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DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL, EXPERIMENTAL,
DEVELOPMENTAL AND HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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**SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS - ENVY, ANGER AND
WELL-BEING**

ABSTRACT

**Of the dissertation thesis
for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"
in the professional field
3.2. Psychology (Health Psychology)**

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Figures: 38

Appendix: Questionnaire, translations and back translation.

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RELEVANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The relevance of the research is determined by several key factors. First is the universal prevalence of social inequalities in human societies. Social inequalities are a fundamental characteristic of social animals and can be found at all stages of economic development in humans, from nomadic hunter-gatherer groups to the settled, post-industrial societies of the West (Boehm, 1999; Smith et al., 2010; Moosa & Ud-Dean, 2011; Global Wealth Report, 2024).

Second is the trend of social inequalities towards stable growth. A historical review of the evolution of social inequalities shows that they have predominantly followed an upward trajectory, except in some historical periods that were accompanied by natural, economic, or political upheavals that led to a reduction in social inequalities (Alfani, 2021; Alfani, Gierok & Schaff, 2022). Current data for 2023 suggest that global wealth continues to be extremely unequally distributed. Around 40% of the world's population owns just 0.5% of global wealth, and 1.5% of people own approximately 48% of all financial assets (Global Wealth Report, 2024).

The data for Bulgaria reveals that income inequalities continue to rise gradually in recent decades, and Bulgaria is currently the country with the highest income inequalities in the European Union (Hallaert, 2020). High social and economic inequalities in Bulgaria are reflected in people's value orientations. A study based on the methodology of H. Hofstede shows that in Bulgaria the values of the dimension "Power Distance" are above the average, and in the studied period (2000 - 2016) they are growing (Silgidjian, Karabelova & Gerganov, 2010; Rösler, 2023). This indicates that "values and cultural practices in Bulgaria are persistently oriented towards maintaining beliefs that people are existentially unequal [...] and the perception of those in power as inaccessible and privileged" (Silgidjian, Karabelova & Gerganov, 2010, p. 34). At the same time, Bulgarians are the most dissatisfied with their lives in the European Union (Eurostat, 2023).

Third, the study of social inequalities is necessitated by their close relationship to a range of individual and social problems (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). Central to the current research is the close relationship between social status, health, and well-being. People with lower social status report overall poorer health and live shorter lives, and children of parents with low social status are less likely to survive their early years. People with lower social status also have poorer health behaviors and increased morbidity from a range of somatic and mental illnesses (for a detailed review see Ellis, Hoskin & Ratnasingam, 2018). The current

dissertation research is grounded in the field of health psychology and analyses well-being as a key component of positive mental functioning and health, which is consistent with the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948; Silgidjian, 2011; Hernandez et al., 2017). Empirical evidence suggests that position in the social hierarchy is related to all aspects of subjective and psychological well-being (Curhan et al., 2014).

Research suggests that objective indicators of social status - income, education, occupation - cannot independently explain differences in health and well-being (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). Of key importance is the relative value of social status, that is, where we believe we stand in society relative to others. This suggests a strong psychological component in the realization of the negative consequences of social inequalities. Position in society is not an objective index that can be computed using various indicators derived from outside the individual. It is a consequence of the individual's interpretation and involves a cognitive appraisal and affective experience of the subjective conditions that accompany the individual in his or her social and material environment (Adler et al., 2000; Singh-Manoux et al., 2003).

Researchers have identified negative emotions as one of the main indirect pathways through which the relationship between social status, health, and well-being, beyond the absolute poverty threshold and objective indicators, is mediated (Gallo & Matthews, 2003). And although researchers attribute a key role to negative emotions as mediators of the relationship between social status, health, and well-being, few studies examine this mechanism and it remains poorly analyzed (Gallo & Matthews, 2003; Matthews et al., 2010).

Many policies and programs at the state and supranational level aim to eliminate or at least minimize social inequalities. Evidence from recent decades shows that these efforts are not producing the desired results. This calls for rethinking of the problem and revisiting it through a different paradigmatic framework, namely that of psychology.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION THESIS

The dissertation consists of an introduction, a theoretical chapter, an empirical chapter, a summary of the results, a conclusion, a list of references, and an appendix that contains additional information about the questionnaires adapted for the Bulgarian socio-cultural context.

The theoretical chapter is divided into 3 subchapters. The first subchapter discusses the origins and historical development of social inequalities, the relationship of social status to health and well-being, and the subjective perception of social status. The second subchapter presents a theoretical overview of envy and anger. Cognitive appraisals and socio-demographic and cultural aspects of envy are discussed. A distinction is made between two types of envy - noble and malicious. Their relationship to social status, health, and well-being is examined. About anger, data are presented on the cognitive, behavioral, and physiological responses to anger, as well as its socio-demographic and cultural aspects. The relationship with social status, health, and well-being is analyzed. The third subchapter presents subjective and psychological well-being, the similarities and differences between them, and an integrative model that summarizes them.

The second chapter discusses the organization and results of the empirical study. The first sub-chapter presents the organization of the empirical study, including the conceptual model of the study, the aims, hypotheses, and objectives. In this section, the psychometric instruments used as well as the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are presented. The second subchapter discusses the empirical results obtained. Construct validity and internal consistency of the questionnaires adapted for Bulgarian sociocultural conditions are analyzed and descriptive statistics for the instruments used are presented. The socio-demographic profile of the studied variables, the interrelationships between them, the predictive role of subjective social status in relation to well-being, as well as the mediating role of status anxiety, the components of status consciousness, envy, and anger are examined.

The third chapter presents a summary of the empirical results and discussion. The hypotheses put forward are verified, the main conclusions of the thesis are synthesized and their significance is discussed. Contributions of the dissertation for practice are presented, as well as for further development of the theoretical framework and methodological apparatus of social status and well-being. The limitations of this dissertation research are outlined and directions for future work in this research area are discussed.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION THESIS

The dissertation thesis pays close attention to the individual subjective components that mediate the relationship between social status, health, and well-being. The theoretical and experimental focus is on analyzing the relationships between subjective social status, the attitudes toward social status and social hierarchy, the dispositions toward envy and anger, and

well-being. The main tenant of the research is the idea that low subjective social status will be associated with lower well-being and this relationship will persist regardless of the effects of objective social status and will be mediated by the attitudes toward social hierarchy and social status, and the dispositions toward negative emotions such as envy and anger. Based on this integrative approach of the studied problem, the dissertation research is organized and its aims and objectives are set.

The relationship between social status and health has been intuitively known to humans for centuries, but the first empirical studies to analyze this dynamic date back to the turn of the last century (Schereschewsky et al., 1916). Contemporary empirical research in public health, medical sociology, and health psychology has systematically demonstrated the relationship between social status and a range of health indicators. People with lower social status have higher mortality, overall poorer somatic and mental health, and worse health behaviors (for a detailed review see Ellis, Hoskin & Ratnasingam, 2018).

The mechanism by which social status influences the health of people from the lowest strata of society can largely be explained through the material and social conditions of their environment and their health behaviors (Baum et al., 1999; Adler & Newman, 2002; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003; Ellis et al., 2018). But empirical evidence suggests that negative health effects do not only affect people of low social status. There is no absolute poverty threshold or minimum level of education beyond which the health effects of social status cease. There is a social gradient of health and well-being, where each position in the social hierarchy has better health and well-being than those below it and worse than those above it (Marmot et al., 1998; Marmot, 2004).

Income, health, and well-being are related up to a certain threshold, beyond which their relationship gradually diminishes, and then disappears (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). However, the social gradient in health persists even in the richest countries and among the wealthiest segments of society (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2014). This shows that once this minimum threshold is crossed, the absolute value of income decreases its predictive power in terms of health and well-being, and its relative value and the psychosocial variables linked to it become increasingly important. In addition to covering basic needs, material capabilities have important psychological, social and symbolic meanings. They serve as a means of constructing and expressing one's self-identity. Wealth becomes an indirect marker of success, respectability and decency, just as poverty is a cause of marginalization and stigmatization. The influence of status on health and well-being is mediated by individual perceptions and subjective interpretation of the position in the social hierarchy relative to other

people in society and the cognitive-affective variables that are related (Adler et al., 2000; Gallo & Matthews, 2003).

