scientific maturity and depth of the doctoral candidate.

II. Practical-applied contributions:

1. The conducted and analyzed study can be considered a plan-program for diagnosing and prognosticating problematic internet behavior, open for further supplementation and development, easily modifiable as a basis for future similar studies.
2. The developed and verified author questionnaire for research is a reliable tool that allowed the author to profile the behavioral manifestations of teenagers in the internet environment and highlight significant personality characteristics that form the basis of psychological support in problematic situations.
3. The work contributes in several practical directions: 1. It allows parents and teachers to be educated regarding the digital challenges faced by adolescents. 2. It can be used as a foundation for training in some aspects of digital literacy. 3. Various other issues related to adolescence have found a place in the dissertation, laying the groundwork for structuring programs and initiatives related to self-regulatory mechanisms, managing anxiety, reducing aggression, and more.

6. Assessment of Publications and Personal Contribution of the Doctoral Candidate

Three publications related to the dissertation topic have been submitted for review, published in prestigious journals. They complement the dissertation and are representative in terms of promoting the text.

I see the personal contribution of the doctoral candidate in several areas: integrative approach to researching problematic internet behavior; highlighting the interrelationship between anxiety, aggression, and internet behavior in adolescence; creating an author questionnaire for investigating the abovementioned issues; successful attempt at personally typologizing participants in the internet space; ideas for developing strategies, programs, and projects for providing psychological support for deviant behavior in upper secondary school age.

7. Abstract

The abstract fully corresponds to the dissertation and presents the main points of the content in a synthesized manner. It is structured according to the requirements and logically sound.

8. Recommendations for Future Use of Dissertation Contributions and Results

I believe that the contributions of the dissertation research are useful for enriching the database on problematic internet behavior, on the one hand, and for profiling teenagers as participants in the digital environment, on the other. Creating the questionnaire for investigating internet behavior and validating it suggests future use and refinement according to specific research goals.

To promote the work, I definitely recommend publishing it in book format to reach a wide range of specialists. The results of the study have a high degree of reliability and can be used to develop projects, programs, and strategies for psychological work with teenagers with problematic internet behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, I categorically state that the dissertation by Antonia Traykova on the topic: "Aggression and Anxiety in Teenagers with Problematic Internet Use" possesses sufficient scientific merits, giving me reason to vote POSITIVELY and invite members of the scientific jury to award Antonia Georgieva Traykova the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Educational and Developmental Psychology).

July 27, 2025

Prepared the opinion:
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