Scientific Opinion

by Assoc. prof. Svetlana Nikolova Sariyska, PhD -

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on a Dissertation for the Award of the Educational and Scientific PhD Degree by field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3. 2. Psychology, PhD programme: 'Social Psychology' at the Section of Social, Occupational and Counselling Psychology, Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies – BAS

author: Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva

topic: "Self-efficacy views, interpersonal needs and interpersonal relationships in Ministry of Interior employees" with scientific supervisor prof. Yolanda Zografova, D.Sc.

1. General description of the submitted materials

At the choice of the scientific jury I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the procedure for the defence of dissertation on "Self-efficacy views, interpersonal needs and interpersonal relations in Ministry of Interior employees" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3. 2. Psychology, doctoral program: "Social Psychology". The author of the dissertation is Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva - PhD student at the section "Social, Occupational and Counseling Psychology" in the Department of Psychology at the Institute for Population and Human Studies - BAS. The set of materials submitted by Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva is in compliance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Includes dissertation, abstract and attached publications.

2. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and objectives

Professional self-efficacy and relationship satisfaction are constitutive of well-being and health. In various conceptual models of psychological well-being, occupational and social relationships are present as a core construct and have direct influences on happiness, meaning in life, satisfaction, achievement, and optimal functioning. In this sense, any attempt to delineate the positive influences of various constructs on working life is of theoretical and practical significance. The proposed dissertation research focuses on professional and social self-efficacy, the extent to which interpersonal needs for inclusion, control, and attachment are expressed, and subjective evaluations of interpersonal relationships, using A. Bandura's self-efficacy and W. Stutz's theories of fundamental orientation in interpersonal relationships (and Schnell and Hammer's later research in the context of business groups) as a conceptual framework. The constructs outlined, and the relationships between them, have empirical verifiability and can be taken as a contribution to the discussion around factors that influence occupational performance and related topics such as psychological well-being and optimal functioning.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The presented study is structured in two parts - theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part covers in-depth analyses of the main constructs:

Self-Efficacy

This construct has been examined in the context of Bandura's socio-cognitive theory and has been defined as the confidence to successfully handle typical tasks and problems at work, achieve personal goals, and maintain good relationships with colleagues. Self-efficacy is related to activity directed towards the achievement of a desired lifestyle by the individual, and affects views about one's own capabilities, resulting in different effects. Moving within Bandura's concept, the analysis considers self-efficacy as a personal trait that has different manifestations in different domains and activities within those domains. The views of self-efficacy are represented by the different dimensions - levels of expressiveness, generalisability and strength. The mechanisms by which the generalized sense of self-efficacy is created are outlined, as well as the sources for its development: previous personal experience, acquisition of new competencies through observation and modeling, verbal persuasion, somatic, affective, and mental states.

Types - individual and collective self-efficacy - and their influences on professional fulfillment and satisfaction are also outlined.

Interpersonal relationships and needs

These constructs are analysed in the context of Schutz theory, and with an additional reference to professional relations, by reference to the research of E. Schnell and A. Hammer. The fundamental orientation in interpersonal relationships is itself revealed through three needs: inclusion, control and attachment and their manifestation. The identified needs are also considered as constitutive for the choice of behaviours and roles in the significant relationships for the individual, as well as for the differentiation of different types of relationships. The theoretical analysis also covers the dynamics of relations and processes in different social groups. Different theoretical approaches and concepts in their understanding are presented.

The analyses are in-depth and aim to substantiate the relationships between the individual constructs, which lends coherence to the theoretical study and frames the empirical study itself.

The empirical part is also distinguished by correct statistical analyses, conducted with instruments with the necessary psychometric characteristics, and results that are consistent with the research hypotheses.

4. Methodology of the study

The methodology reflects the basic design of the study and its conceptualisation. The empirical study was conducted using the following instruments:

- A self-efficacy questionnaire for the workplace that includes two subscales:

- Occupational self-efficacy - includes 36 items divided into three subscales: 'Self-efficacy views related to job performance', 'Self-efficacy views related to career development', 'Self-efficacy views related to workplace authority'; - Social self-efficacy in the workplace - includes 22 items divided into 4 subscales: the social gathering subscale (WSSE-SG), the public performance subscale (WSSE-PP), the conflict management subscale (WSSE-CM), and the help seeking and offering subscale (WSSE-HP).

- The Fundamental Orientation Research in Interpersonal Relationships Questionnaire (FIRO-B) covering six subscales and assessing levels of three basic needs;

- A questionnaire for the study of interpersonal relationships in business groups - combining prompts from Patterson and his colleagues' questionnaire (Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson,

Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson, & Wallace, 2005) and from Furnham and Goodstein's questionnaire (Furnham & Goodstein, 1997), supplemented with more prompts. The construction of the questionnaire outlines possibilities for a more comprehensive study of this construct.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis

The dissertation has 212 pages and includes 53 tables, 5 figures, 2 appendices and references. The structure includes an introduction as an introduction to the research topic, a total of six chapters and a conclusion. The bibliography has 180, (12 in Cyrillic and 168 in Latin). The study itself is structured in two parts - a theoretical one, which presents an overview of the main concepts around which the study is built, and an empirical one, which covers: aims, objectives, hypotheses, instruments of the study with a detailed description of the psychometric characteristics and the different analyses in the context of the formulated hypotheses. The analyses and conclusions are representative of the doctoral student's efforts and support verification of the results.

6. Contributions and Significance of the Development for Science and Practice

The contributions of Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva are meaningfully summarized and correspond to the research conducted. I agree with the contributions presented in the dissertation research.

Overall, I would like to note the following positive points:

- a model for the study of business groups with distinct parameters is created;

- an in-depth analysis of the relationships between the individual constructs is presented;

- empirical evidence is presented on the levels of self-efficacy and of the needs under study, as well as on the relationships between these constructs;

- questionnaires for the study of professional self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships in business groups have been tested and constructed, which could contribute to future research;

- the presented results are a reflection of a precise analysis carried out with an original methodology and the necessary statistical methods, which guarantees the correctness of the conclusions and gives credibility to the claim of realistic applicability in the evaluation of employees of the Ministry of Interior.

7. Assessment of the publications on the thesis

Publications on the topic of the dissertation are in the form of articles and meet the requirements. The articles are 3 and have been published in scientific journals.

8. Abstract

The abstract contains the main propositions of the thesis, the results and their analysis. I believe it is adequate to the dissertation and objectively reflects the theoretical analyses and main results presented in the content of the study.

9. Conclusion

The dissertation work shows that the PhD student Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva has a thorough knowledge of the topic. I believe that the candidate meets the conditions and procedure for the award of the degree of Doctor of Education and Science under the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Following the arguments put forward, as well as the overall positive assessment of the dissertation research, I propose the scientific jury to vote positively and to award the degree of Doctor of Education and Science to Polina Tsvetanova Gudeva, for which I give my affirmative vote.

Plovdiv,

August 21, 2023

Author of the Scientific Opinion:

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