

## **REVIEW**

by **Prof. Dr. Elena Atanasova Boradzhieva**

of a dissertation on:

### **“ROLE OF COMPASSION TO SELF AND OTHERS FOR CAREER SUCCESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION”**

**For Doctor of Philosophy, field 3.2 Psychology**

creator **Maria Petrova Vassileva,**

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Philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Academic Supervisor: **Prof. Irina Zinovieva, Dr. Sc.**

#### **1. Dissertation data**

Maria Vasileva has a remarkable professional career, which was contributed by the secondary education she received at the German Language High School, Sofia, as well as the subsequent studies in the specialty "International Economic Relations" at the University of national and world economy, a master's degree in Business Administration in *High commercial studies of Montreal IHEC/*, Montreal. In addition, the acquired qualifications in her professional path identify her as an inquisitive and addicted person to education, personal development and psychological knowledge. Maria Vasileva has extensive teaching and corporate experience gained abroad. She worked for the longest time and in increasingly higher positions at Air Canada, Montreal. Her

permanent professional career, after 2008, has been oriented in the field of Organizational Psychology.

The topic of Maria Vasileva's dissertation is entirely related to her professional activity. A good education and accumulated experience are a very good basis for the successful development of her dissertation.

## **2. Data for the Ph.D**

From the attached documents, there is no information about committed violations of the procedure for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff (LDAS), according to the Regulations for the implementation of LDAS and the Rules for the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski".

## **3. Dissertation and abstract data**

The topic of the dissertation is current and intriguing. Formulated at first glance too generally, in structural terms the work is very well supported and the interaction between the studied constructs is presented in a prepared and conducted study that meets modern standards. The style of the abstract /in the Bulgarian version/ testifies to a very good language culture.

The dissertation covers a volume of 207 pages, which also includes the list of used literature, occupying 29 pages. The literary sources, 361 in number, are mainly in English and the publications are mostly contemporary.

Initially, the dissertation includes five chapters, the first of which is "Introduction", with a volume of 2 pages. The second chapter is "Theoretical overview" /106 pages/, the third is dedicated to the design

and theoretical framework of the empirical study /21 pages/, the fourth - to the research results /44 pages/. The fifth chapter includes the conclusion and limitations within 2 pages. After the remark I made to the internal defense, the first and fifth chapters as numbering have been dropped, but the numbering in the three chapters remains confused. This is a purely formal remark that does not affect the high assessment I give regarding the choice of the topic, its importance and its thorough development in the dissertation.

The theoretical overview analyzes the main views on the constructs that are the subject of research in the dissertation -*sympathy, satisfaction with life, success in professional career*.

Sympathy is defined, its origin is examined, its unfolding as a process and its manifestation as a state, as well as its emotional regulation, are traced. The relationship of sympathy with attachment style was analyzed. Logically and consistently, the theoretical overview moves to the place of sympathy in the structure of the personality and its interrelationship with personality traits and self-esteem, as well as the influence of culture on individual manifestations of sympathy.

Approaches to examining subjective and objective well-being are complemented by an analysis of a number of published studies establishing the construct's complex interrelationships with self-compassion.

Career success is presented as a separate aspect. A successful attempt was made to highlight and differentiate the elements of the construct, their interrelationships both with each other and with compassion. Based on the results of existing (generally few) studies, the role that compassion for others and for oneself plays in career success is analyzed.

The theoretical overview is well selected and systematized. The analysis of the main constructs and their interrelationships is thorough and testifies to a very good theoretical preparation of the student and the ability to logically and stylishly present theses. It is developed along the lines of the operationalization of empathy, personality traits, self-esteem, career success, and life satisfaction that is necessary for empirical research.