For this reason, the study of inequalities through the conceptual framework and methodological apparatus of psychology has the advantage of capturing individual, subjective perceptions of personality in relation to social status. A study of social status that does not take into account the subjective experience of the individual remains groundless. Rather than focusing on external, objective indicators of social status (e.g., income, education, occupation), measuring *subjective* social status allows one to capture the individual's interpretation of inequalities in that sphere or spheres of life that are of leading importance to the individual. The focus on external indicators of social status leads to the creation of an artificial differentiation that cannot fully cover and reflect inequalities in the way the individual experiences them and they affect their lives.

A methodology that attempts to capture social inequalities must therefore consider the fundamental presence of subjective components that cannot be captured by objective indicators. In the words of Amartya Sen, "An approach [...] that compares inequalities without taking into account their vagueness and incompleteness may contradict their very nature [...] if the studied idea is characterized by vagueness, a precise formulation of that idea must attempt to capture the vagueness in question..." (Sen, 1992, pp. 48-49).

For this reason, in the last two decades researchers have focused on *subjective social status*. Evidence from these studies suggests that subjective social status is a reliable indicator with good predictive value for a range of health indicators, tested in a large sample and among people of different ethnic backgrounds (Adler et al., 2000; Ostrove et al., 2000; Operario et al., 2004).

Subjective social status is weakly to moderately related to objective social status (Goyder, 1975; Adler et al., 2000; Ellis, Hoskin, & Ratnasingam, 2018). This indicates that the two indicators retain their differentiation and can be used as complementary but not mutually exclusive indicators. Subjective social status has an advantage in that it combines objective indicators with the cognitive appraisal of the individual experiencing them.

Research on the predictors of subjective social status has shown that 48% of the variance can be explained by five variables - occupation, satisfaction with standard of living, household income, sense of financial security and education (Singh-Manoux et al., 2003). These results suggest that subjective social status is based on some objective indicators but involves cognitive interpretation of the information from different domains of life and a kind of "averaging" of the available information.

Studies have shown that subjective social status is related to several health variables. Subjective social status is linked to psychosocial and biomedical variables that are involved in the etiology of a number of pathological conditions (Adler et al., 2000; Singh-Manoux et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2016; Cundiff & Matthews, 2017). The negative impact of subjective social status on health is confirmed by experimental studies (Cohen et al., 2008).

Subjective social status is also related to well-being, both subjectively and mentally. Evidence suggests that subjective social status is a statistically significant predictor of life satisfaction, positive affect, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Curhan et al., 2014). Comparative studies between the different indicators of social status have shown that subjective social status is a more reliable predictor of subjective and psychological well-being than objective indicators of social status (Curhan et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2020; Navarro-Carrillo et al., 2020).

Important for understanding the relationship between social status and well-being is the analysis of negative emotions (Gallo & Matthews, 2003). Empirical studies show that there is a statistically significant correlation between subjective social status and negative affect (Adler et al., 2000; Operario, Adler & Williams, 2004). Subjective social status has a negative relationship with morbidity and mortality, and negative affect mediates this (O'Leary et al., 2021).

Despite the established links between generalised negative affect and health, researchers believe that the role of individual emotions should also be analysed, as they may be differentially related to health and well-being (Consedine & Moscovitz, 2007; Uskul & Horn, 2015). And although researchers attribute a key role to negative emotions as mediators of the relationship between social status and health, few studies have examined this mechanism. Two meta-analyses spanning the period 1990 to 2008 found 19 articles directly analyzing the role of negative emotions as mediators (Gallo & Matthews, 2003; Matthews et al., 2010). However, all the articles used objective social status and operationalized negative emotions in their pathological forms.

Most studies of subjective social status in Bulgarian sociocultural context examine the construct through the research framework of sociology (Dobрева, 1999; Stoyanov, 2015; Stamenova, 2016). But there are also some studies that analyze the role of subjective social status in the field of health psychology (Hristov, 2022a; Hristov, 2023; Petrov & Hristov, 2023). Their results show that subjective social status is a statistically significant predictor of

self-perceived health and life satisfaction, with the relationship between the variables partially mediated by negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, and anger (Hristov, 2023).

ORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Based on the theoretical review and synthesis of research in the areas of subjective social status, status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, anger and well-being, a theoretical and conceptual model of the study and its aims, hypotheses and objectives are constructed.

1.1. Aim of the study

The purpose of the present empirical study is to establish the relationships between subjective social status, status anxiety, status consciousness dimensions, envy, anger, and various aspects of well-being. The direct influence of subjective social status on well-being (subjective, psychological, and general) is analyzed, as well as the indirect influence (mediating relationships) of status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, and anger in the relationship between subjective social status and well-being. The theoretical and conceptual model of the variables included in the study and the expected relationships between them is presented in Figure 2.

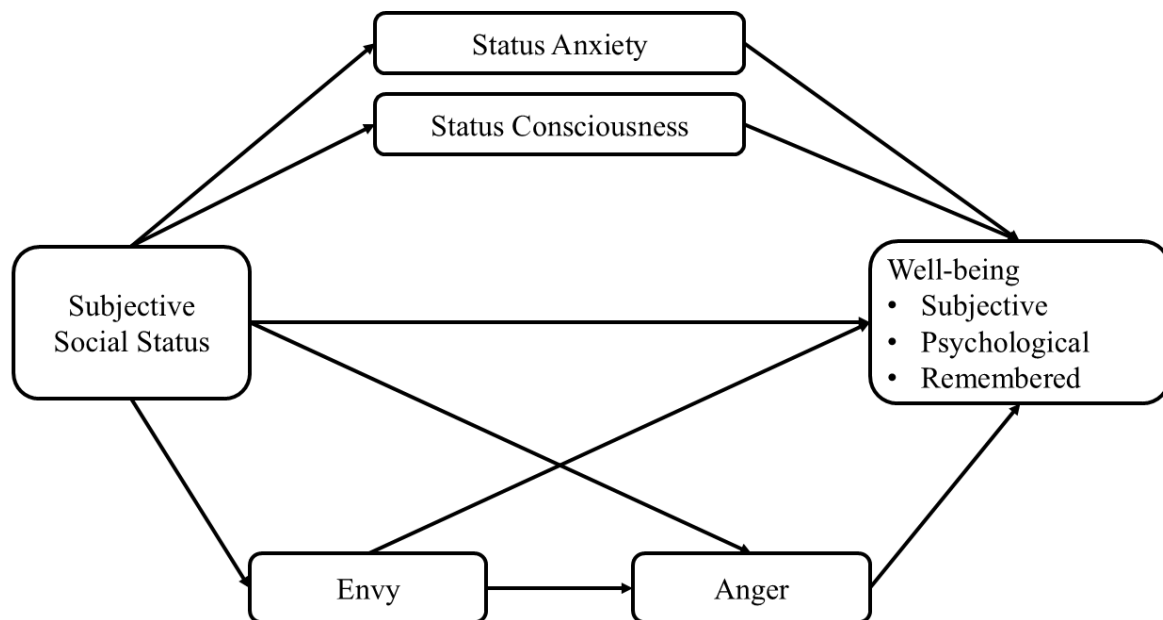


Figure 2. Theoretical-conceptual model of the study.

1.2. Research hypotheses

Based on the theoretical review of the literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 1. Subjective social status, status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, anger, and well-being will demonstrate a differential profile with sociodemographic variables.

- *Hypothesis 1a.* Higher subjective social status will be associated with higher income, education and occupational position.
- *Hypothesis 1b.* Low-perceived status, status anxiety, benign envy, malicious envy, and anger will be more characteristic of the respondents who are young, unmarried, have low income, education, and professional position.

