



Saint Petersburg State University

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Dissertation Thesis Review Report

Author: Uliana A. Udavikhina

Title: Socio-psychological features of mediator's professional activity

It is a pleasure to write this recommendation letter for acceptance of the scientific degree of candidate of psychological sciences submitted by Uliana Udavikhina.

General comments

Nowadays, mediation is applied in many different contexts and fields of research, and it is valuable contribution to the psychological literature on stress in interesting and novel area of this dissertation study. Namely, the topic of thesis is current and relevant in the context of up-to-date research as integrating theoretical and practical aspects with concentration on mediation as social and psychological process and a form of intermediary in social group context reflecting the inspiration of this thesis from both theoretical and methodological point of view.

The thesis consists of three main chapters, the introduction as the first part of thesis, the rich part is appendixes (more than 30 pages with 13 appendixes with questionnaires used and some additional numeric results of the statistical analysis) and the bibliography (236 relevant sources) following the classic structure of a PhD thesis. The main text of the thesis is written on 182 pages all together in both a Russian and English part of the dissertation. The findings and conclusion of the thesis Author preformed in the fourth and fifth chapter with the Glossary at the end of the thesis, whereby the numerous tables and graphs inside the dissertation. The author has studied and used appropriate number of bibliography sources used and quoted in the thesis. It is the evidence of the deep theoretical knowledge and good orientation in the problem discussed in the thesis. The thesis is prepared in good editing standard. All the figures and tables are carefully prepared and clearly presented.

Both parts of the dissertation – theoretical and empirical, contain original contributions to the field. In order to attain them, the Author had to have a good command of the subject matter, both theoretically and in terms of empirical techniques for data collection and quantitative comprehensive analysis.

No major criticism regarding the overall quality of the work I should like to move on to the specific areas of dissertation with some issues which could be addressed to specify through academical discussion.

Specific comments

The introduction to the main text is proper helping to understand the acknowledgements presented inside the text and presents the aims and methods of the study as well as the hypothesis of the research. Aims and methods are clearly described, author represents the ideas and knowledge with sufficient theoretical background in the Chapters 1-2, and the research process and its results in the Chapter 3.

Chapter 1 consists of a literature review and has a logical partition with three relevant sub-chapters analyzing the body of research on mediation as multi-disciplinary phenomenon, concentrating to the characteristics of the mediator, and analyzing mainly contemporary research in the field of mediation in Russia, whereby the last sub-chapter, by contrast to first two sub-chapters, is considerably less informative and give the impression of less depth and analytical precision. The key broad concept – mediation as a socio-psychological phenomenon, is integrated and inscribed into the theoretical-empirical background

of the thesis but raises a question: Why Author uses at the Glossary (pp. 292) narrow definition of the mediation.

The main part of the thesis – Chapter 2 is methodological consisting of two sub-chapters. The aims were fulfilled, methods of research work are appropriate to the aims and hypothesis formulated in the thesis. In general, the coverage of the development of the quantitative methodology and the research design is thoughtful and coherent.

Nevertheless, concerning the methodological part of the thesis I would like to make two comments. Firstly, it could be useful to bring more attention to the use of one of the key terms – “mediators and participants in mediation” because it seems that at most parts of the thesis term “mediators and their clients/mediation clients” are used by Author as synonyms, whereby also confusing terms “negotiators” and “interviewees” are used.

Secondly, the Author succeed in connection of seven adapted and validated research methods as integrated whole for analysis of the research material, whereby one of the used research methods is called as a projective method consisting open-ended sentences. It raises a question: What is a conceptual framework for understanding projective technique based on the methodology of this dissertation study?

In general, the presented results are reliable and well documented. I would like to emphasize that the dissertation study concerns a broad area of research, and their main value consists in the detailed description of the obtained results. Generally, the results are well presented, and their interpretation is at a high scientific level. I really appreciate the candidate expertise in the scientific field.

In the final section the general conclusions of the work are summarized. This chapter is well-argued, summarizing the key contributions of the research well, and presenting some thoughtful reflections on the research process and future directions for work in this area. The Author correctly highlights the contribution of the thesis, but the notices its limitations is not included in the thesis, therefore it evokes a question during the academical defending process.

Conclusion

In spite of the above-mentioned minor remarks for academical discussion, this reviewed PhD thesis is clearly the result of great deal of work and the Author demonstrates a good command of the principles of scholarly work. To sum up, this dissertation presents the high level of scientific work:

The thesis research generates significant new knowledge in a scientific area.

The methodology of the thesis scientifically sound and described in a way that allows reproducing.

The thesis demonstrates a solid understanding of the research area and the knowledge of the important and current literature.

The results presented clearly with the appropriate statistical analysis.

The results discussed in relation to the research of others and demonstrate a good understanding of the implications of the work in a broader scientific context.

The candidate’s contribution to the research and publications is sufficiently large to award her with the Candidate of Sciences in Psychology in the field of Social Psychology, Political and Economic Psychology.

For the reasons, I recommend the PhD thesis entitled “Socio-psychological features of mediator’s professional activity” by Uliana A. Udavikhina for acceptance and for a final defense.

Finally, I thank The Saint Petersburg State University, for the possibility to serve as an External Examiner for the thesis of Uliana A. Udavikhina.

Associate Professor Kristi Kõiv, PhD University of Tartu, Estonia

