Review

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krasimir Ivanov

for a dissertation on the topic:

"Mediation and Settlement in the Process of Psychological Conflict Resolution"

PhD student: Maria-Stefka Dimitrova

Supervisor: Prof. Mayana Mitevska, Ph.D

professional field 3.2 "**Psychology**"

PhD program "**General Psychology**"

The presented work is dedicated to the topic of comprehensive designation, multifaceted and difficult to explain unambiguously – conflicts.

It is all-encompassing because it extends to all spheres of life, multifaceted because it is refracted through individual understanding and the prism of emotional response, difficult to explain due to the "rightness" of all parties involved in the conflict situation.

For some time now, professionals in the field of psychological knowledge and practice have been carefully and cautiously studying the complex aspects of conflict.

However, this freed up the field for a more elementary reading of this complex matter by people with a simpler training in the field of psychology and led to the profanization of the understanding of conflicts, their development, diagnostic clarification and overcoming.

The PhD student Dimitrova and her supervisor have changed this trivial perspective and presented a serious scientific study with a very detailed theoretical basis, conducted professionally and skillfully empirical research and achieved results with an undeniable practical contribution to the process of overcoming conflicts.

In the theoretical part of the work, a serious theoretical review of the origin, causes and dynamics of conflicts is made. Special attention is paid to the methods of prevention in an organizational environment and to the psychological essence of mediation, including its application in employment relations.

The thesis defended asserts that psychological overcoming of conflicts through mediation is a process that should be built on the diagnosis of the personality characteristics of the participants. The inclusion of methods for assessing the locus of control in the practice of the mediator has the potential to help adapt the negotiation approach and achieve more sustainable and satisfactory

agreements by addressing the psychological prerequisites of conflict behavior. The effect of this approach should be verified through real intervention research.

A theoretical model is presented, working hypotheses are derived and the tools used, including an author's questionnaire and a description of the studied sample, are detailed.

In the conducted research, the doctoral student Dimitrova has set herself the task to diagnose and compare the personality profiles, social orientations, localization of control and negotiation styles of mediators and their clients.

The study itself was conducted exactly and includes - the actual research part and the statistical analysis of the results.

The main objective of the dissertation research is achieved - to study the relationship between the localization of control and the perceived conflict in an organizational environment, to analyze the influence of demographic factors and on this basis to substantiate the applied potential of mediation and to develop differentiated strategies in accordance with the psychological profile of the participants.

The localization of control is studied (according to the method of Velichkov and Radoslavova) and an in-depth psychological analysis of the correlations between the educational qualification, the locus of control and the levels of conflict in the organization is made.

The reliability of the study and the internal structure of the questionnaire are checked. It is focused on the applied role of mediation. The stages of work in restorative mediation programs are outlined, the professional tools of the mediator are analyzed and a conceptual framework for conflict resolution through restorative practices is presented.

Appropriate tools for the study have been selected, using a multimethodological undercurrent, including a theoretical method for

comparative analysis of the literature, a deductive and inductive approach in formulating the concept of mediation and a psychometric method.

The results are clearly presented and explained in an understandable way.

The presented contributions include proving the relationship between the locus of control and the effectiveness of mediation in the Bulgarian organizational context, an adapted concept of "Restorative mediation" in labor disputes and can be summarized through:

Theoretical significance: Enriching the knowledge about the role of personality dispositions (locus of control) in the genesis and dynamics of organizational conflicts. Deriving a psychological profile of the conflict personality.

Practical significance: Development of criteria for diagnosing the conflictogenic environment and differentiated mediation strategies that have the potential to help increase the resilience of agreements and improve the psychological climate in organizations.

The scientific novelty is expressed in the association of organizational conflict with the locus of control and in the derivation of differentiated mediation strategies according to the internal or external orientation of the participants. This allows mediation to be conceptualized as a psychologically sensitive and personalized process, and not as a uniform procedure for all parties to the conflict.

As an effect for the practice, there is the development of professional tools for mediators, focused on the psychological support of the parties.

The attached abstract fully reflects the dissertation development. The publications are in the field of dissertation research.

In conclusion, I propose to the Honorable Jury to award the degree of Doctor to Mriya-Stefka Dimitrova for her dissertation on the topic "Mediation and reaching agreements in the process of psychological overcoming conflicts"

Varna

01.10. 2026 Assoc. Prof. Krasimir Ivanov,M.D.,Ph.D.