Hypothesis 2. Subjective social status will be related to status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, anger, subjective, psychological, and remembered well-being.

Hypothesis 3. Well-being will be related to status anxiety, status consciousness, envy and anger.

Hypothesis 4. Subjective social status will predict changes in well-being, and this predictive role will persist after controlling for the influence of socio-demographic variables and objective indicators of social status (income, education, occupation).

Hypothesis 5. Subjective social status will explain more of the variance in well-being than objective indicators of social status (income, education, occupation).

Hypothesis 6. The relationship between subjective social status and well-being will be partially mediated by status anxiety and status consciousness.

Hypothesis 7. The relationship between subjective social status and well-being will be partially mediated by envy and anger, and this mediating relationship will be realized through parallel and serial mediation.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The realization of the aim of the study requires the following objectives:

1. Construct validity and internal consistency analysis of the adapted psychometric instruments:

- Status Anxiety Scale (Keshabyan & Day, 2020);
- Status Consciousness Scale (Alba et al., 2014);
- Benign and Malicious Envy Scale (Lange & Crusius, 2015);

- Remembered Well-Being subscale from The Pemberton Happiness Index (Hervas & Vazquez, 2013).

2. To examine the differentiating role of socio-demographic indicators such as gender, age, place of residence, income, education, occupational level, marital status, number of children, political and religious beliefs.

3. To determine the statistically significant relationships between subjective social status, status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, anger, the components of subjective and psychological well-being, and remembered well-being. As well as to analyze whether the predictive role of subjective social status is maintained after controlling for the influence of sociodemographic variables and objective indicators of social status.

4. To analyze the mediating role of status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, and anger in the relationship between subjective social status and well-being.

2. Method

2.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

The final sample of the present study consisted of a total of 490 subjects. Of these, 34.7% were male and 65.3% were female. The average age of the respondents was 33 years. Frequency analysis by place of residence shows that 43.5% of respondents live in Sofia. Slightly more than half of the respondents, 51.4%, were unmarried and 65.9% had no children. Approximately 64% of the sample possesses higher education. In terms of occupation, 33.1% of respondents reported that they are not working. Approximately 59% of the respondents receive a monthly income that is between 780 and 2500 BGN. In terms of political and religious beliefs, 48.3% said they could not determine their political beliefs and 66.3% identified themselves as religious to some degree.

2.2 Measures

To fulfill the objectives of this dissertation research, a battery of the following psychometric instruments was constructed:

Subjective social status. The MacArthur Subjective Social Status Scale (Adler et al., 2000) was used to measure this construct. The scale consists of one item and was translated into Bulgarian for the purposes of the dissertation. The subjects were presented with a ladder with ten rungs and asked the following question: 'Imagine that this ladder reflects where people are in our society. On the highest rung are those who have the most money, the highest education and the most prestigious professions. On the lowest rung are those people who have

the least money, the least education, no prestigious jobs or are unemployed. The higher you stand, the closer you are to the people on the highest rung, and the lower you stand, the closer you are to the people on the lowest rung. Where do you think your place is on this ladder?" (see Appendix A).

Status anxiety. This construct is measured using the Status Anxiety Scale (Keshabyan & Day, 2020), which is conceptualized as the worry that we occupy too low a position in the social hierarchy or are at risk of deteriorating our social status. The scale consists of 5 items that are rated on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 7 is "Strongly Agree." A sample item from the scale: 'I worry that my social status will not change'. The scale has been translated into Bulgarian for this study.

Status consciousness. It is assessed using the Status Consciousness Scale (Alba et al., 2014). The scale consists of 45 items that are divided into 8 subscales of 5 items each, reflecting the different subjective components of social status and social hierarchy: hierarchy belief (Example: "There is nothing wrong with some people being in a better position than others."), hierarchy respect (Example: "Everyone should respect superiors."), egalitarianism (Example: "I prefer everyone to be equal."), status display (Example: "I like to tell others about my accomplishments."), status enjoyment (Example: "I like the idea of being an important person."), status rejection (Example: "It doesn't matter to me where I am in the social hierarchy."), high-perceived status (Example: "I often think I am better than others."), and low-perceived status (Example: "Compared to others, I am nothing special."). Subjects responded on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 was "Strongly Disagree" and 7 was "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire was translated into Bulgarian for the present study.

Envy. The Benign and Malicious Envy Scale (Lange & Crusius, 2015) was used to measure this construct. This instrument conceptualizes envy as consisting of two dimensions, benign envy and malicious envy. The scale consists of 10 items - 5 items for benign envy (Example: "Envy motivates me to achieve my goals.") and 5 items for malicious envy (Example: "I feel resentment toward people I envy."). Subjects responded on a six-point Likert scale, where 1 ("Completely disagree") and 6 ("Completely agree"). The scale has been translated into Bulgarian for the present study.

Anger. This construct is measured using the Anger subscale of the Multidimensional Aggression Scale (Kalchev, 2009). The subscale consists of 10 items, six of which are from the original Buss and Perry (1992) scale, one is a reformulated version of the original physical aggression items from the same scale, and three are additionally included to the questionnaire by Kalchev (2009). Respondents give their answer on a five-point Likert scale, where 1

corresponds to "Completely false" and 5 corresponds to "Completely true". A sample item from the scale: 'When I am angry, I have difficulty controlling myself'. The internal consistency of the subscale is $\alpha = 0.88$.

Well-being. To measure well-being, several instruments were used:

- *The Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS - Diener et al., 1985; Ivanova, 2011) was used to measure the cognitive component of subjective well-being. The scale consists of 5 items that are rated on a seven-point Likert scale - 1 - "Completely disagree" and 7 - "Completely agree". The scale focuses on overall life satisfaction. Sample item from the scale: 'Overall, the life I lead is close to my ideal'. The internal consistency of the subscale is $\alpha = .82$.
- To measure the affective component of subjective well-being, the *Positive and Negative Experiences Scale* (SPANE - Diener et al., 2009) was used. The scale consists of 12 items, 6 for positive affect and 6 for negative affect. For each item, they are asked to indicate a response on a five-point scale, where 1 is "Very rarely or never" and 5 is "Constantly." Internal consistency of subscales - positive affect ($\alpha = .89$) and negative affect ($\alpha = .83$). The scale was translated in Bulgarian by Krasen Ferdinandov.
- The short version of the *Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire* (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Silgidjian, Karabelova, & Zankova, 2007) was used to measure psychological well-being. The questionnaire contains 18 statements that are rated on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1 - do not agree at all" to "6 - strongly agree". The scale is composed of six: self-acceptance (Example: "I am generally positive and confident in myself."), purpose in life (Example: "I like to make plans for the future and work to make them happen."), personal growth (Example: "For me, life is a continuous process of learning new things, change, and development."), positive relationships with others (Example: "I know I can trust my friends and they know they can trust me."), environmental mastery (Example: "I cope quite well with the many responsibilities of everyday life."), and autonomy (Example: "My decisions are usually not influenced by what others do."). The internal consistency of the scale is $\alpha = .88$.
- Subscale "**Remembered well-being**" from the *Pemberton Happiness Index* questionnaire (Hervas & Vazquez, 2013). The subscale consists of 11 items (2 for general well-being (life satisfaction and energy in daily life), 6 for psychological well-being (one for each component conceptualized by Carol

Ryff), 2 for positive and negative affect, and 1 item for social well-being). The subscale is adapted for the present study.

The scales for subjective social status, status anxiety, status consciousness, benign and malicious envy, and remembered well-being were translated into Bulgarian for the dissertation thesis. For this purpose, 7 independent translations from English into Bulgarian were used (see Appendix B). The Bulgarian translations have been combined into one summarised version by the author and supervisor. The summarised Bulgarian translation was subjected to back-translation from Bulgarian to English (see Appendix C).

RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

1. Construct validity and internal consistency of the adapted questionnaires

To establish the factor structure of the questionnaires translated for this study, exploratory factor analysis was applied using the Principal Axis Factoring method with promax rotation.

The results of the factor analyses support the construct validity of the adapted psychometric instruments. For all questionnaires, the resulting factor structure replicated that implied in the original studies. The only exception was the high-perceived status subscale of the Status Consciousness Scale. In Bulgarian sociocultural conditions, some inconsistencies are observed on this factor. Two of the statements that fell under this factor in the original scale, statement 3 ("If you are not at the top, then you have achieved nothing") and statement 1 ("I treat people with lower status than mine as I should"), do not demonstrate high enough factor weights to be assigned to either factor. It was decided, for the purposes of this dissertation research, to construct the subscale using the three statements with sufficiently high eigenvalue weights that cluster on the factor.

Table 7 shows the reliability coefficients of the instruments translated into Bulgarian for the first time in this study and compares them with the results of the original studies. The data shows that the scales retain good internal consistency in the Bulgarian sample.

Table 7
Comparison of the reliability coefficients

Scale	Cronbach's α	
	Present study	Original study
Status Anxiety Scale	0,86	0,92
Status Consciousness Scale		
Status Display	0,86	0,85
Egalitarianism	0,85	0,86

Status Rejection	0,83	0,83
Low-perceived Status	0,83	0,78
Status Enjoyment	0,84	0,85
Hierarchy Respect	0,75	0,76
Hierarchy Belief	0,71	0,70
Benign and Malicious Envy Scale		
Malicious envy	0,88	0,89
Benign envy	0,83	0,85
Remembered well-being	0,89	0,82 - 0,93 ^a

^a The scale was constructed with 9 samples from different countries. The lowest and highest internal consistency values are indicated.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the instruments translated into Bulgarian for the first time show good construct validity and high internal consistency, which speaks for their high reliability when applied in a Bulgarian sociocultural environment.

As for remembered well-being, there are results that provide support for the convergent validity of the instrument. The "Remembered Well-being" subscale emerges as a convenient, brief and quick to administer scale. Table 6 presents the correlation coefficients between remembered well-being and the other aspects of well-being.

Table 6
Interrelationships between the scales of well-being

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Remembered well-being	-				
2. Satisfaction with life	0,780**	-			
3. Positive affect	0,672**	0,593**	-		
4. Negative affect	-0,584**	-0,501**	-0,599**	-	
5. Psychological well-being	0,771**	0,661**	0,551**	-0,529**	-

**p < 0,01

3. Variation in the studied variables in relation to the socio-demographic profile

To test the differential role of the different socio-demographic variables independent samples t-test and one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Games-Howell post hoc test were used (Howell, 2007).

The data shows that the socio-demographic variables of age, marital status, number of children in the household, monthly income, educational attainment, and occupational level systematically differentiate the variables examined. On the other hand, the socio-demographic variables gender, place of residence, political and religious beliefs are only partially related to the variables included in the theoretical-conceptual model.

3.2. Age

In terms of status display, respect for hierarchy, belief in hierarchy, perception of high status, anger, life satisfaction and positive affect, the results showed no statistically significant relationship.

The results of the post hoc tests show that age significantly differentiates differences in social status. Respondents under 25 years of age ($X = 5.37$; $SD = 1.55$) rated their subjective social status as lower compared to respondents 26-50 years of age ($X = 5.96$; $SD = 1.71$) and over 50 years of age ($X = 6.07$; $SD = 1.55$). The situation is similar for perceived low status, with younger respondents ($X = 19.99$; $SD = 7.68$) reporting stronger inferiority experiences relative to their own position in the social hierarchy compared to respondents aged 26-50 ($X = 17.11$; $SD = 7.49$) and over 50 ($X = 15.34$; $SD = 6.06$). Also, results showed that younger respondents reported stronger status anxiety and higher levels of benign and malevolent envy. Subjects under 25 years of age ($X = 19.51$; $SD = 6.71$) were more likely to emphasize differences and social comparisons relative to those 26-50 years of age ($X = 22.31$; $SD = 7.23$) and over 50 years of age ($X = 23.81$; $SD = 7.11$). Young people feel more strongly about the advantages that a privileged position in the hierarchy provides ($X = 18.64$; $SD = 6.56$) compared to those aged 26-50 ($X = 15.85$; $SD = 6.68$) and over 50 ($X = 16.18$; $SD = 6.22$), but they also desire a more equal society ($X = 24.62$; $SD = 7.1$) compared to those over 50 ($X = 22.86$; $SD = 6.99$).

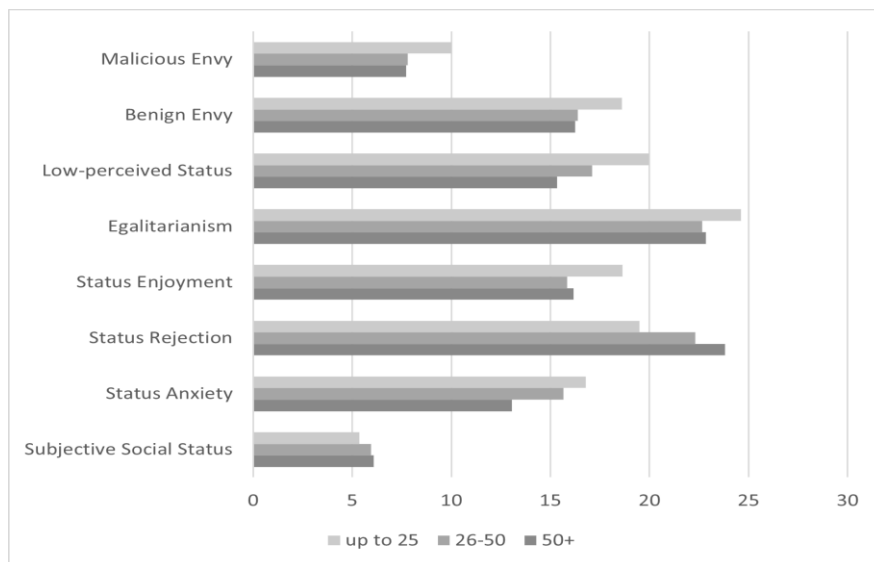


Figure 1. Mean values of status variables differentiated by age.

In terms of well-being, the results overwhelmingly show a linear relationship with age. Older adults reported lower levels of negative emotions ($F(2, 487) = 4, p < 0.01$) and higher

levels of psychological well-being ($F(2, 484) = 16.38, p < 0.001$) and remembered well-being ($F(2, 487) = 9.58, p < 0.001$). Some of these results are consistent with previous research on the topic. Advancing age is systematically associated with lower negative affect and higher autonomy, coping, self-acceptance, and positive relationships with others (Ryff, 1989b; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Springer et al., 2011; Buecker et al., 2023).

3.4. Marital status

Analysis of variance revealed no statistically significant results for the status display, status enjoyment, respect for hierarchy, belief in hierarchy, perception of high status subscales of the Status Consciousness Scale, the benign envy subscale of the Benign and Malicious Envy scale, the anger subscale, and the autonomy subscale, of the Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire. Post hoc analyses found no differences between groups with respect to egalitarianism.

The results of the post hoc test show that the subjects who are married or cohabiting rate their social status as higher ($F(3, 481) = 9.55, p < 0.001$), feel less anxiety about it ($F(3, 484) = 17.24, p < 0.001$), report less ill-intentioned envy ($F(3, 484) = 5.85, p < 0.001$), and are more likely to reject social status ($F(3, 484) = 5.36, p < 0.001$) compared to unmarried individuals.

In terms of well-being, the results consistently show that married or cohabiting respondents have higher well-being in all indicators than unmarried respondents (see Figure 2).

