

## **REVIEW**

of **Tetiana Khvalyboha**,

Professor, DSc (Education),

Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages

I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University

of the **thesis**

**Professional Training of Masters in Music Therapy at Universities of the USA**

written by

**Li Shanyin**

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the specialty 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences

### **1. Topicality of the performed work and its connection with the relevant plans of the branches of science**

The 21st century has brought with it both remarkable advancements in science and technology and an escalating array of challenges related to the mental and physical health of populations worldwide. These challenges, which have been amplified by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing military conflicts, highlight the urgent need for innovative therapeutic methods capable of addressing diverse and complex health issues. Music therapy, which utilizes musical interventions to achieve therapeutic outcomes, has emerged as a particularly effective approach in this context. It is a versatile therapy that improves emotional well-being, enhances social adaptation, and helps maintain cognitive and physical functions. Given the rising levels of stress and anxiety, the demand for qualified music therapy professionals is growing, especially in countries like Ukraine, where a shortage of trained specialists is evident. The lack of specialized training programs in music therapy further exacerbates this issue, underscoring the need for the development of comprehensive educational structures to prepare skilled practitioners in the field.

The relevance of this thesis is especially significant for Ukraine, as there is currently no formal program in the country dedicated to training music therapists. Such a program would play a vital role in the development of psychosocial and medical care systems, while also addressing the need for qualified specialists in the field. Furthermore, the thesis presents a comparative study of the music therapy education systems in the United States and Ukraine. This comparative approach provides an opportunity to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each system and explore potential pathways for integrating international best practices into Ukraine's educational landscape.

The research is particularly valuable as it focuses on the education system in the United States, which has seen significant developments in recent years. The inclusion of recent data on music therapy education in the U.S. makes the findings of this study highly relevant and up-to-date, reflecting the latest trends and approaches in training music therapists.

Therefore, the timeliness and importance of Li Shanyin's thesis is underscored not only by the need to address the shortage of trained music therapists in Ukraine but also

by its contribution to understanding the current state of music therapy education in the United States and its potential integration into Ukrainian higher education. The findings of this research will be instrumental in shaping future educational frameworks and policy decisions in Ukraine, ultimately supporting the development of a professional music therapy workforce.

The topic of Li Shanyin's thesis Professional Training of Masters in Music Therapy at Universities of the USA corresponds to the topic of scientific work Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Personal and Professional Development of a Modern Specialist in the Conditions of Integration into the International Educational Space carried out at the Department of Pedagogics and Innovative Education at Lviv Polytechnic National University (number of state registration 0121U113179).

The topic of this thesis was approved (Minutes № 3/22 dated 24.10.2022) at the meetings of the Academic Council of the Institute of Jurisprudence, Psychology and Innovative Education of Lviv Polytechnic National University.

## **2. The most significant scientific results contained in the thesis**

Evaluating the most important achievements of the qualification research work presented for our review, first of all, we would like to note those that contribute greatly to the development of Music Therapy education, particularly in the context of Ukraine. Specifically, the analysis and justification of the theoretical and methodological foundations for training Music Therapy specialists provides a solid framework for further research. Additionally, the exploration of the content of professional training for Music Therapy masters, viewed through the lens of American societal needs, offers valuable insights. The characterization of organizational forms and teaching methods, as well as the study of the practical aspects of Music Therapy training, are crucial contributions to understanding how to effectively prepare future professionals. Furthermore, the comparative analysis between the experiences of the United States and Ukraine, along with the proposed directions for integrating beneficial elements from the American system into Ukraine's higher education framework, is a significant step toward enhancing the quality of Music Therapy education in Ukraine.

## **3. New facts obtained by the dissertator**

Analysing the results of Li Shanyin's scientific research, we can state that most of the author's achievements have scientific novelty. *For the first time*, a comprehensive analysis of the professional training of masters in Music Therapy at US universities was conducted. The theoretical and methodological foundations of the professional training of music therapy specialists *were analysed and substantiated*, including behaviourism, cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, and connectivism, as well as methodological approaches such as competency-based, activity-based, personality-oriented, cultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative. The content of the professional training of masters in Music Therapy, which is practically oriented and aims at developing the ability to: carry out client diagnostics; integrate knowledge about the cultural diversity of clients; jointly develop an effective and clear support plan through diagnosis of customer needs and selection of measures; use knowledge and resources to organize therapeutic care; communicate; maintain clinical documentation, etc., *was analysed*. The

organizational forms (interactive lectures, seminars, educational conferences, research training, etc.) and teaching methods (reverse brainstorming, concept mapping, collaborative learning, service-learning, problem-based learning, distributed learning, project-based learning, etc.) *were characterized*. The specifics of the practical component of the professional training of masters in Music Therapy *were examined*. Based on a comparison of the experiences of the two countries, directions for the implementation of constructive ideas from the American experience into the system of higher education in Ukraine *were defined and justified* at the strategic, organizational, methodological, and research levels.

