

REVIEW

by Prof. Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD, from Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

of the thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor'

in: Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences

Professional field 3.2. Psychology

Doctoral programme in Educational and Developmental Psychology

Author: Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova

Topic: “Self-Esteem, Subjective Well-Being, and Flourishing among Adolescents Studying in Traditional and Innovative Education Systems”

Academic Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova – Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

1. General Description of the Submitted Materials

By Order No. RD-21-1358/25.06.2024 of the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU), I am an appointed member of the scientific jury carrying out the defense procedure of the thesis on the topic of “Self-Esteem, Subjective Well-Being, and Flourishing among Adolescents Studying in Traditional and Innovative Education Systems”, for the purpose of acquiring the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor' in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral programme in Pedagogical and Developmental Psychology. The author of the thesis is Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova – a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychology, supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova.

The materials submitted by Teodora Pampulova in paper format comply with Article 36 (1) of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU and include the following documents:

- a request to the Rector of PU for initiating the thesis defense procedure;
- a curriculum vitae in European format;
- a protocol from the department council reporting readiness to initiate the procedure and preliminary discussion of the thesis;
- Thesis;
- a summary of the thesis;

- List of scientific publications on the thesis topic;
- Copies of scientific publications;
- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the documents attached.

The doctoral candidate has attached five publications.

2. Brief Biographical Information about the Doctoral Candidate

Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova was born in 1985. In 2012, she obtained a BSc in Psychology, qualifying as a psychologist and a teacher of psychology. Furthermore, in 2013, she completed an MSc in counselling from PU. In 2015, she obtained a second Master's degree in Social Mediation and Communication from PU. Her doctoral studies began on 1st March, 2021, when she was enrolled in a full-time Pedagogical and Developmental Psychology doctoral programme in the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Education at PU. During her studies, she responsibly carried out all activities included in the individualised syllabus for the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor', and successfully passed all the exams specified in said syllabus. In 2024, T. Pampulova was discharged with the right to defend her thesis before a jury.

Teodora Pampulova has professional experience as a school psychologist and educational counsellor at "Ivan Vazov" Language School, Plovdiv, as well as other schools. She currently works as a child psychologist in a private practice, providing psychological assistance and support to children up to 18 years old, parents, as well as offering training and seminars. At Plovdiv University, she works on a freelance basis and teaches seminars as a practicing psychologist as part of a module on "Positive Parenting". She has authored several books for parents, such as the "Handbook for Dealing with Monsters, Dinosaurs, and Other Scary Things" and "Nursery School - A Happy Place", in addition to books for teenagers - "A Confident Child". She is the Plovdiv regional coordinator for the Bulgarian Psychological Society.

The CV presented shows the doctoral candidate's consistent interest in psychological topics regarding childhood and adolescence, which is reflected in her approach to selecting the topic of the thesis research – the well-being of adolescents in an educational environment.

3. Topic Relevance and Appropriateness of the Goals and Objectives Set

Teodora Pampulova's thesis is dedicated to researching self-esteem, subjective well-being, and flourishing among adolescents who are educated differently in school. The problem is relevant

both scientifically and practically, as an attempt is made to expand scientific knowledge in the field of Adolescent developmental psychology, Positive psychology, and Educational psychology. In terms of practice, the topic is relevant as a potential way to improve the mental well-being of children and adolescents in the educational sphere. Teodora Pampulova has aimed to study the parameters of self-esteem, subjective well-being, and flourishing among adolescents in secondary school age, from year 8 to year 10, educated using an innovative educational model, and to investigate possible interrelations between these constructs. In light of this, it is interesting and challenging to empirically study the influence of a given educational innovation, in this case, "One Device-One Student", on the mental health and well-being of students.

4. Familiarity with the Problem

Teodora Pampulova is familiar with the state of the problem and has creatively reviewed the literature on the subject matter.

5. Research Methods

The research methods chosen have allowed Teodora Pampulova to achieve the goal that was set, and obtain an adequate answer to the tasks addressed in the thesis. Three instruments were utilized:

1. **The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** – Bulgarian standardization by Margarita Dilova, Eva Papazova, and Metodi Koralov. The scale features 10 items that track attitudes towards the self and how it is experienced by an individual. One can determine one's self-worth based on personal values and beliefs.
2. **The Subjective Well-Being and Relationships in Adolescence Scale (SWRA)** – a short Bulgarian version, tested on a Bulgarian sample and standardized by Plamen Kalchev (2014). It is a brief, economical, and easy-to-use self-report questionnaire designed for students aged from V to XI grade (11-17). It can be used on groups or individually, and takes about 10 minutes. Results are interpreted based on the overall subjective well-being score and the way the components of mental well-being are configured. The overall indicator of Subjective Well-Being is calculated from the sum of Self-Esteem + Positive Attitude Towards Life + Depressive Mood (with an

inverse sign, i.e., all items are recoded before being included in the Subjective Well-Being indicator).

