

OPINION

by Dr. Doncho Stoyanov Donev, Associate Professor at Burgas Free University

on the dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"
in: Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences.
Professional direction 3.2. Psychology
Doctoral program Positive Psychology

Author: Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov

Topic: Study of the Experience of Well-being in Early Adulthood.

Scientific Supervisor: Associate Professor Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova

1. General Presentation of the Procedure and the Doctoral Candidate

By order No. RD-21-2107 of 20.11.2024 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure the procedure for the defense of the dissertation on the topic "Study of the Experience of Well-being in Early Adulthood" for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program Positive Psychology. The author of the dissertation is Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov, a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychology with scientific supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Irena Levkova.

The set of materials presented by Stanislav Alexandrov is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and includes the following documents: The doctoral candidate has attached three publications in scientific journals.

2. Brief Biographical Data of the Doctoral Candidate

In 2018, Stanislav Alexandrov successfully completed the bachelor's program in psychology at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". Two years later, he defended his master's degree in positive psychology. In 2021, he was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the positive psychology program at the same university.

3. Relevance of the Topic

The topic of the dissertation is significant and fundamental for positive psychology. It addresses the issue of mental well-being and mental health in the context of dynamic changes in contemporary society.

4. Understanding of the Problem

Stanislav Alexandrov demonstrates a deep understanding of the discussed constructs. Philosophical and theological concepts of happiness are presented in detail and chronologically. All constructs of the study are logically and sequentially operationalized. The theoretical interconnections between them are clearly defined.

5. Research Methodology

The research methodology is relevant to the set research goal and leads to the fulfillment of the research tasks. The methods are suitable for measuring the defined criteria in the context of the defined target group.

6. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation and Contributions

The first chapter of the dissertation offers an interesting perspective on the understanding of subjective mental well-being. The construct is analyzed in detail in its connection with the three dimensions of time perspective - past, present, and future. Each of these dimensions is determined by specific personal dispositions. The text offers a multidimensional and in-depth analysis of factors (internal and external to the personality) related to mental well-being.

Philosophical concepts from ancient China, ancient India, and ancient Greece are postulated as a prerequisite for studying well-being from psychology. The understanding of happiness and bliss in the context of Christianity and Judaism is traced, with a content analysis of parts of the Bible. The evolution of the concept of happiness is traced from Stoicism to the modern understanding of well-being, mental well-being, and subjective mental well-being.

All constructs within the object of the dissertation research are consistently and clearly defined and operationalized. The author's concept of the interconnection between the studied constructs is also visible.

The second chapter presents the concept and organization of the empirical research. The research goal is specific and precisely formulated. Five research tasks are defined, which are sequential and linked to the main goal. Five hypotheses are raised, each of which implies clarifying the relationships between the defined criteria (variables). Four diagnostic tools adapted for the Bulgarian population are used. Each of them is directly related to establishing the levels of a specific, pre-defined variable. The tools are described, and data on the characteristics of each of the used tools are presented. The organization of the research is relevant to the set goal and the main research question.

The third chapter presents data from the conducted research, with an analysis verifying the hypotheses. The used descriptive statistics provide sufficiently in-depth and clear information about both the data and the studied group of individuals. The in-depth statistical analysis and analysis of quantitative data make a good impression. The applied statistics are relevant to the scales used to measure the variables. The performed correlation, regression, and

non-parametric analyses lead to the verification of the raised research hypotheses. The results of the hypothesis verification are presented at the end of the third chapter.

The conclusions from the conducted empirical research are specific and directly related to the obtained data and their analysis. They directly correspond to the research concept and its defined limitations.

The dissertation expands the field of positive psychology in terms of mindfulness and hope as directly related to well-being. Correlates of subjective mental well-being are placed in a time perspective, which is a serious prerequisite for creating a multidimensional model related to the human life cycle.

7. Evaluation of Publications and Personal Contribution of the Doctoral Candidate

Stanislav Alexandrov has presented three publications in conference proceedings, published during his doctoral studies. All three are related to the topic of the dissertation and reflect different aspects of the conducted research.

The concept, organization, and design of the conducted research are original. The data and their analysis are authentic. On this basis, I believe that there is no evidence of plagiarism, and the presented dissertation is original.

8. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

When conducting diagnostic research, it is accepted that its object is some psychological construct of the studied individuals, not the individuals themselves. Such a formulation is characteristic of experimental research, where there is a certain impact on the participants in the experiment.

A little more descriptiveness and justification of the statistical analyses would contribute to easier orientation in the third chapter of the dissertation.

Correlation analysis establishes a connection between two variables. The correlation coefficient can indirectly indicate the presence of differences. The most widely used method for directly studying differences between variables (hypothesis 1) is Student's t-test.

9. Abstract

The abstract fully reflects the content of the dissertation. It presents key points from the theoretical analysis, as well as data from the empirical research.

10. Recommendations for Future Use of the Dissertation Contributions and Results

I believe that the results of the conducted research could be useful in providing psychological support and counseling. Additionally, some of them could be significant for developmental psychology. The connection between well-being and hope can contribute to the even more successful and complete integration of humanistic concepts such as that of Viktor Frankl into positive psychology.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains results that represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Application of the law, and the corresponding Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The dissertation shows that Stanislav Alexandrov possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in positive psychology, demonstrating qualities and abilities for independent scientific research.

For the above reasons, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research and propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Stanislav Alexandrov in the field of Higher Education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program Positive Psychology.

13.01.2025

Prepared by:

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Doncho Donev)