

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Applicant

Mgr. et Mgr. Václav Linkov, Ph.D.

Habilitation thesis

Cultural diversity in cultural-comparative psychological research and factors influencing it

Reviewer

Jüri Allik, PhD, Professor

**Reviewer's home unit,
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Institute of Psychology, University of Tartu, Estonia

This is a great honour and privilege for me to review Václav Linkov's habilitation thesis.

For my report I read carefully the Habilitation Thesis, which includes reprints of 9 articles. I also have a pleasant opportunity to meet Václav Linkov many times in person and discuss many topics covered by his Thesis. All this has convinced me that he is a very knowledgeable and competent researcher, who is interested in topics of cultural-comparative psychology having his unique outlook on it.

Perhaps there is no need to analyse all papers included to the habilitation thesis, however some observations and ideas deserve special mentioning. Article #2 is an excellent criticism of studies demonstrating that openness to experience is connected to a higher number of personal pronouns in an essay written by the subject. The observed link is easily misinterpreted if different cultural norms are ignored. For example, in some cultures it is impolite to use personal pronouns when speaking about older people or people with higher status. Open people, as Linkov notices, follow the rules of politeness to a lesser degree than less open people. This is indeed a very good example how a "mechanical" interpretation, which is not culturally informed, could lead to a serious mistake.

Article #3 "Research based on scientific realism should not make preliminary assumptions about mathematical structure representing human behavior" entertains a very interesting idea that quantitative psychological research needs to consider how numbers are used and interpreted in the studied cultures. One implication is that the structure of a mathematical or any quantitative description cannot be chosen properly without properly understating the phenomenon to which it is applied. Thus, the culture's quantitative base is one aspect of cultural diversity, which cannot be ignored.

Article #4 "Tokenism in psychology" is also very interesting. Tokenism is when someone who has a distinctive characteristic related to some field is erroneously considered to be expert in a much broader field. For example, a person might be considered to be knowledgeable about much larger sets of cultures, like the whole region to which this culture belongs. The person does not need to have good knowledge about other countries and cultures in this region. If this person is considered an expert on the region due to this token and they are asked to design cross-cultural comparative research for this region, it might lead to the creation of a design that portrays the region as sharing common psychological/cultural characteristics. Consequently, the research might fail to show the actual cultural diversity in the region.

Although hypothetical, this study provides a good example how distortions can emerge in views of cultural experts.

Although strictly in terms of bibliometrics, Václav Linkov's impact has been relatively modest. During writing this report, his profile in the Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=dP7dUVYAAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>) demonstrates that his papers were cited 187 times h-index equals 7. This number indicates, first of all, that his interests are mainly outside the mainstream. It is not surprising that in his thesis the WEIRD movement is sympathetically referred, because the mainstream psychology is primarily occupied with participants from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic countries. Although nowadays many cross-cultural psychologists have never been involved in old-fashioned field-work, Václav Linkov is an exception. He has learned languages, which are very different from European and also studied and lived in Non-Western countries.

Although the most cited paper (44 times) was on a different topic "Human factors in the cybersecurity of autonomous vehicles" (Frontiers in Psychology, 2019, IF=4.2), this serves as an indicator of the author's range of interests and competencies. Majority of studies included to the thesis were published in the prestigious international journals such as *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, *Theory & Psychology*, and *Human Affairs*.

Overall, Václav Linkov is a competent researcher well-qualified to work in the area of cultural-comparative psychology. Ability to think laterally to the mainstream tradition is certainly not his weakness rather than a strength, which could open new prospects for understanding cultural diversity.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

Anthropologists have noticed that many cultures use the binary principle. Georges Dumézil, however, proposed that the trifunctional partition better describes the mental world of the Indo-Europeans. Any thoughts if different numerical principles governing the mental world could determine different quantitative descriptions better fitting these principles.

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled Cultural diversity in cultural-comparative psychological research and factors influencing it by Mgr. et Mgr. Václav Linkov, Ph.D. **fulfills** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Psychology.

Date: June 23, 2023

Signature: