

OPINION

by

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regarding

Violeta Petrova Glogova, F066250

on the dissertation entitled:

“Movement Therapy through Dance Techniques and Its Impact on Nonverbal Communication in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders”

for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD)
in Professional Field 8.3 Music and Dance Art

Significance of the Research Problem in Scientific and Applied Scientific Terms

The topic of the dissertation is highly relevant and significant both from a scientific and an applied scientific perspective. Autism spectrum disorders represent one of the most serious challenges in the field of communication development and social interaction in children. Contemporary research demonstrates that a large proportion of children with ASD experience significant difficulties in the development of communicative skills, including nonverbal communication.

In this context, the search for innovative therapeutic approaches that support the development of social and communicative skills is of particular importance. Dance-movement therapy represents an interdisciplinary approach combining physical movement, music, and emotional expression, thereby creating a favorable environment for the development of communication abilities in children with ASD.

The model for the application of dance-movement therapy proposed in the dissertation has the potential for practical implementation not only in therapeutic practice, but also in educational and social contexts. This gives the study substantial applied scientific value.

Justification of the Goals and Objectives of the Dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is clearly formulated and directed toward investigating the effect of structured dance-movement therapy on the development of nonverbal communication in children with autism spectrum disorders.

In order to achieve this aim, the author formulates specific research tasks, including the development of a therapeutic program, the experimental application of the developed

methodologies, and the assessment of observed changes through validated measurement instruments.

The stated goals and objectives are logically substantiated and correspond to the subject of the research. They are consistently implemented throughout the structure of the dissertation, which ensures clarity and methodological coherence of the scientific study.

Correspondence between the Selected Methodology and Research Methods and the Goals and Objectives of the Dissertation

The dissertation applies a comprehensive methodological approach that includes both theoretical analysis of scientific literature and empirical research.

In her research, doctoral candidate Glogova employs several complementary methodological instruments, including:

- an original matrix for assessing nonverbal behavioral responses;
- the standardized **ATEC instrument (Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist)** for measuring the effect of the therapeutic intervention;
- a methodology for selecting movements in dance-movement therapy;
- a methodology for selecting musical material within the therapeutic process.

The use of these methods allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the therapeutic intervention and provides both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis of the results.

The research methodology is appropriate to the stated goals and objectives and provides a reliable basis for interpretation of the obtained findings.

Statistical data processing was conducted using descriptive statistics, significance tests (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and Mann - Whitney U Test), and graphical representations, with analyses performed using the statistical package R.

Scientific and Applied Scientific Contributions of the Dissertation

The dissertation contains both scientific and applied scientific contributions.

Among the principal scientific contributions are:

- systematization and analysis of theoretical concepts related to nonverbal communication and its development in children with autism spectrum disorders;
- investigation of the role of dance-movement therapy as a means of stimulating nonverbal communication.

The applied scientific contributions include:

- development of a methodology for selecting movements in dance-movement therapy for children with ASD;
- development of a methodology for selecting musical material tailored to the specific characteristics of the studied group;

- experimental implementation of the developed therapeutic program and analysis of its effects on the nonverbal communication of the participants.

The proposed methodologies may be utilized in the practice of specialists working with children with autism spectrum disorders, which gives the study considerable practical value.

Last but not least, the developed “shortlists” of movements and musical playlists create a practice-oriented model for individualized dance-movement therapy for children with ASD, based on actual behavioral responses and functional capacities.

Evaluation of the Publications Related to the Dissertation

The doctoral candidate’s publications on the dissertation topic reflect the principal results of the conducted research. They have been published in scientific editions and present key aspects of both the theoretical framework and the empirical findings of the study.

The publication activity of doctoral candidate Violeta Glogova complies with the requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD).

Citations by Other Authors, Reviews in Scientific Publications, etc.

At the time of preparation of the present opinion, there is no available evidence of a significant number of citations of the dissertation-related publications, which is common for recently defended research.

Given the relevance of the topic and the interdisciplinary nature of the study, it may be expected that the results will attract broader scientific and applied interest in the future.

Opinions, Recommendations, and Remarks

The dissertation has been developed at a high scientific level and demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the research problem.

It should be noted that the study has a pilot character and was conducted on a limited sample, which implies the need for future research involving a larger number of participants.

It would also be beneficial for the developed methodologies to be adapted for application in various educational and therapeutic contexts.

Good academic practice also presupposes active publication activity, including the preparation of joint scientific publications with the scientific supervisors, with the aim of broader scientific dissemination and sustainable development of the research topic.

Conclusion

The dissertation of **Violeta Petrova Glogova, F066250**, represents an independent scientific study with a clearly formulated objective, well-structured methodology, and significant scientific and applied scientific results.

The presented research meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations for the award of the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” (**PhD**).

Based on the arguments presented above, I give a positive evaluation of the dissertation and propose that the esteemed Scientific Jury award Violeta Petrova Glogova the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD).

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