

# REVIEW

by

Prof. Romyana Krumova-Pesheva, DSc

Of Dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree  
“PhD”

in scientific specialty 3.2 Psychology (Clinical Psychology)

Title: **“The possibilities of the cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy for  
overcoming depressive states in dyslexia of the development”**

Developed by: Vaska Zdravkova

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Vanya Matanova, DSc

The dissertational work of Vaska Zdravkova is related to an actual for the modern reality topic – the topic of depressive conditions typical for patients with dyslexia of the development. It is associated with the investigation of new psychological and psychotherapeutic possibilities for helping with overcoming similar affective states. The significance of the examined question is being exhibited by the PhD student from a point of view including the current situation in the Republic of North Macedonia. In the moment, there exists a necessity for developing the diagnostic and intervention models and methods of working in the clinical psychology. There has been also noted the lack of enough scientific-investigational strategies, as well as approaches, concretely according to children with dyslexia of the development.

The dissertation possesses a volume of 170 pages and consists of introduction, three chapters, bibliography and a conclusion. The bibliography reference is made of 214 sources, 10 of which are in Cyrillic, the rest of them – in Latin. All of the used literature titles are fully relevant with the examined problematic in the dissertation work. The results received, which are based on the investigation, are being demonstrated by 5 figures and 10 tables. In application,

there are shown the methodics of the empiric research. The abstract consists of 40 pages and is an informative and synthetized brief variant of the dissertation. There are presented 5 publications: 1 in co-authoring and 4 independents which are directly related to the topic investigated.

In the introduction of the dissertation work prepared by Vaska Zdravkova, there has been displayed concisely the state of clinical-psychological support in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the need for a bigger amount of contemporary psychological-diagnostic and psychotherapeutic methodologies and activities. A special focus is being put on the question associated with depressive states, typical for the adolescents with dyslexia in the development. Moreover, there have been examined the behavioural conditions and social problems related to this topic. The idea of testing the cognitive-behavioural psychotherapeutic approach towards children and its assessment has been included.

The first chapter of the dissertation represents a theoretical look over the connotations discussed, the psychic phenomena and conditions, in relation with the chosen investigational topic. A significance of the dyslexia has been involved and described by the reflexive “picture” of a wild range of opinions and conceptions. Vaska Zdravkova highlights, in a very thorough way, distinct aspects according to the limits of the definitions, depending on the paradigms and the investigational parameters. The specific disturbances are properly examined, as well as the possible etiological factors such as: constitutional predispositions, emotional and intellectual characteristics, phonological deficit, magnocellular malfunction, specific disturbances in the ability of learning, etc. There are demonstrated descriptive definitions. The main focus has been put on the difficulties and the determinants during the formation of concrete skills, according to the three-dimensional approach. In addition, there has been offered a medical and social model of understanding the dyslexia, a biopsychosocial model, a three-stage model, etc. The work of the author is being based on convincing data, related to the distributing of the dyslexia and researches different etiological theories and approaches. With a great attention Vaska Zdravkova displays the indicators for dyslexia of the development, but also symptoms for anger and for depressive and anxious suffering. Furthermore, the PhD student focuses on the comprehension towards the complex biological, cognitive and behavioural level during the observation, diagnostics and interpreting of the clinical data of young patients with dyslexia characteristics. Very concretely and professionally there has been depicted the dynamic picture of the problematic researched with an accent on the depressive suffering, which contains a feeling of instability and helplessness, many difficulties in the communication with the others

and in the adaptation to the setting. The author properly shows the essence of the early diagnostics for achieving high effectiveness in the next professional interventions. A profile of a student with dyslexia has been presented and there have been displayed not only the difficulties, but also the sources and abilities for progress, according to the speech and language, reading, writing, mathematical skills, memory, motor abilities, behavioural reactions, etc. Qualifications of different types of dyslexia have been offered. A cognitive-behavioural scheme has been included with its steps, diagnostic and interventional procedures. In an extremely convincing way Vaska Zdravkova focuses on the social and emotional difficulties or, specifically, on the characteristics and depth of the depressive suffering of children with dyslexia of the development.