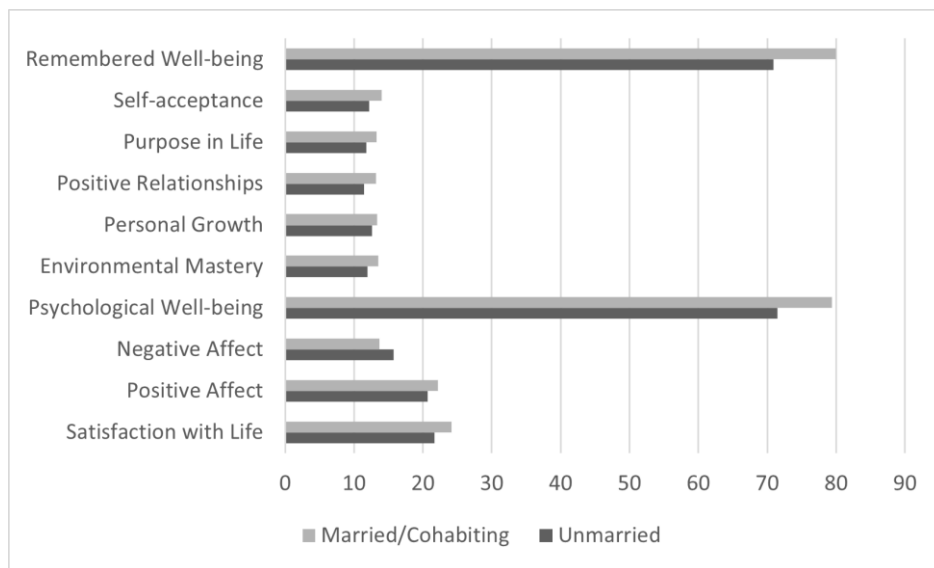


Figure 2. Mean values of well-being differentiated by marital status.

3.5. Children

Analysis of variance showed no statistically significant results for status display, status enjoyment, respect for hierarchy, belief in hierarchy, perception of high status, benign envy, anger, and positive affect.

A summary review of the results shows no statistically significant differences between the groups with one, two or three children. The results of the post hoc tests indicate that all significant differences are between the childless group and either of the groups with children, with the sole exception of malicious envy, where those with two children have higher values than those with three children. These results suggest that the presence of children in the family, rather than their number, is important for improving subjective social status and well-being.

In terms of subjective social status, the data indicates that those with one ($X = 6.14$, $SD = 1.38$) or two children ($X = 6.2$, $SD = 1.55$) rated their position in the social hierarchy as higher relative to childless subjects ($X = 5.48$, $SD = 1.68$). Respondents with one, two, or three children reported lower levels of status anxiety and lower perceptions of low status, and those with one or three children were less likely to experience malicious envy compared to those without children. Respondents with one ($X = 23.21$, $SD = 7.19$) or two ($X = 22.85$, $SD = 7.51$) children reported higher status rejection compared to childless respondents ($X = 20.35$, $SD = 6.89$). Also, those with one ($X = 21.24$, $SD = 7.46$) or two ($X = 22.14$, $SD = 6.64$) children had lower egalitarianism compared to those without children ($X = 24.41$, $SD = 7.15$).

Results from the present sample suggest that having one or two children in the family is associated with increases in life satisfaction ($F(3, 486) = 8.42$, $p < 0.001$) and decreases in negative affect ($F(3, 486) = 5.36$, $p < 0.001$). The present results indicate that the study subjects with one, two or three children had higher levels of remembered well-being ($F(3, 486) = 15.17$, $p < 0.001$), psychological well-being ($F(3, 486) = 14.57$, $p < 0.001$) and its components compared to the childless respondents (see Figure 12).

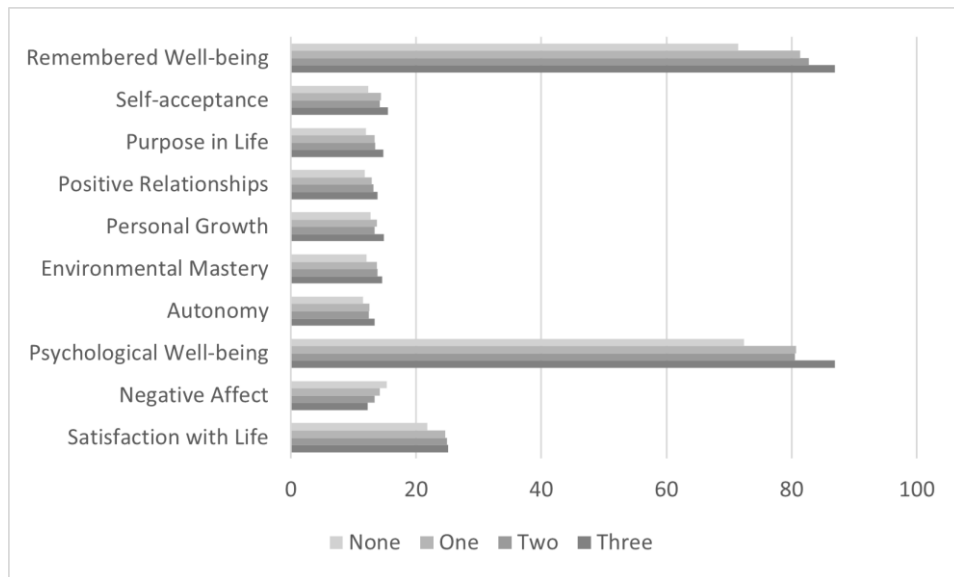


Figure 3. Mean well-being values differentiated by number of children.

3.6. Income

Monthly income significantly differentiates subjective social status and well-being. Regarding the mediating variables included in the model, no statistically significant differences were found with respect to status display, respect for the hierarchy, belief in the hierarchy, perception of high status, benign envy and anger.

The results of the post hoc test showed that income significantly differentiated subjective social status ($F(3, 482) = 26.66, p < 0.001$). As income increases, the probability that subjects attribute higher subjective social status increases. Surveyed individuals with a monthly income of more than 2,500 leva ($X = 6.81, SD = 1.29$) assigned their subjective social status higher by almost two units than those with incomes up to 780 leva ($X = 5.08, SD = 1.69$).

Similarly, those with incomes between BGN 1501-2500 and above BGN 2500 reported lower status anxiety ($F(3, 484) = 9.97, p < 0.001$) and lower perception of low status ($F(3, 484) = 11.16, p < 0.001$) compared to those with incomes up to BGN 780 and between BGN 781-1500. The results show that respondents with income up to BGN 780 are more likely to pay attention to the social status of others ($F(3, 484) = 5.41, p < 0.001$) and report more malicious envy ($F(3, 484) = 7.15, p < 0.001$) compared to those earning between BGN 1501-2500. Similarly, those earning up to BGN 780 have a stronger desire to demonstrate their status ($F(3, 484) = 3.57, p < 0.05$), experiencing pleasure in doing so, but also report a stronger desire for social equality ($F(3, 484) = 3.47, p < 0.05$), compared to respondents earning between BGN 1501-2500.

In terms of well-being, the results consistently show that respondents with income above BGN 2,500 have significantly better well-being than respondents with income up to BGN 780 (see Figure 4).

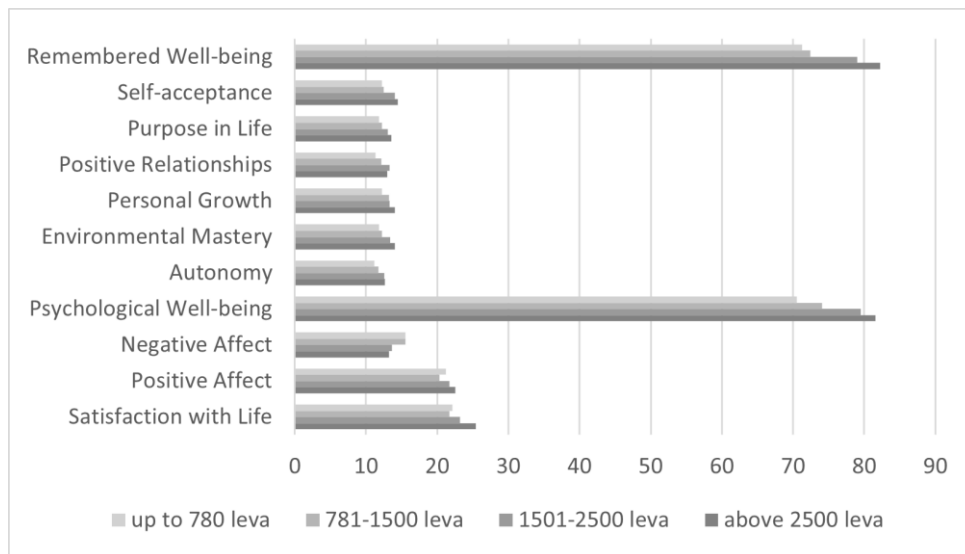


Figure 4. Mean values of well-being differentiated by income.

