SCIENTIFIC OPINION

by Professor Minko Stoev Hadzhyiski, PhD

for the dissertation work of Diyana Tsvetanova Dobreva-Hristova on the topic: "Existential fulfillment and full human functioning in actors (Guidelines for Psychological Counselling)", presented for acquisition of the of an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field: 3.2 "Psychology", Specialized professional field: "Counseling psychology."

There is no doubt that psychological counselling enters more and more perceptibly into the practice of psychological assistance in different situations and for different categories and groups of people in need. At the same time, modern eclecticism needs more in-depth studies in theoretical terms, regarding the applicability of proven trends and schools. This, with great relevance and significance, refers to the Existential-Humanistic approach, which not only explains the basic causes of human problems, but also provides valuable and, in a certain sense, universal psychotherapeutic ideas and prescriptions. In this sense, the author's reference to a little researched and specific professional community of actors is not only interesting, but also necessary, given the nature of their work and their so far with the existential phenomena of art. Naturally, this leads to diverse psychological, medical, personal, and social attitudes - towards people, oneself and life. Referred to the construct of existential fulfillment, they can be explored and used to understand and guide psychological intervention when needed. Therefore, I consider that the topic is not only fitting for writing a dissertation, but also completely non-trivial. The work's complex presentation of the concept of full-fledged psychological functioning and well-being in the continuum of humanistic and existential theories is little discussed in the Bulgarian psychological space. I see the main contribution of this work in the opportunity provided for its popularization in social and psychotherapeutic practice.

Deeply motivated by the idea of presenting an original view of the existential problematic of a specific and little-studied professional group, the author proceeds from a theoretical base that is sufficiently informative. The inclusion of theoretical and empirical statements of positive psychology in the understanding and study of theoretical constructs in person-centered theory is a fitting and original moment in itself. In this sense is also the reference to Alfred Leangle's theoretical and methodical approach to the ways and means of actualization of the person, for the development of his autonomy and for his transformation into a "capable and self-determining subject of his own life".

The research itself has been passed perfectly in terms of focus, presentation and methodology. Here it is worth noting the clearly formulated goal and tasks corresponding to the intention to study the influence of existential self-realization (self-distancing, self-transcendence, freedom and responsibility) for the full functioning of people in the acting profession. The formulated four hypotheses contain assumptions about the relationship of mental well-being with the experience of stress, the influence of socio-demographic factors and the relationship of the structural components of existential fulfilment with stress levels in acting. They are concrete and objectively verifiable with the used instrumentation, which is impressive in terms of specificity and relevance to the research intentions.

An in-depth statistical and substantive analysis of the obtained results was made, both in general and according to the individual hypotheses. It is worth noting the accurate and adequate tabular and graphical presentation, which helps to perceive and understand the many correlational relationships established.

The conclusions are specific and related to the convincing confirmation of the four raised hypotheses. They contain the theoretical and practical contributions. The conclusion that existential fulfillment and its components are protective resources and a buffer against stress, while favoring the mental well-being and resilience of professional actors, is important to guide counseling interventions when needed and in principle.

The attached publications, four in number, are related to the topic of the dissertation. I can especially note the adaptation of the "Existence Scale" methodology, which is a contribution to psychodiagnostic practice. The expansion of the concept of the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy with the ideas of the existential paradigm also deserves attention.

In conclusion, I can confidently say that Diana Tsvetanova Dobreva-Hristova's dissertation is an up-to-date, well-conceived and perfectly executed work, which has an indisputable importance for consulting practice. Its application goes beyond the studied professional group and can be adopted in a more general counseling and psychotherapeutic plan. The author deserves the award of the of the educational and scientific degree „Doctor", for which I vote categorically positively.

17.11.2023 SIGNATURE:

Veliko Tarnovo Prof. Minko Hadzhyiski, Phd