

JURY'S MEMBER OPINION

by DSc. Manol Nikolov Manolov – Associate Professor, Paisii Hilendarski University

of a dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "**doctor**"

in: field of higher education 3. *Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.2.*

Psychology

doctoral program *Positive psychology*

Author: *Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov*

Topic: *Exploring the experience of well-being in early adulthood*

Scientific supervisor: *Assoc. Prof. Irena Ivanova Levkova, PhD, Paisii Hilendarski, University of Plovdiv*

By order RD-21-2107/20.11.2024. of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for ensuring a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic of Research on the Experience of Well-being in Early Maturity for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education³. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program *Positive psychology*

The author of the dissertation is Stanislav Raychev Aleksandrov - doctoral student at the Department of Psychology with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Irena Ivanova Levkova, PhD from the University of Paisiy Hilendarski.

The set of materials on paper submitted by Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) from the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov was born in 1994 and is a Bulgarian citizen. He has built his academic and professional career primarily in the field of psychology, consistently completing a bachelor's degree (2018) and master's (2020) degree at the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski". His education is focused on positive psychology, which shows a focused interest in studying personal well-being, motivation, and related psychological mechanisms.

During his professional career, Stanislav Alexandrov has gained diverse experience, including both academic knowledge and practical skills. He has worked in various fields – from industrial enterprises and commercial companies to training and coaching activities, which has contributed to his flexibility and adaptability in different environments. Has a high level of English proficiency (C2 for listening and reading, B2 for writing, C1 for speaking), which allows him access to a wide range of scientific sources and international academic contacts.

In recent years, he has been actively engaged in scientific research, which culminated in the development of his dissertation. He is engaged in research in the field of positive psychology, analyzing factors related to psychological well-being and personality development.

2. Relevance of the topic

The topic of the dissertation "Investigating the Experience of Well-Being in Early Adulthood" is extremely relevant in contemporary psychology, as well-being is a central factor for personal and professional development. In the context of positive psychology, research on well-being continues to gain increasing importance, especially with regard to individual resources for coping with stress, life transitions, and adaptation to social challenges.

The scientific relevance of the study is expressed in the analysis of three key concepts - hope, cognitive-affective mindfulness, and quality of life, which are considered predictors of flourishing. The study contributes to the expansion of existing models by providing empirical data on the importance of age differences in the formation of well-being.

From a scientific and applied point of view, the results of the work can be applied in the fields of educational, clinical and organizational psychology. Understanding the factors influencing well-being in early adulthood can help develop interventions aimed at improving the personal resilience, motivation and overall quality of life of young people.

3. Knowing the problem

Stanislav Raichev Alexandrov's dissertation demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the concept of well-being, analyzing it from the perspective of positive psychology and its relationship with key psychological constructs - hope, cognitive-affective mindfulness, and quality of life.

The author presents a comprehensive theoretical overview that includes:

- The classic theories of well-being – subjective well-being (Ed Diener), psychological well-being (Carol Riffe), the theory of flourishing (Martin Seligman).
- Historical and philosophical foundations of the concept, including the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.
- Contemporary empirical research analyzing the influence of emotional regulation, social relationships, and personality characteristics on well-being.

Particular attention is paid to three key predictors of well-being:

- Hope – It is seen as a motivational resource that supports personal development and coping with life challenges. Charles Snyder's theory is included, according to which hope consists of two components - pathways (planning) and agency (motivation to achieve goals).
- Mindfulness – Researched as a psychological mechanism for increasing awareness and managing stress. The connection between cognitive-affective mindfulness and the level of well-being is emphasized by reducing anxiety and negative automatic thoughts.

- Quality of life – Analyzed through physical, emotional and social aspects, using the SF-8 scale, a proven tool for assessing health and psychological well-being.

The author demonstrates in-depth knowledge of research methodology, such as:

It applies validated psychological instruments to measure the main constructs.

Conducts correlation and regression analysis to determine the influence of hope, mindfulness, and quality of life on well-being.

Compares results across age groups, which contributes to understanding the development of well-being across the life cycle.

4. Research methodology

Theoretical level – The research enriches the understanding of flourishing by linking this concept to hope, mindfulness, and quality of life. This complements the classic models of well-being (Seligman, Riff, Diener) with new empirical evidence.

Empirical level – The study provides a comparative analysis between two age groups (young adults and older participants), allowing to identify the key factors influencing well-being at different life stages.

Applied level – The data from the study have potential application in the development of psychological programs to improve mental health, as well as in educational and corporate environments to increase the motivation and adaptability of young people.

Specific tasks developed in the dissertation

The dissertation work sets the following main tasks:

To determine the levels of flourishing, hope, cognitive-affective mindfulness, and quality of life in the subjects studied.

To compare results between young adults (18–30 years old) and older respondents (30–60 years old).

To establish correlations between the studied constructs and to examine how hope, mindfulness, and quality of life influence the level of flourishing.

To apply regression analysis to identify the strongest predictor of well-being across age groups.

The present study contributes to the understanding of the personal and social factors that influence emotional resilience and subjective feelings of happiness in early adulthood, offering new perspectives for psychological interventions.