3.7. Education

Due to the very low number of subjects ($n=4$) with primary education, this category was not included in the analysis of variance. Education significantly differentiated subjective social status and well-being (with the exception of positive affect), and in terms of mediating variables, there were significant differences to status anxiety, perception of low status, and malicious envy.

The results of the post hoc test showed that educational attainment significantly differentiated subjective social status ($F(3, 479) = 19.49, p < 0.001$). Subjects with secondary education had lower subjective social status compared to all other groups.

In terms of status anxiety and perception of low status, the results indicate that individuals who completed a master's degree reported lower status anxiety ($F(3, 482) = 4.14, p < 0.01$) and perception of low status ($F(3, 482) = 11.08, p < 0.001$), relative to those with a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree. Results were similar for the different aspects of well-being (see Figure 5).

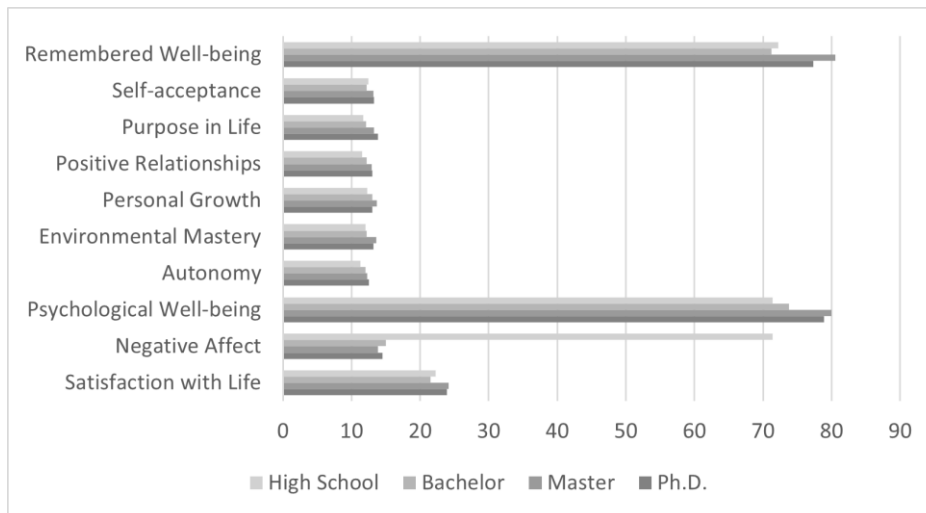


Figure 5. Mean values of well-being differentiated by education.

3.8. Level of professional position

Level of professional position significantly differentiated subjective social status and well-being (except for positive affect), and in terms of mediating variables, there was a statistically significant relationship with status anxiety, status rejection, status enjoyment, egalitarianism, perception of low status, and malicious envy.

The analysis of the post hoc results showed that the unemployed ($X = 5.08$, $SD = 1.61$) in the sample had the lowest mean values for subjective social status, while people in executive ($X = 5.67$, $SD = 1.51$), expert ($X = 6.25$, $SD = 1.55$), and managerial ($X = 6.59$, $SD = 1.52$) positions rated their social status as higher relative to the unemployed. Relative to the other status variables, the results show that those in expert and executive positions report lower status anxiety and perception of low status compared to the unemployed, and those in expert positions also have lower status anxiety than those in executive positions. Also, respondents in an expert position have higher status rejection and experience lower status enjoyment relative to unemployed people. And those in executive positions are less likely to consider social equality a value compared to the unemployed. Relative to malicious envy, the data suggest that those in expert positions are less likely to experience envy compared to the unemployed and those in executive positions (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Mean values of status variables differentiated by occupational position.

In terms of well-being, the results show that higher professional position is systematically associated with improvements in various well-being indicators (see Figure 7).

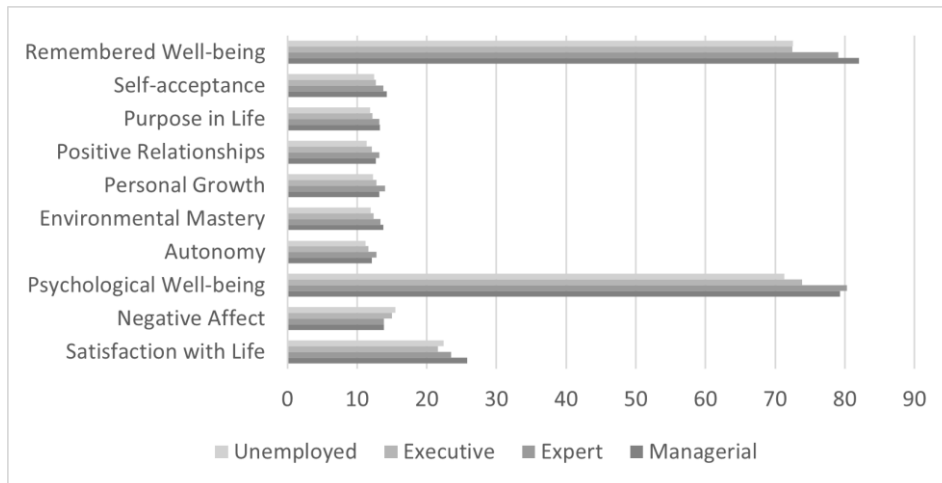


Figure 7. Mean values of well-being differentiated by occupational position.

4. Relationships between the variables in the study

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationships between the variables in the theoretical-conceptual model of the study. Firstly, the relationships between subjective social status and the mediating variables of the model - status anxiety, status consciousness, envy and anger - were analysed. And then the relationships between different aspects of well-being and the mediating variables of the model are presented.

The results of the correlation analysis showed that subjective social status demonstrated a weak positive relationship with perception of high status ($r=0.096$, $p<0.05$), belief in hierarchy ($r=0.099$, $p<0.05$) and benign envy ($r=0.100$, $p<0.05$), and a weak negative

relationship with egalitarianism ($r=-0.133, p<0.01$), malicious envy ($r=-0.179, p<0.01$), anger ($r=-0.202, p<0.01$), status anxiety ($r=-0.366, p<0.05$), and low status perception ($r=-0.401, p<0.01$). The most pronounced correlation coefficients of the relationship between subjective social status and negative experiences in terms of social status were perception of low status and status anxiety.

Regarding the relationships between subjective social status and different aspects of well-being, the results of the correlation analysis show that subjective social status exhibits a weak but statistically significant relationship with all aspects of well-being. The strongest correlation was with life satisfaction ($r=0.413, p<0,01$) and remembered well-being ($r=0,412, p<0,01$). The results of the correlation analysis highlight the important role that subjective perception of the position in the social hierarchy has on well-being. Objective indicators of social status - income, education, occupation - are important for well-being, but empirical research has shown that subjective social status is a more reliable predictor of well-being and its importance persists beyond the role of objective social status (Curhan et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2020; Navarro-Carrillo et al., 2020).

Table 15 presents the results of the correlation analysis between the different aspects of well-being and the mediating variables (status anxiety, status consciousness, envy and anger) embedded in the theoretical-conceptual model.