In the chapter "Empirical research - design and theoretical framework" a clear and precise theoretical model of the empirical research, which guarantees the verification of the established hypotheses, is derived and illustrated. They are presented in detail. In my opinion, in their formulation in Bulgarian, instead of the foreign word "association" it is more appropriate to use the Bulgarian word „връзка“ (relationship), since association is related with similarity of ideas, and correlations serve to measure relationships. *An example from the text in Bulgarian in the abstract:* "It exists association between sympathies (sympathy for others, helpfulness, fear of sympathy, sympathy for self) and personality traits". /

The instrumentation is adequate to the studied constructs. For the instruments that were not adapted for Bulgaria (these are: Scale for self-compassion short format; Scale for sympathy for others; Fear of sympathy for others; Career satisfaction) was processed according to the established requirements of the Bulgarian test committee at the Society of psychologists in Bulgaria. It is noted that a triple translation from English to Bulgarian, as well as a reverse translation from Bulgarian to English, was carried out. The best translation for each item is selected. The psychometric characteristics of the scales included in the battery of questionnaires are derived.

Statistical procedures of factor, regression, correlation and comparative analysis were used to validate the hypotheses.

The sample includes 320 examined persons, and their distribution by gender, age and education is presented.

In the chapter "Results and general discussion" the impression is confirmed that the dissertation student is able to present the results of the research thoroughly, systematically and logically. In the analysis of the results, in addition to revealing the differences in the elements of the empathy construct according to demographic characteristics and the relationships of empathy with personality traits, life satisfaction and career success, it is also derived *predictive ability* of self-compassion in relation to objective and subjective career success. The latter is rarely found in dissertations for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in Psychology. After the extensive discussion of the results, at the end of the chapter, the verification of the established hypotheses is precisely and clearly outlined.

In conclusion, the author rightly draws attention to the fact that sympathy and self-compassion have long been the object of attention in other fields of science, I would add especially in creativity, and in psychology they have traditionally been seen as independent constructs. The purpose of the dissertation and its main contribution is to examine compassion and self-compassion in the context of meaningful life manifestations such as life satisfaction and career success.

The dissertation's in-depth knowledge of the principles of empirical psychological research is also highlighted in delineating the limitations of the analysis of the results.

The abstract fully corresponds to the dissertation development and presents the main parts of its content in a synthesized form.

### **3.Theoretical and applied contributions of the dissertation**

In my opinion, the main contributions of the dissertation work are:

4.1. The subject of research in the dissertation enriches the psychological literature with an in-depth study of the aspects of empathy and its role in life satisfaction and career success.

4.2. The empirically established results relating self-compassion to objective and subjective career success are a contribution to the available research.

4.3. The empirical study confirms the results of published studies, but in the present study the results refer to the Bulgarian population.

4.4. Four questionnaires were adapted for Bulgaria (Compassion for self - short format, Compassion for others, Fear of sympathy for others and Satisfaction with career). Two new scales (Helpfulness and Objective Career Success) were developed.

4.5. The conclusions of the research are applicable in various fields of psychology - personality psychology, organizational psychology, etc.

### **5. Publications and participation in scientific forums**

The doctoral student has indicated in the Reference - declaration of fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, legal and economic sciences, according to Art. 2b from ZRASRB, six publications on the topic of the dissertation, which testifies to his experience in preparing shorter scientific forms and presenting them to a professional community.

Maria Vasileva participated in 4 conferences in Bulgaria. She was in the scientific team of 2 projects of SU "Kliment Ohridski". As a full-time doctoral student, she was a member of the expert groups on accreditation of 3 doctoral programs in two universities in our country.

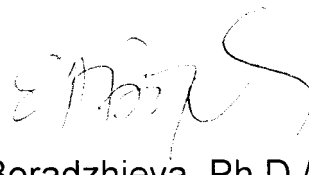
## 6. Conclusion

Based on the above analysis of the dissertation of Maria Petrova Vasileva on the topic: "**The role of self-compassion and compassion for others in career success and life satisfaction**", I give a POSITIVE evaluation of her work. I declare my positive vote for the award of **Maria Vasileva** of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, legal and economic sciences, by professional direction: 3.2. Psychology, Cultural and differential psychology (in English).

04/14/2024

V. Tarnovo

Signature:



/prof. Elena Boradzhieva, Ph.D./