The second chapter of the dissertation is related to the organisation of the empiric investigation. It consists of the aim, the research tasks, a description of the people examined, of the methodology, of the methodics and of the procedure. There have been displayed 3 scientific hypotheses and the methodics chosen have been described correctly. After a precise selection from 120 investigated people, the research has been done with 70 participants, divided in two groups: 35 are part of the group with the cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy; 35 did not take advantage of this psychotherapeutic program. The exclusion factor, as well as the demographic characteristics of the participants have been shown precisely. The procedure has been displayed thoroughly and informatively by the author, in a time diapason, weekly. For processing statistically the empiric data and for verifying the hypotheses discussed have been used adequate methods: dispersion and correlation analysis.

In the third chapter the results from the research are shown in a comparative order between the control and the experimental groups. Descriptive statistics have been used with the objective to analyse the demographic indicators. To evaluate the data from the differences related to the exponents between the groups, there has been included a multivariate dispersion analysis. In quantity, it has been presented that there is an improvement in the condition of the experimental group, but not in the control one. Definitively, the results confirm that there has been a significant decrease in the self-reported by the participants depressive symptoms, as well as optimising their social and emotional functioning. There has been also made a precise comparison with the habitual care for children with dyslexia of the development, without psychotherapeutic interventions. With the final data received, there has been clarified that in the group with cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy there has been a lower approximate result of depressive symptoms than the ones in the group with usual medication, without therapeutic

interventions, in the fourth week after finishing the research. In the discussion of the results, Vaska Zdravkova highlights the importance of the psychotherapeutic interventions for achieving a more adaptive functioning, as well as for accomplishing a big range of positive changes, related to adopting new skills. In the conclusion, the author remarks the high effectivity, concretely of the cognitive-behavioural approach, with the aim to reduce the depressive conditions of children between the age of 7 and 13 years, with dyslexia of the development. In the course of the cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy, there has been noted a symptomatic decrease in the depression of the children tested, which has been argued with changes in the depressive state, creating new objectives in school and outside school conditions, increasing the extracurricular activities, possessing motivation and ambition for constructive and active solution to the problems present, etc.

The author exhibits some limits of the investigation such as: the fact that it is associated only and mainly with the depressive symptomatology; the limited number of the people tested; the lack of sex specification, etc. Based on the research, she displays also a great variety of possibilities and perspectives for future investigational projects, which are related to the idea of conducting a massive dynamic research of the discussed psychic phenomena, as well as to achieving comparative investigations in this concrete scientific area. There have been shown 4 contributing moments of the dissertation work, according to the constructing of theoretical-empirical model for working with depressive conditions of children with dyslexia of the development. Nevertheless, these moments are related to the adaptation of the practical instruments, as well as to the usage of the results as orienteers for the clinical practice with the group of investigated people.

Not lastly, I aim to explain that the PhD student has taken into account all of the recommendations given from me, according to the development of the dissertation work, such as: she has made structural and definitive changes; the topic has been redacted and fully finished; the hypotheses have been reformulated properly; the citations in the research and in the bibliographic reference have been revised and displayed in the same bibliographic model; the conclusion has been developed and has been formed convincingly; in the investigational work have been involved all of the missing parts., etc.

**In conclusion**, I firmly believe that the dissertation work of Vaska Zdravkova possesses an actual and essential role for the modern psychological science and practice, also partly for the clinical and consultative work in the Republic of North Macedonia. The idea of conducting such observation and research has been exhibited by the author correctly, thoroughly,

consequently and precisely. It shows her advanced skills for making theoretical analysis and synthesis of different psychic phenomena in the area of dyslexia of the development. In the investigational work, there have been shown the abilities of the PhD student, associated with planning, organising and accomplishing profound research projects with fully engaged and careful approach and sense related to the people tested. All of the above gives me a reason to recommend confidently to the respected scientific jury Vaska Zdravkova to be given the scientific and educational degree “doctor” of a scientific specialty 3.2 Psychology (Clinical Psychology).

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Sofia

Prepared the review:.....

(Prof. R. Krumova–Pesheva)