5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov's dissertation represents a significant scientific study that contributes to expanding knowledge about psychological well-being in early adulthood. It is distinguished by its in-depth theoretical analysis, precisely developed methodology, and empirical verification of key factors influencing the well-being of individuals. The topic of the study is particularly relevant in contemporary positive psychology, including the analysis of concepts such as flourishing, hope, mindfulness, and quality of life. The theoretical section demonstrates a complex

and multidisciplinary approach, combining philosophical, psychological and social aspects of well-being.

The methodological structure of the study is well-argued through the use of validated psychological instruments that ensure the reliability of the results. The inclusion of correlation and regression analysis allows for in-depth examination of predictors of well-being and the interactions between them. The sample covers two age groups, which allows for a detailed comparative analysis of the dynamics of well-being at different age stages.

The dissertation has several significant contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the conceptual framework for well-being by expanding existing models with empirical evidence on the influence of hope, mindfulness, and quality of life. Furthermore, it identifies specific determinants of well-being that combine flourishing processes with cognitive and emotional factors. The methodological contributions of the study include the application of established psychological instruments such as Seligman's PERMA profile, Snyder's Hope Scale, CAMS-R mindfulness scale, and SF-8 quality of life scale. The study also contributes to the validation of these instruments in Bulgarian conditions, which expands the possibilities for future studies of well-being in the country.

Empirically, the study finds specific differences across age groups, proving that mental health is the strongest predictor of flourishing, while hope and mindfulness play an additional role in personal well-being. Correlation analysis confirms the strong relationship between hope and flourishing, which further reinforces the importance of a positive attitude for life satisfaction.

The applied nature of the research is also significant, as it provides practical guidance for developing psychological support programs for young people. The data from the study can be used in the fields of educational and clinical psychology, contributing to the development of interventions aimed at developing hope, managing stress, and increasing subjective well-being.

6. Assessment of the doctoral student's publications and personal contribution

Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov's publications reflect his high scientific commitment and deep interest in the research topic. They are in full accordance with the dissertation work and demonstrate a consistent development of its scientific ideas. They highlight a systematic approach to the study of well-being, viewed through the lens of positive psychology, with an emphasis on key constructs such as flourishing, hope, mindfulness, and quality of life.

The analysis of the publications shows that they meet the national requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", as they have been presented in reputable scientific journals and conferences. This testifies to the doctoral student's integration into the academic community and his ability to communicate his research to a wide audience.

The publications are conceptually related to the topic of the dissertation, which speaks to the purposefulness of the author's research activities. They present detailed empirical analyses that contribute to a better understanding of well-being in different age groups, as well as the role of

cognitive and emotional factors in shaping it. Some of the articles offer comparative analysis, which further expands the applicability of his scientific conclusions.

The content of the publications testifies to the broad scientific horizon of the doctoral student, which is not limited to theoretical analysis, but also includes empirical research that has applied value. The author demonstrates a knack for an interdisciplinary approach, integrating knowledge from positive psychology, cognitive psychology, and mental health.

The publications demonstrate the doctoral student's ability to formulate clear scientific problems, apply adequate methodological approaches, and present reasoned conclusions.

7. Autor's abstract

The abstract of Stanislav Raychev Aleksandrov's dissertation is complete, clearly structured and professionally prepared. It adequately summarizes the key aspects of the dissertation, presenting the theoretical framework, methodological approach, main results and contributions.

The document emphasizes the scientific significance and relevance of the research issue, offering a well-argued presentation of the conceptual model, including hope, mindfulness, and quality of life as predictors of well-being. The presentation is clear and logical, providing an accurate picture of the objectives, hypotheses, and empirical analyses performed in the study.

The abstract meets all formal requirements and presents a systematized overview of scientific contributions, demonstrating high professional competence. It successfully fulfills its functions by providing a comprehensive overview of the content of the dissertation work and the significance of the achieved results.

8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

In order to maximize the potential of this study, it is recommended that the results and scientific contributions be expanded and adapted to various scientific and practical areas.

First of all, the dissertation has theoretical and empirical value, which makes it suitable for publication in the form of a monograph. This would allow for wider scientific accessibility and use of the achieved results by researchers, educators, and practicing psychologists. The publication of a monograph will contribute to the popularization of the concept of flourishing, hope, mindfulness, and quality of life as key factors for well-being.

Second, future research in this area can be expanded by more in-depth analysis of the mechanisms through which hope, mindfulness, and quality of life influence well-being. The dissertation research shows significant relationships between these constructs, but further studies can deepen the understanding of the mediator and moderator effects, as well as individual differences in these processes.

Thirdly, based on the results of the dissertation work, it is advisable to develop a specific psychological program to enhance well-being in early adulthood. The program may include training modules for developing hope, increasing awareness through mindfulness techniques, and improving

personal quality of life. It could be applied in both educational and organizational and clinical contexts, with the aim of improving the personal resilience and adaptability of young people.

CONCLUSION

The work is distinguished by academic rigor, conceptual consistency, and methodological precision. The use of validated psychological instruments, as well as the applied statistical analyses, guarantee high reliability of the conclusions and applications. The dissertation meets all national and academic requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", and its theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions enrich the understanding of the concept of well-being and create prerequisites for future scientific and practical developments. In view of the significant scientific contributions, the in-depth analysis and the methodological precision of the study, I recommend to the esteemed jury to award Stanislav Raychev Alexandrov the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program "Positive Psychology". His research has significant scientific and practical value, and its results can serve as a basis for future interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of young people.

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Prepared the opinion:

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