



Saint Petersburg State University

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Dissertation Thesis Review Report

Author: Tatiana I. Ilina

Title: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON OF EMOTIONAL BURNOUT IN WOMEN ON MATERNITY LEAVE

I thank you for the invitation to review the Ph.D. thesis of Tatiana Ilina which I accept and submit herein the review report as requested.

General comments

The thesis research generates significant new knowledge to investigate a large array of contextual and psychological factors associated with maternal burnout – specifically emotional burnout, in a Russian community-based population in order to contribute to better operationalize the key phenomenon and to explore its determinants. Emotional burnout is vital in the field of Social Psychology, connecting the society to the personal domains of the individual, and explaining its impact in general on psychological health of the vulnerable individuals as women on maternity leave. The topic of thesis is current and relevant in the context of up-to-date research in the relevant theoretical context connected with modern views of complex motherhood as multifaced phenomenon in the society.

PhD thesis is organized in the form of the monographic thesis, in which the PhD student presents her research in the classical format and the thesis resulted in three peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, where the doctoral student is the first author.

This Ph.D. thesis is well structured and correctly presented. The thesis consists of three main chapters, the introduction as the first part of thesis, the part of appendixes (with used questionnaires and some additional numeric results of the statistical analysis) and the bibliography (150 relevant sources, whereby about one quarter are foreign language sources). The Author has studied and used appropriate number of bibliography sources quoted in the thesis. The main text of the thesis is written on 128 pages all together in both a Russian and English part of the dissertation. All the figures and tables are carefully prepared and clearly presented.

The thesis is inspired from both of the theoretical and methodological point of view, whereby both parts of the dissertation – theoretical and empirical, contain original contributions to the field. It is the evidence of the deep theoretical knowledge and good orientation in the problem discussed in the thesis. No major criticism regarding the overall quality of the work I should like to move on to the specific areas of the 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. The hypothesis and arguments are well formulated with meritorious conclusions based on valuable and actual literature.

Chapter one consists in a literature review and has a logical partition of the thesis with five relevant sub-chapters analyzing the body of research and a comprehensive bibliography contains all the relevant papers for the discussed field. This part is well written and provides a good background for understanding the rest of the thesis.

Chapter two is methodological consisting of four sub-chapters. In general, the coverage of the development of the triangulation of data collection through two-stage methodology and integration of research methods is coherent. The most important thing is that the Author succeed in connection of four previously adapted research methods, whereby one of them was modified research method by Author, as integrated whole for analysis of the research material, showing the Author's high level of research expertise and impressive command of empirical methodology.

Nevertheless, concerning the methodological part of the thesis I would like to make two comments. Firstly, the used quantitative research methods have been described in sufficient detail, but the description of the interview methodology will remain superficial, whereby from the point of view of the thesis as a whole, it is questionable to present the results of the interview data in the theoretical part of the work. Secondly, the research procedures are presented without describing the ethic of research and more attention should be paid to more detailed information on the whole research process in relation to the sensitive sample.

Part three consists of nine subchapters, each addressing a specific problem with providing original results of the investigations. The results are well presented with the appropriate statistical analysis and their interpretation is at a high scientific level demonstrating a solid understanding of the research field. Author also highlights the key findings that represent the valuable basis for development of the structural model of her research about emotional burnout.

In general, the presented results are reliable and well documented. I would like to emphasize that the results of the PhD research concern a broad area of research, and their main value consists not only the detailed description of the obtained results, but also contributes to the application of the results in a practical context of prevention and correction with the focus of the risk factors that can be associated with the level of maternal burnout of women on a maternal leave.

Also, I would like to ask the candidate to answer a question during the academical defense process: if the Author of the work can design a study to focus of the protective factors that can be associated with the level of maternal burnout of women on a maternal leave what kind of research design and which methodology she would use?

In the final section of the dissertation the general conclusions of the work are summarized confirming that the formed objectives of the PhD research were successfully obtained. This part of work is well-argued, summarizing the key contributions of the research well, and presenting some thoughtful reflections on the research process and implication possibilities in this area.

Conclusion

In spite of the above-mentioned minor remarks for academical discussion, this PhD thesis is clearly the result of great deal of work and much effort has been devoted to deliver a high-quality thesis bringing new evidence and a commendable effort to expand the parental burnout literature and empirical research, specifically in the area of examining motherhood as a multifaceted and complex process in which a woman on parental leaves can lead to emotional burnout rooted in social interactions.

To summarize, this thesis is worth to note that the Author has studied carefully research subject with scientific critical view. It is an evident fact that Tatiana Ilina deeply understood the topic of discussed problems. The reviewed thesis fulfils all requirements aimed for obtaining PhD degree and this thesis is ready to be defended orally, in front of respective committee.

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

Associate Professor Kristi Kõiv, PhD University of Tartu, Estonia