For subjective well-being, the data shows that life satisfaction demonstrates a weak positive relationship with belief in hierarchy, status display, and status rejection. On the other hand, status anxiety, perception of low status, malicious envy, anger, and egalitarianism were weakly to moderately negatively related to life satisfaction. Positive affect was weakly positively related to status display, respect for hierarchy, and weakly negatively related to status anxiety, low status perception, malicious envy, and anger. Negative affect was positively correlated with status anxiety, low status perception, malicious envy, anger, and egalitarianism. While a weak negative correlation was observed between negative affect and status display, belief in hierarchy, and status rejection.

In terms of psychological well-being, conceptualized using Carol Ryff's model, results showed that general psychological well-being was weakly positively related to belief in hierarchy and status rejection, and negatively related to status anxiety, status enjoyment, egalitarianism, perception of high status, perception of low status, malicious envy, and anger. Autonomy demonstrated a statistically significant, weak positive relationship with status rejection, and weak negative correlations with status anxiety, status display, status enjoyment, respect for hierarchy, high status perception, low status perception, benign envy, malicious

envy, and anger. Environmental mastery was weakly positively related to status rejection and belief in hierarchy, whereas there were weak to moderate negative correlations between environmental mastery and status anxiety, egalitarianism, perception of low status, malicious envy, and anger. Personal growth was positively correlated with status display, and negatively correlated with status anxiety, low status perception, malicious envy, and anger. Positive relationships with others are weakly positively correlated with status display and status rejection, and weakly negatively correlated with status anxiety, egalitarianism, high status perception, low status perception, malicious envy, and anger. Purpose in life demonstrated a statistically significant, positive association with respect for hierarchy, belief in hierarchy, and benign envy, whereas there was a negative association with status anxiety, egalitarianism, perception of low status, malicious envy, and anger. Self-acceptance showed a positive relationship with status display and status rejection, and a negative relationship with status anxiety, egalitarianism, low status perception, malicious envy, and anger.

Remembered well-being shows a statistically significant, positive correlation with status display, status rejection, respect for hierarchy, and belief in hierarchy, and a statistically significant, negative correlation with status anxiety, egalitarianism, perception of low status, malicious envy, and anger.

Status anxiety and perception of low status emerged as the most prominent variables with which well-being was associated. Worrying about not occupying a high enough position in the social hierarchy and/or being at risk of losing one's position were associated with lower subjective and psychological well-being. Position in the social hierarchy is key to our self-esteem. In a modern world characterized by high social mobility and few close social relationships, people are forced to rely on external and superficial indicators to judge others. High social status indicates that we deserve attention, recognition, respect, admiration and even love. But unlike societies of the past where social status was tied to heredity and family history, in the modern world status is something that is predominantly seen as a personal achievement and a reflection of self-worth (De Botton, 2008). The contemporary narrative cleverly omits or minimizes the important and uncontrollable role of the environment and macrosocial phenomena, at the expense of personal success. Consequently, the inability to achieve high status is assumed to be a direct consequence of our lack of skills and seen as a clear indicator of our low worth. For this reason, anxiety about not being in the 'right place' in the social hierarchy is closely tied to lowered well-being.

Considering the negative emotions, malicious envy and anger, quite predictably there is a statistically significant relationship with all aspects of well-being. The conceptual model

of subjective well-being itself is characterized by maximizing positive emotions and minimizing negative emotions. Empirical research in the field supports this relationship and shows that it is present in samples from Europe and the United States as well as in Asia (Lange & Crusius, 2015; Iani et al., 2017; Briki, 2018; Espin et al., 2018; Crusius et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2022; Grondal et al., 2023). There are also several previous studies linking malicious envy and anger to reduced psychological well-being (Kudryavtseva, 2016; Sanyal et al., 2016; Iani et al., 2017; Taj et al., 2020; Shabani et al., 2021).

In relation to status consciousness and well-being, the results suggest that the attitudes and beliefs towards social status and social hierarchy are complex and ambiguously related to well-being - distancing from the status system is positively related to some aspects of well-being, while acceptance and full participation in it are positively related to others. On the one hand, the results that the acceptance of social inequalities and the status system as natural features of human societies provide a kind of security for individuals in their interaction with the social world. This determinism makes the social world more understandable and easier to navigate and cope with. Evidence also suggests that status display, ostentation, and highlighting one's own accomplishments are associated with subjective well-being and some aspects of psychological well-being, such as self-acceptance, personal growth, and positive relationships with others. This suggests that acknowledging one's own strengths, assets and achievements is integral to adequate self-esteem, positive self-attitude, personal development and life satisfaction.

On the other hand, distancing from the system of social comparisons is associated with an increase in subjective and psychological well-being, and this relationship is most pronounced for autonomy. The rejection of social status, the avoidance of posturing and demonstrating one's own social position, and the disregard of informal rules imposed by social hierarchy contribute to a sense of independence in life. The rejection of social hierarchy, as a prescribed system of norms and rules of conduct, allows the individual to participate freely and autonomously in social life without being guided by the ultimate social determinism that social hierarchy mandates.

Caution must be exercised in interpreting the relationships between well-being and the attitudes and beliefs toward social status and social hierarchy, as measured by the Status Consciousness Scale, because, although statistically significant, the correlation coefficients are low - $r < 0.2$. This indicates that although there is a small possibility that these correlations are due to chance, they are not clear-cut.

Table 15*Correlations between well-being and mediating variables (status anxiety, status consciousness, envy and anger)*

Variable	Status anxiety	Status Display	Rejection of status	Status Enjoyment	Respect for hierarchy	Belief in hierarchy	Egalitarianism	High status	Low status	Benign envy	Malicious envy	Anger
Satisfaction with life	-0,568**	0,132**	0,162**	-0,025	0,073	0,167**	-0,106*	-0,033	-0,587**	-0,012	-0,317**	-0,246**
Positive affect	-0,407**	0,182**	0,070	0,073	0,100*	0,056	-0,035	-0,014	-0,465**	0,058	-0,226**	-0,198**
Negative affect	0,425**	-0,131**	-0,206**	0,071	-0,015	-0,117**	0,115*	0,052	0,385**	-0,009	0,330**	0,401**
Psychological well-being - general	-0,616**	0,085	0,255**	-0,091*	0,009	0,124**	-0,165**	-0,118**	-0,686**	0,046	-0,448**	-0,312**
Autonomy	-0,350**	-0,178**	0,473**	-0,258**	-0,200**	0,008	-0,073	-0,206**	-0,288**	-0,185**	-0,307**	-0,217**
Environmental mastery	-0,549**	0,047	0,174**	-0,027	0,046	0,144**	-0,138**	-0,008	-0,601**	0,069	-0,318**	-0,265**
Personal growth	-0,239**	0,125**	0,084	-0,019	-0,015	0,018	-0,061	-0,066	-0,354**	0,072	-0,313**	-0,135**
Positive relationships with others	-0,442**	0,187**	0,133**	-0,075	0,024	0,049	-0,150**	-0,102*	-0,491**	-0,007	-0,329**	-0,280**
Purpose in life	-0,433**	0,060	0,020	0,043	0,132**	0,220**	-0,175**	-0,059	-0,556**	0,243**	-0,277**	-0,125**
Self-acceptance	-0,637**	0,119**	0,238**	-0,066	0,033	0,085	-0,110*	-0,072	-0,665**	0,008	-0,403**	-0,325**
Remembered well-being	-0,606**	0,186**	0,165**	-0,029	0,106*	0,201**	-0,130**	-0,055	-0,609**	0,064	-0,376**	-0,257**

Note: Statistically significant coefficients are in **bold**.

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001;

5. The predictive role of subjective social status on well-being

To analyse the predictive role of subjective social status on different aspects of well-being, independent of the effect of the socio-demographic characteristics and objective social status, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted.

As a first step in the regression model, socio-demographic characteristics - gender, age, place of residence, number of children, political beliefs and religious beliefs - are entered. The second step of the regression model includes the objective indicators of social status - income, education, occupation. As a third step, subjective social status was added in the regression model to test whether it has predictive value independent of socio-demographic characteristics (step 1) and beyond objective indicators of social status (step 2). The hierarchical regression model described here is replicated for each of the aspects of well-being.

