STATEMENT

from

prof. Violeta Boyanova, MD

For a dissertation on

Validation and digitalization of a scale for the assessment of learning skills through play PTESS at the age of 0 to 4 years

Doctoral student: Nina Iordanova F107741

Supervisors: assoc. prof. Polina Mihova, PhD

assoc. prof. Deyan Palezhev, PhD

The dissertation is spread over 288 pages and includes an introduction, literature review, aims, objectives, hypotheses, methodology and research contingent, results and analysis, conclusions and recommendations, scientific contributions, bibliography and a very large volume of appendices. The dissertation is illustrated with 21 tables, 15 diagrams, 15 appendices and several screen shots of digitized platform elements. The literature used contains 251 titles, 201 in Latin and 50 in Cyrillic. Thus presented, the development meets the formal requirements for a dissertation.

Relevance of the topic: undoubted and of great importance for both theory and practice. The scale developed for the developmental assessment of children from 0 to 4 years of age is useful above all for the practice of the speech therapist. In the dissertation there are also data for children up to 6 years of age, which is beyond the task in the title. With greater relevance and timeliness I consider the developed possibility of digital communication of parents with child development specialists, which include speech therapists.

Theoretical framework: The literature presented on the problem is very extensive, up-to-date and with a great variety of information - so much so that it is difficult to know which facts are from literature data and which are from the author's research. I have the feeling that she has decided to present everything that has been worked on so far- Yordanova is a long time well known speech therapist and specialist. She has presented training courses with parents of children, and the issues discussed are interesting, but unrelated to the specific research.

For example, "Have you read Terry Pratchett"- with a little more imagination a correlation could be made between his thesis on "volition" and child behaviour, but this part of the thesis is unnecessary for the specific topic. The theoretical framework provides a detailed overview of the concepts of validation and verification, the explanation being the same for both concepts. In practice, the study validates the authors' Child Development Rating Scale /PTESS/, as the results are largely consistent with the Munich Development Scale, which is accepted as the standard. Validation means that the data from this study is real and not made up. In summary, this part of the dissertation contains too much vague and redundant information which creates a feeling of chaotic.

Experimental study : 461 children aged 0 to 54 months were studied. The aim of the study is formulated correctly as well as the corresponding tasks .There are two hypotheses, which are confirmed in the course of the study. The analysis of the obtained results is done correctly with rich illustrative material of tables and diagrams. The author's development rating scale created is very reasonable and illustrates the professionalism of the dissertation. Allowing parents to assess and participate in this process is a modern, contemporary approach to working with children with both normal, and developmental problems. Conclusions and recommendations are made adequate to the results obtained. A final and very important outcome of this dissertation for practice is the attempt /largely well implemented/, to make a diagnostic package of markers of normal development in childhood.

I have a few questions for the dissertator. On page 77 the ways of assessing children on a particular game correctly performing the task - score 1, inconclusively - score 0.5 and unable to perform - again score -1 ? Is this a typo or some feature of the assessment?

How do you explain why in your opinion the children studied with dyspraxia, sensory dysfunction and genetic syndromes, i.e. different pathology, have the same improvement from play?

Conclusion : The dissertation develops a topical issue relevant to theory and practice. The literature review is extensive and addresses all aspects of the problem under consideration. The methods used are adequate to the aim, the results are processed and analyzed correctly. The contributions to theory and practice are unquestionable. All this gives me grounds to recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award the scientific degree "Doctor " to Nina Yordanova.

04.12.2024   Prof. Violeta Boyanova, MD