The *content of the concepts* “Music Therapy,” “music therapist,” and “Music Therapy curriculum” *was clarified*.

The understanding of the concepts within the field of higher Music Therapy education, as well as the features of master’s training in Music Therapy and the organization of both theoretical and practical training, *was enhanced and expanded*.

The theses regarding the organization of master’s training in Music Therapy, in alignment with modern theories and substantiated methodological approaches, *were further developed*.

#### **4. The degree of validity of the scientific statements, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis**

Analysis of the thesis content and related publications provides grounds to conclude that the scientific statements, conclusions, and recommendations are well-substantiated and reliable. The need for research on the professional training of music therapists in Ukraine has been justified by several contradictions, such as: 1) the gap between society’s demand for music therapy specialists who can provide high-quality services to various segments of the population and the lack of professional training programs for music therapists in many countries, including Ukraine; 2) the existing trends in higher music therapy education development and the insufficient legislative, substantive, and methodological support for training future music therapists; 3) the necessity of a comprehensive analysis of the American experience in music therapy and the insufficient level of its analysis in pedagogical comparative studies.

The application of a range of research methods, including theoretical methods (descriptive and comparative methods, induction and deduction, analytical, logical, historical, and prognostic methods) and applied methods (content analysis), has led to reliable results and successful achievement of the research objectives.

The validity and originality of the research conclusions are supported by the thorough analysis of a significant amount of scientific literature, pedagogical documents, and the practical implementation of the research results into the educational process of several Ukrainian higher education institutions.

The thesis has been conducted at a high scientific level. The research topic is clearly defined, with well-formulated object, subject, aims, and objectives. The abstract succinctly summarizes the key points and conclusions of the thesis. The scientific findings and conclusions of the research have been widely presented at international scientific conferences and are fully discussed in the author’s scientific publications.

Li Shanyin's thesis undoubtedly demonstrates a high scientific level, relevance, completeness, and practical significance, all of which confirm the dissertator's in-depth investigation of the issue, as well as the scientific validity of the results, objectives, and conclusions presented.

## **5. Significance for science and practice of the author's obtained results**

The theoretical and practical significance of the research lies in the fact that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this thesis offer valuable contributions to the field of music therapy education, particularly in the context of Ukraine. The research results can be used to enhance and refine the educational process in higher education institutions, especially in courses such as "Comparative Pedagogy", "Actual Problems of the Theory and History of Pedagogy", "Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Professional Education", "Special Seminar: Actual Problems of Modern Pedagogical Education", "Psychology", and "Psychological Counselling with the Basics of Psychotherapy". Moreover, the research provides a solid foundation for developing and implementing the ideas drawn from the American experience in the training of future music therapists. These ideas can be further utilized in the creation of new educational programs, the revision of existing curricula, and the development of higher education standards in Ukraine.

In addition, the research results have already been integrated into the academic activities of several higher education institutions, including Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Stepan Gzhytskyi National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies of Lviv, Mukachevo State University, and Lviv Polytechnic National University.

## **6. Recommendations for the use of the results and conclusions of the thesis**

The main findings of the thesis can be applied to further research on the professional training of music therapists in Ukraine, particularly in the context of higher education. It is undoubtedly valuable for Ukrainian universities to explore new opportunities for integrating the American experience in Music Therapy into educational practices, as well as expanding academic exchanges between institutions. This can foster the development of new educational programs, enhance professional training for music therapists, and contribute to the creation of academic mobility initiatives for students and faculty. Furthermore, the results can be used to refine curriculum design, improve teaching methodologies, and support the introduction of best practices in music therapy training across Ukraine.

## **7. Assessment of the content of the thesis and its completeness**

Li Shanyin's thesis is a complete academic paper with a clear structure and sequence content of scientific statements, which correspond to the purpose and logical solution of the research objectives. The thesis consists of the introduction, three chapters, conclusion to each chapter, general conclusions, references, which include 312 items, as well as 10 appendices. The content of the work, supported by visual aids such as figures and appendices, along with clear conclusions and generalizations, clearly demonstrates the high level of validity of the scientific findings and the overall quality of the research.

The first chapter, *Theoretical and Methodological Fundamentals of Music Therapists' Professional Training*, explores the professional training of music therapists, focusing on the theoretical foundations and methodological approaches in their education. It thoroughly reviews key areas of scientific development, including the history and current state of Music Therapy training, and the international experience in this field. The chapter highlights the application of educational theories like behaviourism, cognitive and social constructivism, and connectivism, as well as key methodological approaches such as competency-based, activity-based, personality-oriented, cultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative approaches to professional training.