3. **Diener's Flourishing Scale** – Bulgarian standardization by Plamen Kalchev. This is an 8-item scale designed to measure the overall global assessment of respondents' life satisfaction. An emphasis is placed on the cognitive evaluation of experiences in significant areas of existence. Originally, the Flourishing Scale is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 7, being "strongly agree", to 1, being "strongly disagree". Due to the specifics of studying adolescents, the original 7-point scale was reduced to a 4-point scale for the purposes of this thesis.

6. Characteristics and Assessment of the Thesis

This thesis consists of 221 pages and includes: an introduction, three parts, a discussion, a conclusion, references, and appendices. The theoretical and empirical parts are well-balanced. The study cites 282 references, a significant portion of which are recent publications. The doctoral candidate has explored psychological research conducted in Bulgaria as well.

The first part consists of a literature review, analysing the theory on the topic of the thesis. It focuses on four main aspects: the study of self-esteem, mental well-being, flourishing, and the presentation of innovative educational systems. The author has conducted a thorough analysis of the theories and approaches to studying self-esteem, whilst addressing various aspects of the research on this construct. Special attention was paid to changes in self-esteem during adolescence. The views of various authors such as James, Hartur, Kernis, and others have been presented. The construct of mental well-being was thoroughly analyzed as well. Theoretical frameworks with a focus on empirical confirmations (Diener, Ryff, Seligman, and others) have been provided. Flourishing was examined in light of the theories of Keyes, Bakracheva, Lippman, and others. A review of innovative educational systems was conducted, with a detailed examination of the 1:1 Model - "One Student - One Device". Studies by Rockman, Penuel, and others, which present both positive and negative aspects of the implementation of this method in many schools worldwide, have been analyzed.

The second part describes the design of the study, outlining its aim, seven tasks, its subject and object, as well as five hypotheses. A total of 486 adolescents took part in this study. They were

divided into two groups: an experimental group with 238 individuals and a control group with 248 individuals. Students from year 8 and year 10 from three different schools were studied.

The third part of the thesis is dedicated to analysing the research results. The analysis was conducted in several stages: utilizing descriptive statistics; processing the instruments used and verifying their reliability; examining the influence of sociodemographic factors on the levels of constructs through a series of one-way ANOVA and t-tests; as well as examining the interrelationships between the studied constructs, by using correlation and regression analyses.

In the study, Teodora Pampulova posits the following five main hypotheses:

1. It is assumed that statistically significant differences in self-esteem levels will be discovered among adolescents (8th and 10th grades) depending on the characteristics of the educational system – traditional (without Chromebooks), and innovative (using the 1:1 Model).
2. It is assumed that statistically significant differences in the level of subjective well-being will be discovered among adolescents (8th and 10th grades) depending on the characteristics of the educational system – traditional (without Chromebooks), and innovative (using the 1:1 Model).
3. It is assumed that statistically significant differences in the level of flourishing will be discovered among adolescents (8th and 10th grades) depending on the characteristics of the educational system – traditional (without Chromebooks), and innovative (using the 1:1 Model).
4. It is assumed that correlational relationships between some of the constructs (self-esteem, subjective well-being, and flourishing) will be discovered.
5. It is assumed that each of the constructs will correlate with at least one of the subscales of the Questionnaire for Subjective Well-Being and Relationships in Adolescence, in both the control and experimental groups.

The results and their analysis indicate that the first hypothesis was not confirmed. The comparative analysis of the mean values of self-esteem based on the Rosenberg Scale for the two participant groups showed that the difference is -0.17051, which is not statistically significant. Thus, in the study, the self-esteem of students (8th and 10th grades) does not differ significantly between traditional and innovative education systems.

Regarding the assessment of subjective well-being, it was discovered that the differences between the mean values for the two groups of students (experimental and control) are not statistically significant. The second hypothesis was not confirmed.

Regarding the third hypothesis, it was found that there were statistically significant differences in the level of flourishing among adolescents depending on the characteristics of the educational system – traditional (without Chromebooks), and innovative (with the 1:1 Model). The third hypothesis was confirmed. This is a very interesting finding obtained in this study and likely requires additional analysis and research.

