



BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Institute for Human and Population Studies

Department of Psychology

Abstract of dissertation thesis of Kalina Venelinova Krumova

The dissertation examines the influence of social and psychological factors on the risky driving behavior and aims to create prerequisites for the generation of new policies and innovative prevention in the field of road safety based on scientific data and analysis in the field of traffic psychology.

The first chapter provides a theoretical overview of current research in the field of traffic psychology, analyzing the main factors that provoke risky driving - personal, cognitive and social characteristics, as well as factors of the social environment. The attitudes and risky driving behavior are thoroughly studied. The focus of research interest is on certain social factors that determine the risky driving behavior. The subject of empirical study is the influence of other road users, the influence of the family environment, peer pressure as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of the drivers.

The second chapter presents the formulation of the empirical study, analysis and interpretation of the results obtained. A scientifically substantiated goal of the empirical study has been formulated - to analyze the role of socio-psychological factors and related differences for committing disorders and risky driving behavior. Seven research tasks have been set for its achievement. Seven hypotheses have been formulated to be verified. The conceptual model of the study and the methodologies used are presented, which include a Questionnaire to study the socio-psychological factors that influence risky driving behavior as a prerequisite for road accidents (Hristova, Krumova), The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), as well as a Sociodemographic Data Block. The model applied is representative with a calculated sample size of $n = 415$ units with criteria for selection of units of study by gender, age and location.

The results of the empirical study support the assumption that there are different aspects of attitudes and behavior on the road across different gender, age, education, geographical location of the drivers, and different relationships between these aspects. We have found that risky driving in Bulgaria is determined by age and

gender, but is typical of young men. The results show that there is a considerable amount of knowledge about the problems of young drivers and there are increasing challenges in researching the risky driving behavior of older people. Risky driving, as well as the driving behavior that impedes and disturbs other road users, also depends on the size of the city and applies especially to large cities. We found that peer pressure is a stronger predictor, which more predetermines committing road disorders from the influence of the family environment, and its influence varies with age.

As a general conclusion from our theoretical review of the relevant scientific literature and empirical research, we conclude that the study of social factors influencing the risky driving behavior in Bulgaria should continue and be deepened in many different aspects of its manifestation and the possibilities for prevention and impact. The lack of any scientific development in the field of traffic psychology in our country so far is a prerequisite for the failure of policies and activities in the field of road safety, both as an institutional activity and as insufficient knowledge and awareness of the problem by the public.

The main contributions of the dissertation thesis are related to the restoration after a long interruption of the research into the psychological reasons for the risky behavior on the road, a new methodology developed and tested for Bulgarian conditions. It is particularly important to note that in the studies of the problem up to now, the factor “influence of the size of the city” did not exist. Our results identify the size of the city as an important factor in shaping certain attitudes and risky driving behavior. The scientific results of the dissertation have important practical benefits for road safety interventions. These results identify the importance of exploring the underlying mechanisms for each risky driving behavior for different age groups of drivers and are a reliable scientific basis for policy making and prevention in the field of road safety.