

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. **Ivan Vasilev Trichkov**, PhD, University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski, Faculty of Education,

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**" of University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski

by: field of higher education **3. Social, economic and legal sciences**

professional direction **3.2. Psychology**

doctoral program **Pedagogical and age psychology**

Author: Nikolay Iliev Dimchev

Theme: Relationship between aggression and attachment in adolescence

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva,

University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

By order № RD - 22-891 dated 27.04.2026r. 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: **Relationship between aggression and attachment in adolescence** to acquire 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**. **Author of the dissertation is** Nikolay Iliev Dimchev – PhD student in full-time study at department Psychology, at PU "Paisiy Hilendarski" with scientific supervisor Prof. Dr. Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski.

The set of paper materials presented by Nikolay Iliev Dimchev is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU.

2. Relevance of the topic

The growing forms of aggressive, often escalating and leading to delinquent behavior among adolescents is an extremely acute problem. Despite the preventive measures taken by state authorities, the number of youth with aggressive behavior remains high, which necessitates a review of conceptual approaches to preventing youth aggression. In this context, the problem of aggression and attachment in adolescence acquires new dimensions and critical relevance.

The relevance of the topic is fueled precisely by the increasingly frequent signals in the public space about severe manifestations of violence among adolescents - both in the physical environment (school, family) and in the digital space (cyberaggression). These phenomena are not isolated acts, but symptoms of deep psychological processes that require precise scientific analysis. It is indeed

necessary to identify the roots of these manifestations, with attachment theory offering one of the most convincing and fundamental explanatory frameworks for understanding the genesis of aggressive behavior. Nowadays, family dynamics, in which the quality of attachment between adolescents and parents, as well as conflictual relationships between parents themselves, function as a powerful predictor of behavioral deficits. The feeling that aggression is the result of insecurity in emotional relationships necessitates the need to objectify observations in this direction. In this sense, the topic of this dissertation is of particular relevance for the scientific and practical spheres.

3. Knowing the problem

The doctoral student knows the basic issues well and skillfully introduces interesting authorial interpretations with a scientific and applied focus. The theoretical statements on the research problem are presented comprehensively, multi-facetedly and in depth. The main constructs, subject and object of the dissertation have been competently researched.

4. Research methodology

For the needs of this study, two instruments that are well-established in international psychological practice and have proven psychometric properties were selected - **Bass and Perry aggression questionnaire (The Aggression Questionnaire – BPAQ)**, **Inventory of Parental and Peer Attachment (IPPA)**, and to investigate the quality of attachment in the adolescent sample studied, it was evidently used **Armsden & Greenberg developed** by Armsden and Greenberg. Several methods for statistical processing of the results obtained from the study were also applied. I personally believe that the research methodologies chosen by the doctoral student allow for achieving the goal and obtaining adequate answers to the tasks set in the dissertation.

5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The dissertation is 160 pages long and contains an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a conclusion and a bibliography. The bibliographic reference contains a total of 193 titles, of which 36 are in Cyrillic and 157 in Latin.

In **the first chapter**, the author logically and consistently builds his concept related to the phenomena of aggression and attachment in adolescence. A psychological analysis of aggression is made, examining classical concepts and contemporary models. Extensive attention has been paid to the types of aggressive behavior, as well as the age-specificity of aggression in adolescence. An interesting interpretation has been made in the direction of analyzing the essence of attachment theory. Attention is paid to how attachment transforms in adolescence and a connection is made between attachment and emotional regulation. The theoretical analysis is based on an integrative framework in which aggressive behavior in adolescence is viewed as a dynamic process resulting from the interaction between individual dispositions, cognitive-affective structures, and attachment patterns. Special emphasis is placed on the role of insecure attachment and deficits in emotional regulation as key factors that, through mechanisms such as "hostile attribution", modulate the threshold of aggressive response in adolescents. **The second chapter** presents the organization and

methodology of the empirical research. I should note that the object, subject, goal, tasks, hypotheses and contingent of the study, as well as the presentation of the tools, are formulated with exceptional correctness. For the purposes of the study, the following instruments were used and applied - to study aggressive manifestations in this work, the questionnaire by Arnold Bass and Mark Perry was used, and to study the quality of attachment in the studied adolescent sample, the Inventory of Parental and Peer Attachment (IPPA), developed by Gay Armsden and Mark Greenberg, was used. The analysis of the obtained results is presented in **the third chapter**. The study included 216 adolescents, divided into an experimental group and a control group. The data were interpreted quantitatively and qualitatively. They are illustrated using tables and diagrams, which makes them easier to understand. There is a well-structured conclusion.

6. Assessment of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student

The scientific contributions of the dissertation work that Nikolay Dimchev presents are the following:

- theoretical verification of the model: The study confirms the applicability of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1978) in the context of the contemporary Bulgarian adolescent sample, establishing the role of emotional connections as a fundamental regulator of social behavior.
- Differentiation of parental roles: A scientific contribution is the establishment of the specific influence of the two parental figures – while deficits in attachment to the mother are a leading predictor of internal hostility and anger, the breakdown in communication with the father is closely related to the externalization of aggression and deviant behavior.
- Revealing the compensatory mechanism of peers: The study sheds new light on the role of the friendship circle in adolescents with deviant behavior. It is proven that high attachment to peers can act as an emotional "buffer", but at the same time as a medium for legitimizing aggressive patterns in the absence of family security.
- Psychometric adaptation and validation: The high reliability of the instruments – Parental and Peer Attachment Inventory (IPPA) and Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) for the study of Bulgarian adolescents with deviant behavior – has been confirmed, which enriches the toolkit for future research in the field of special pedagogy and criminal psychology.

There are three publications in total, and it is striking that they are all on the topic of the dissertation.

7. Abstract

The text of the abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation.

8. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

I know doctoral student Nikolay Dimchev as responsible, conscientious, precise, and informed about current issues in psychology. His research and articles are well-argued, methodologically and statistically sound, with results that are significant for theory and practice. I

believe that his achievements so far in lecturing and extracurricular activities are distinguished by high professionalism. I accept the doctoral student's dissertation as presented and believe that the research and contributions are his personal work. **I have no critical remarks.** In terms of recommendations - it would be good if the contributions were grouped into theoretical-practical and scientific-applied aspects. I recommend that the doctoral student continue to develop his or her research potential in the field of modern areas of psychology. I recommend publishing the research data in refereed and indexed publications. I recommend publishing a monograph on the topic. I also recommend that the doctoral student continue to expand the scope of his work with a focus on the relationship between aggression and attachment in adolescence.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation shows that Nikolay Iliev Dimchev possesses theoretical knowledge and professional skills in psychology, demonstrating qualities and skills for independently conducting scientific research. The scientific work fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the regulations for its implementation. In view of the above, I give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research and the achieved results, and *I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of 'doctor'* to Nikolay Dimchev in the field of higher education: **Social, economic and legal sciences**, professional field of **Psychology**, doctoral program in **Pedagogical and Age Psychology**.

31.05. 2026 г.

Prepared the opinion:

(signature)

Assoc. Prof. Ivan Trichkov, PhD