

## **OPINION**

By DSc Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva, Prof.

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

For awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

In the scientific area: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional field: 3.2. Psychology

Doctoral programme Positive Psychology

Author: Kristiana Georgieva Eneva

Title: Positive cognitive processes and satisfaction with romantic relationships in early adulthood

PhD supervisor: Prof. Yurii Pavlov Yanakiev, PhD, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

### **1. General description of the procedure and the doctoral student**

By order № ПД-22-1496 as of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic Positive cognitive processes and satisfaction with romantic relationships in early adulthood for awarding the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the scientific area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral programme: Positive Psychology. Author of the dissertation is Kristiana Georgieva Eneva – part-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychology with supervisor Prof. Yurii Pavlov Yanakiev, PhD from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials, produced by Kristiana Georgieva Eneva, complies to Section 36 (1) of the Rulebook for development of the academic staff of University of Plovdiv and includes the following documents: a request to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv for disclosure of the procedure for defense of the dissertation; CV; protocol from the department council, related to readiness to disclosure of the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation; dissertation; abstract of the dissertation; a list of the articles related to the topic of the dissertation; copies of the articles; declaration of originality and authenticity of the documents. The doctoral student has deposited eight publications.

### **2. Relevance of the topic**

The dissertation explores the broad perspective of optimal functioning and attaining well-being and realization of personal potential. The research is relevant in both scientific and applied aspects. Studying aspects of positive psychology and relating them to individual and group flourishing is undoubtedly important in the contemporary context. Kristiana Eneva examines the facet of relationship satisfaction, emphasizing the impact of the studied concepts of optimism, hope, and mindful-

ness in this and in a broader context. The conclusions drawn have implications for research, practice, and education.

### **3. Knowledge of the topic**

Kristiana Eneva demonstrates in-depth knowledge and skills for analysis of scientific literature. She has a thorough understanding of the state of the art in the field and of contemporary research approaches and practical implications.

### **4. Research methods**

The theoretical analysis provides a solid foundation of the research design. The scope, subject, purpose, and objectives of the research are soundly formulated. The methods chosen are completely adequate for achieving the stated objective. The data have been correctly processed and the psychometric qualities of the instruments used have been confirmed. The results have been correctly interpreted employing appropriate methods of analysis. It should be noted that the study covers 825 respondents, with a relative balance in terms of marital status, parental status, and age.

### **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and the contributions**

The dissertation contains 344 pages and 166 references. It is structured in the classic three chapters, with an introduction, conclusion, and appendices. The first chapter provides a broad theoretical overview and presents the conceptual framework of the study. The second chapter describes the research design, and the third outlines the results. The text is well organized, with logical connections between chapters and paragraphs. Concepts are explained analytically with conclusions and well-supported ideas. Relevant sources are used with correct citations. The clear style of expression should also be noted, which confirms the doctoral student's competence in using and organizing scientific text. The author demonstrates a good knowledge of the literature, logically links and presents positions, outlining not only the chronological but also the substantive perspectives in the research of the concepts and highlighting their relevance. The presentation of the studied variables in a uniform manner, chronology, and content focus in the research, are noteworthy. Various research approaches to concepts are reported, treating the concepts as traits and from the perspective of attitude formation, which is the focus of the doctoral student's position.

The substantive focus of the theoretical part provides a good basis for the research model. The hypotheses put forward are consistent with the objective set, and the methods are properly selected to confirm them. The psychometric characteristics of the scales used are described and meet research standards. The statistical analysis is adequate for the tasks set in the study and for testing the hypotheses. The results are presented on scales with correct interpretations.

I have no reason to believe that the results are not the personal achievement of the doctoral student.

The main focus of the presented study is on the opportunities for learning and building potential and resources for personal development. A clear link is made between the concepts studied and the author's position in defining them as positive cognitive processes. I accept the contributions noted by the doctoral student for adapting scales (1 and 2) as a contribution in the research and the systematization of research in an interdisciplinary aspect. It is not clear what is meant by the proposed contribution 4 and its use in scientific and non-scientific fields. Contributions 5, 6, and 7 refer to a contribution with an applied focus. The contribution mentioned under № 8 is more of an opportunity for future research. I can summarize that the dissertation research contributes to research, education, and psychological practice.

## **6. Evaluation of the publications related to the dissertation and the personal contribution of the doctoral student**

Kristiana Eneva has presented a list of 8 published scientific articles, 6 of which are her own and 2 co-authored, 3 representing reports published in proceedings from scientific conferences and 5 articles in journals.

## **7. Abstract of the dissertation**

The dissertation abstract comprises 32 pages and meets the requirements; it describes the main results and the contents of the dissertation research.

## **8. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have some recommendations with regard to the dissertation. Currently, Bulgarian studies on couple relationships and the concepts studied, as well as research from recent years in general, are not included. There is an imbalance in the theoretical part, which significantly exceeds the scope of the own study. Some theoretical paragraphs are too fragmented (containing 1-several pages) and could be combined. In several places, there is an overly ambitious claim for opening up the perspective of research in Bulgaria, without taking into account the numerous studies in the field of positive psychology and romantic relationships. The hypotheses put forward can be argued as confirmatory and exploratory. The adaptation of the scales and the description of the respondents should be provided in Chapter 2, which currently does not contain a description of the individuals studied. It is not clear why some characteristics that have not been analysed (e.g., sexual orientation) have been included. It is unclear the role of the research questions, which repeat the hypotheses, and how questions 3, 5, and 6 are specifically answered. Parenting and its effect are not the subject of empirical research, and Bulgarians' satisfaction with romantic relationships cannot be determined without a comparative framework or on the basis of a single cross-sectional, unrepresentative study. Age progression can only be tracked in a longitudinal study, which is also mentioned in the study's limitations. The demographic profile is defined as an additional questionnaire, which in practice are items added to

each study. It would be good to present the results by hypothesis and to deepen the interpretation and analysis, which are currently mainly in the form of statements. With regard to comparisons, it is a good idea effect size to be reported in view to substantiate the conclusions It is not clear why, given that a broad concept and perspective of positive cognitive processes is mentioned in several places, the study is limited to intimate relationships and not directly related to well-being and flourishing. These remarks are intended to small revisions for improvement of the text and do not undervalue the merits of work.

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains scientific and applicable results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law for Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the respective Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The dissertation research demonstrates that the doctoral student possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills to independently conduct scientific research in scientific area: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology.

Due to the abovementioned I give my positive assessment of the research presented by the reviewed dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and I propose the scientific jury to award Kristiana Georgieva Eneva the educational and scientific degree ‘Doctor’ in the professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral programme: Positive Psychology.

1st July 2025

Jury member: .....

Prof. Margarita Bakracheva, DSc