ВЕЛИКОТЪРНОВСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
"СВ. СВ. КИРИЛ И МЕТОДИЙ"



ST. CYRIL AND ST. METHODIUS
UNIVERSITY OF VELIKO TARNOVO

OPINION

by Prof. Velislava Chavdarova, PhD

regarding the doctoral dissertation of

Lyubomir Rumenov Draganov

Title:

"Belief in a Just World and Life Stories"

Scientific Supervisor:
Prof. Ergül Tair, DSc

Professional Field: 3.2. Psychology
Doctoral Program: General Psychology

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Institute for Population and Human Studies
Department of Psychology

1. General Evaluation of the Dissertation (Evaluative in Nature)

The doctoral dissertation of Lyubomir Rumenov Draganov presents an in-depth, theoretically grounded, and methodologically precise study of belief in a just world as a personality variable and its diagnosis through autobiographical narratives of experienced injustice. The topic is highly relevant both in the context of contemporary approaches to personality and with regard to the applied dimensions of the research—adaptation, interpretation of social reality, and behavioral regulation. These aspects inherently require psychological interpretation, verified through representative empirical research, which is successfully realized in the reviewed dissertation.

The overall impression is that of a conceptually well-structured and logically coherent scholarly text, demonstrating a high level of theoretical competence, thorough knowledge of

classical and contemporary research in the field, and skillful integration of diverse research approaches. The author convincingly argues for the necessity of extending traditional self-report methods through narrative analysis and successfully implements this research strategy in the empirical part of the dissertation.

The structure of the dissertation is clear and well-balanced: the analytical premises are developed in detail, the methodology is comprehensively described, and the results are presented systematically and analytically.

The theoretical section reflects a deep understanding of the subject matter and demonstrates the author's ability to critically evaluate existing explanatory models and the hierarchy of concepts upon which they are built. The text is readable, logically constructed, and critically oriented, guiding the reader toward possible empirical validations and applied implications of the analyzed theoretical constructs. Each chapter concludes with clearly formulated conclusions. The literature sources are used correctly. The theoretical foundation of the study is assessed as adequate, up-to-date, and academic in nature.

The most substantial value of the present research lies in its focus on the essence of the problems by combining traditional and innovative methods to examine the influence of personal and general belief in a just world on how individuals interpret, organize, and make sense of experienced injustice in narrative form, as well as on the associated emotional, cognitive, and motivational consequences. The text is written in clear scientific language, with precise terminology and without unnecessary descriptiveness, which facilitates the tracing of the main arguments and conclusions.

2. Evaluation of the Significance and Persuasiveness of the Results

The debates surrounding the definitional parameters of the key variables are adequately reviewed. The semantics of related, complementary, and explanatory concepts are thoroughly clarified, including the conceptual development of belief in a just world and its place in personality structure, its integration into the narrative approach to life stories, the personal contract and the justice motive, the characteristics of narrative organization, and the constructs through which life stories are examined.

The aims, objectives, and hypotheses of the dissertation are clearly stated and excellently formulated. The obtained results are significant from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

The study convincingly demonstrates that personal and general belief in a just world function as distinct yet interrelated psychological dispositions that exert specific influences on the way individuals interpret and structure experienced injustice.

A particularly important contribution is the empirical demonstration of the mediating role of autobiographical narrative elements (self-presentation, resolution process, and outcome) in the relationship between belief in a just world and current psychological consequences. Through structural equation modeling, the author demonstrates high persuasiveness of the results, supported by excellent model fit indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR), indicating methodological rigor and correctness in statistical analysis.

The results regarding the differentiated influence of personal and general belief in a just world are especially convincing. Personal belief is primarily associated with the quality of the narrative outcome and with motivational and emotional consequences, whereas general belief exerts a stronger influence on self-presentation and the evaluation of the social situation. These relationships are logically consistent, empirically supported, and aligned with existing theoretical models, while also extending them.

Overall, the planning, implementation, and analysis of the empirical study testify to the doctoral candidate's excellent research culture and in-depth, systematic understanding of the investigated issues.

3. Evaluation of Interpretations, Conclusions, and the Nature of the Scientific Contributions

The interpretations of the results are well-argued, empirically verified, and theoretically precise. The author avoids overgeneralizations and clearly distinguishes statistically significant effects from trends, demonstrating a mature scientific approach. The conclusions logically follow from the presented data and are aligned with the initially formulated aims and hypotheses.

The scientific contributions of the dissertation may be defined as original and significant. Notable among them are:

- the conceptual integration of the theory of belief in a just world with the narrative approach to life stories;
- the development and application of an original framework for qualitative analysis of autobiographical narratives of injustice with high reliability;

- the empirical modeling of complex relationships between personality dispositions, narrative structure, and current psychological consequences;
- the expansion of empirical data on the functioning of belief in a just world within the Bulgarian sociocultural context.

The research design addressing these interrelations is not only relevant to the theoretical conceptualization but also creatively constructed and deeply elaborated. In this respect, Draganov's work enriches theoretical-methodological and applied research not only in general psychology but also in social, counseling, and personality psychology.

These contributions have the potential to be utilized in future scientific research as well as in applied fields such as counseling psychology, psychotherapy, social interventions, and the analysis of social attitudes.

4. Evaluation of the Quality of the Scientific Publications Related to the Dissertation

The scientific publications related to the dissertation research are characterized by high quality, thematic coherence, and methodological rigor. They adequately reflect the main stages and results of the dissertation and demonstrate a sustained scientific interest in issues of justice, personal interpretations, and social context.

The publications reveal the author's capacity for independent scientific thinking, proficiency in working with empirical data, and correct application of statistical methods.

With regard to the author's style of presentation, both the published texts and the dissertation itself are conceptually appropriate, logically structured, and easily readable. Their dissemination beyond academic circles would likely enhance the psychological literacy of a broad range of professionals.

5. Reasoned Conclusion

In conclusion, the doctoral dissertation of Lyubomir Rumenov Draganov represents a completed, original, and scientifically significant study. The topic is timely, the methodology is adequate and well substantiated, and the obtained results are convincing, with clearly delineated scientific contributions.

The author demonstrates profound theoretical knowledge, high methodological competence, and the ability to conduct independent scientific research. On this basis, I give a

positive evaluation of the dissertation and consider that it fully merits the awarding of the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”** in Professional Field 3.2 Psychology / General Psychology.

29.01.2026

Veliko Tarnovo **Prof. Velislava Chavdarova, PhD**

Velislava Atanasova Chavdarova

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