The second chapter, *The Organization of Professional Training of Masters in Music Therapy in US Universities*, comprehensively examines the professional activity and requirements for music therapists in the US, focusing on the master's level education. It discusses the content, forms, and methods of training, emphasizing a continuous and comprehensive learning process aimed at developing both professional competence and socially significant personal qualities. The chapter highlights the interdisciplinary, practice-oriented approach of the educational programs, which are aligned with national standards set by the American Music Therapy Association. Key components include diagnostic skills, cultural awareness, client-centred care, and ethical behaviour. Various teaching models, including traditional and innovative methods, are used to promote cognitive, intellectual, and practical skills. The chapter also outlines the importance of clinical practice, research, and internships, with graduates gaining employment in diverse sectors such as healthcare, education, and social services.

The third chapter, *The Possibilities of Using the Constructive Ideas of the American Experience of Training Masters in Music Therapy in Ukrainian Educational Practice*, explores the current state of Music Therapy education in Ukraine, emphasizing the lack of formal master's programs in this field. A detailed and well-reasoned comparative analysis with the American system highlights the potential for integrating American educational models into Ukraine's higher education framework. The chapter identifies the absence of specialized Music Therapy programs in Ukrainian universities and discusses how Music Therapy is currently incorporated into broader programs like psychology, art therapy, and social work. The chapter also underscores the need for a more interdisciplinary approach and the development of dedicated Music Therapy programs in Ukraine. Drawing from the American experience, it suggests three potential pathways for integration: modular changes, the introduction of American models, and the development of holistic educational approaches. The chapter concludes with a compelling recommendation for the creation of Music Therapy programs that combine elements of physical therapy and ergotherapy, aligning with both national traditions and modern American trends in Music Therapy education.

In the general conclusions, Li Shanyin effectively presented the results, demonstrating that the set objectives were successfully accomplished.

## **8. Discussion points, recommendations and comments on the content of the thesis**

In general, while the scientific and practical significance of the results is greatly appreciated, there are some points for discussion and suggestions regarding the content of the work:

1. In the first chapter, the author distinguishes between the *interdisciplinary* and *integrative* approaches. However, the differences between the two could be made more explicit. Although the distinction is mentioned, the exact boundaries between these two concepts remain somewhat vague. Additionally, although the text thoughtfully emphasizes the benefits of both approaches, it could further benefit from addressing potential challenges or pitfalls in applying these methods to Music Therapy education. Adding more detail about these aspects could elevate the chapter to offer an even more nuanced and comprehensive perspective.

2. The second chapter introduces *musical* versus *clinical* improvisation and describes them separately. However, the difference is somewhat confusing, especially for readers unfamiliar with music therapy practices. A more precise explanation of how these two forms of improvisation function within the therapeutic context could provide greater clarity.

3. The text mentions the importance of educational programs in Music Therapy being accredited by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). However, it could further explain the significance of this accreditation, particularly in terms of its role in professional certification. Adding more detail about AMTA's role in setting professional standards or providing accreditation could enhance the text's informational depth.

4. In the third chapter, the author offers a thorough and well-structured set of recommendations for the professional training of masters in Music Therapy. The chapter includes a substantial amount of descriptive content regarding the proposed recommendations and their application. However, the thesis would benefit from incorporating visual elements, such as tables or charts, to summarize key points like the differences between the Ukrainian and American systems or the three proposed options for adopting American experiences.

5. The linguistic and stylistic aspects of the thesis fully align with the conventions of academic writing, showcasing careful attention to detail. However, there are some minor punctuation and spelling errors present.

## **9. Completeness coverage of results in publications**

The main findings and results of the thesis are sufficiently presented in 8 publications by the author, 6 of which are individual contributions. These include 4 articles in journals listed in the specialized scientific publications of Ukraine, as well as 4 works that certify the approbation of the thesis materials at scientific and practical conferences.

## **10. Conclusion**

To sum up, the reviewed Li Shanyin's thesis on the topic "Professional Training of Masters in Music Therapy at Universities of the USA" is an independent and complete

academic paper. It has solved a number of scientific problems and obtained the findings containing scientific novelty, theoretical and practical value for pedagogical science and practice.


We affirm that Li Shanyin's thesis deserves a positive assessment and meets the requirements of the Order On Approval of Requirements for Thesis Formatting (as amended) No. 40 of 12 January 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Procedure for Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Cancellation of the Decision of a One-time Specialised Academic Council of a Higher Education Institution or Research Institution to Award the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No.44 of 12 January 2022). Its author Li Shanyin deserves the award of the scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences, field of knowledge 01 Education/Pedagogy.

**Reviewer:**

Professor, DSc (Education),  
Professor of the Department of  
Foreign Languages  
I. Horbachevsky Ternopil  
National Medical University

  
\_\_\_\_\_ Tetiana KHVALLYBOHA

**Scientific Secretary**  
I. Horbachevsky Ternopil  
National Medical University

  
\_\_\_\_\_ Illya HERASYMYUK

Особистий підпис   
Заступник ректора з кадрів та питань  
Тернопільського національного  
медичного університету