The fourth hypothesis was also confirmed. In the experimental group, a relationship was found between the results from the Flourishing Scale and those based on the Subjective Well-Being Scale.

By testing three sub-hypotheses, Teodora Pampulova was seeking confirmation of the fifth assumption related to a correlation with at least one of the subscales of the Questionnaire for Subjective Well-Being and Relationships in Adolescence. The analysis confirmed this hypothesis. The results obtained from the experimental group allow the following conclusions:

Based on the Rosenberg Scale, self-esteem cultivated during adolescence correlates with the following components: Positive Attitude, Closeness with Parents, Peer Acceptance, Trustful Communication, in addition to the absence of depressive mood, misfortunes and negative attitude from classmates.

Subjective Well-Being has a very strong positive correlation with Positive Attitude and a very strong negative correlation with Depressive Mood. Significant positive correlations are observed with Closeness with Parents, Peer Acceptance, and Trustful Communication.

Flourishing has positive correlational relationships with the following components of the instrument for studying subjective well-being and relationships in adolescence: Subjective Well-Being, Overall Self-Esteem, Positive Attitude, Closeness with Parents, Peer Acceptance. Negative correlations were observed with Depressive Mood and Problems in Relationships with Peers.

7. Contributions and Significance of the Work to Science and Practice

To sum up, Teodora Pampulova's thesis contributes scientifically and practically by conducting an original study on self-esteem, subjective well-being, and flourishing in adolescents taught using either traditional or innovative models. The research offers a more comprehensive understanding of the attempt to implement particular educational innovations, which affects not only the development of students' intellect and competencies, but also their mental health and well-being. The scientific contributions reflected in the content of the thesis can be summarized as follows:

1. Contemporary views on self-esteem, subjective well-being, and flourishing in adolescents were interpreted based on a comprehensive theoretical analysis. Both fundamental classical and contemporary models and approaches, related to innovative educational systems, were conceptualized and scientifically interpreted.
2. A systematic review was presented of numerous empirical studies related to the constructs examined in this thesis.
3. An original empirical study was conducted in Bulgaria, in the scientific field of the researched problem, concerning the interrelationships between mental health constructs and the type of educational system.
4. While empirically studying the development of the constructs in adolescents, certain specifics emerged.
5. Empirical data provide a basis for incorporating specific activities in the development of educational policies when implementing innovative models and applications in Bulgarian education, with the aim of promoting positive mental development and health.

8. Evaluation of Publications Related to the Thesis

A total of 5 publications were presented for review. All of them are standalone articles by T. Pampulova and are in Bulgarian. Two of these are articles in "Doctoral Studies" – a scientific journal for doctoral students at the Faculty of Education in PU. One publication is an article in a collection of reports from the national scientific-practical Psychology conference held by the Bulgarian School of Psychoanalysis in Varna, 2022. Two of the publications are articles in collections from the tenth and eleventh student Science forums at the Faculty of Education in PU. In terms of content, all publications are related to the topic of the thesis research.

9. Personal Involvement of the Doctoral Student

I believe that the research done for this thesis was personally conducted by the doctoral student, Teodora Pampulova. I further assert that the contributions that have been formulated and the results obtained through the writing process are her personal achievement.

10. Summary of Thesis

The summary of this thesis adheres to the requirements and reflects the main results achieved in the thesis.

11. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I have no critical remarks that would significantly impact the review. I recommend that T. Pampulova continues her diligent work in the field of child and adolescent psychology and pedagogy.

12. Personal Impressions

I have known Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova since 2008, when she was a Psychology student. My opinion of her is positive. She is responsible, organized, loyal, innovative, and communicative.

13. Recommendations for Future Use of Thesis Contributions and Results

I recommend that she publish scientific articles and a monograph on the topic.

Based on my competence, I did not find any texts that could be classified as plagiarism, and during the period of working on this review, I did not receive any signals regarding such issues.

CONCLUSION

The thesis contains scientific, applied, and practical results that represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDSAB), the Rules for the Application of LDSAB, and the relevant Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The thesis demonstrates that Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova has theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific field of educational and developmental psychology. Moreover, she has demonstrated that she has the qualities and skills necessary for conducting independent scientific research.

For the above reasons, I firmly give my positive assessment for the conducted research, as presented in the reviewed thesis, abstract, results, and contributions, and ***I recommend that the esteemed academic jury award the educational and scientific degree of ‘Doctor’ to Teodora Zapryanova Pampulova*** in the field of higher education: Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field Psychology, doctoral programme Pedagogical and Developmental Psychology.

29.07.2024

Reviewer:

(Prof. Kirilka Tagareva, PhD)