Data from the regression analyses shows that subjective social status predicts changes in all aspects of well-being except for the Autonomy subscale of the Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire. Similarly, across all aspects of well-being for which subjective social status has a statistically significant predictive role, the effect persisted after controlling for the confounding of the sociodemographic characteristics and the objective indicators of social status (see Figure 17).

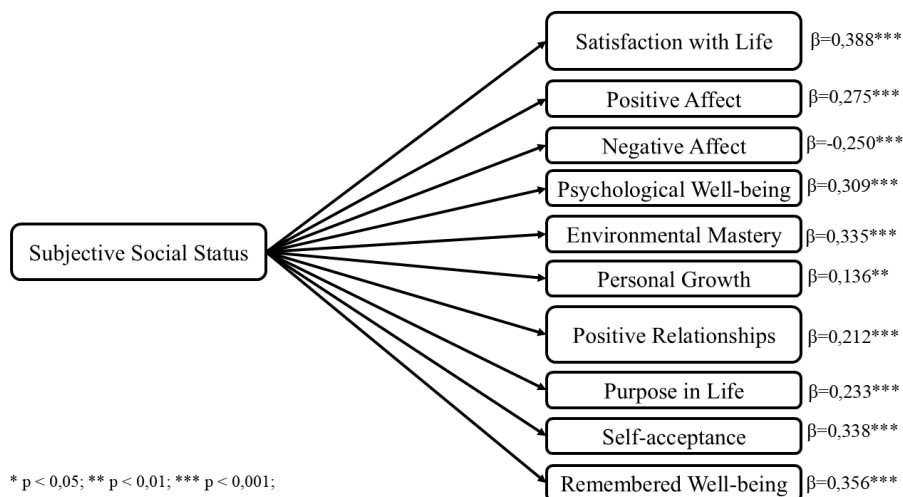


Figure 17. Standardized beta coefficients of subjective social status on well-being.

The lack of a statistically significant relationship with autonomy requires further consideration and analysis to delineate the mechanisms that are likely to determine this outcome. Ryff conceptualizes autonomy as an aspect of psychological well-being that encompasses qualities such as independence, intrinsic motivation, and internal locus of control

that allow individuals to regulate their behavior independently according to their own personal standards and with minimal need for external approval. This gives the individual the freedom to realise themselves against their internalised value system without succumbing to social conventions and conformity (Ryff, 1989a; Ryff, 1989b; Ryff & Singer, 2008). The results of the correlational analyses in this dissertation study support and complement this conceptualization. On the one hand, autonomy is the aspect of well-being (not just psychological well-being) that is least related to subjective social status. On the other hand, autonomy is the aspect of well-being that is most strongly related to status rejection. Also, autonomy is negatively related to status display, status enjoyment, and respect for hierarchy. These results allow for the reasonable assumption that autonomy is tied to rejection of the social hierarchy as a system of social organization and distancing from the social comparisons that underlie it. People with high autonomy avoid demonstrating their social status and refuse to compare themselves with other people in society. While autonomy implies independence, intrinsic motivation, and internal locus of control, social status is associated with vigilance regarding one's own social position and that of other people in society, constant social comparisons, and conformity to one's relative position in society.

The results on the lack of relationship between subjective social status and autonomy obtained in this dissertation study are also found in other empirical studies in the field. Navarro-Carrillo and colleagues (2020) found no statistically significant correlation between subjective social status and autonomy, and no significant predictive role of subjective social status relative to autonomy. In terms of objective indicators of social status, the researchers found that only income significantly predicted changes in autonomy, while education and occupation had no statistically significant effect. The cross-cultural study by Curhan and colleagues, also showed a lack of statistically significant correlation between subjective social status and autonomy in both the U.S. and Japanese samples (Curhan et al., 2014).

5.4. Summary of the explained variance in well-being

Table 27 summarises the explained variance, across the different aspects of well-being, from the current hierarchical regression model. Data on the effect of objective indicators of social status indicate that only income demonstrates a relationship with well-being, but the statistical significance of this relationship fades when subjective social status is added to the model. Analysis of the explained variance in the different regression models shows that, for all aspects of well-being except personal growth, subjective social status explains a larger percentage of the variance than objective indicators of social status.

The data show that the first step of the model - socio-demographic variables - explains approximately between 4% and 11% of the variance in different aspects of well-being. The arithmetic mean of the explained variance from socio-demographic variables is approximately 7%. The highest percentage of explained variance was present in remembered well-being ($R^2 = 0.110$), and the least amount of variance was explained in personal growth ($R^2 = 0.035$) and positive relationships with others ($R^2 = 0.048$).

The second step of the regression model includes objective indicators of social status - income, education, occupation. The addition of these variables in the regression model explains approximately between 1% and 5% of the variation in different aspects of well-being, independent of the influence of socio-demographic variables. The arithmetic mean of the explained variance from the second step in the regression model is approximately 3%. The highest percentage of explained variance, the second step of the model added to environmental mastery ($R^2 = 0.045$) and psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.042$). The lowest percentage of explained variance was observed for positive affect ($R^2 = 0.012$) and negative affect ($R^2 = 0.013$).

The third step adds subjective social status to the regression model and explains approximately between 2% and 12% of the variance in different aspects of well-being, independent of the influence of socio-demographic variables and objective indicators of social status. The arithmetic mean of the independent explained variance from subjective social status is approximately 7%. Subjective social status contributed the most to the explained variance for life satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.121$) and remembered well-being ($R^2 = 0.101$), and contributed the least for personal growth ($R^2 = 0.015$) and positive relationships with others ($R^2 = 0.036$).

Table 27
Summary of explained variance in well-being

	Step 1 (R^2)	Step 2 (R^2)	Step 3 (R^2)
Satisfaction with life	0,069	0,094	0,215
ΔR^2		0,025	0,121
Positive affect	0,055	0,068	0,128
ΔR^2		0,012	0,061
Negative affect	0,057	0,070	0,120
ΔR^2		0,013	0,050
Psychological well-being	0,089	0,130	0,207
ΔR^2		0,042	0,076
Autonomy	0,089	-	-
ΔR^2		-	-
Environmental mastery	0,066	0,111	0,201
ΔR^2		0,045	0,090

Personal growth	0,035	0,065	0,080
ΔR^2		0,030	0,015
Positive relationships	0,048	0,063	0,099
ΔR^2		0,015	0,036
Purpose in life	0,077	0,102	0,146
ΔR^2		0,025	0,044
Self-acceptance	0,068	0,093	0,185
ΔR^2		0,026	0,091
Remembered well-being	0,110	0,133	0,234
ΔR^2		0,023	0,101

These results demonstrate the important role that subjective social status plays in the proper understanding of the relationship between social inequalities and well-being. Objective indicators of social status indicate the factual situation with respect to particular achievements, but do not reflect the way in which these achievements are realised, transformed into opportunities and experienced by the individual. Information about objective achievements in particular areas of life cannot reflect the way in which these achievements are perceived and valued by the individual. The analysis of social inequalities should not remain confined to the field of objective status indicators because they do not reveal the capabilities, desires and goals that guide people's lives. Over-reliance on 'objective' indicators can present a distorted and unrealistic picture of the individual, subjective world. The results of this dissertation research suggest that objective indicators of social status lose their predictive role when juxtaposed with individual, subjective perceptions of social status. Therefore, subjective social status should be used as a complementary tool in the assessment of social inequalities because it allows to capture the individual, personal side of the phenomenon that remains unreflected in the objective indicators of social status.

6. The mediating role of status anxiety, status consciousness, envy and anger

To analyze the mediating role of status anxiety, status consciousness, envy, and anger in the relationship between subjective social status and well-being, two types of mediation analyses were used.

The first of these examines the mediating role of status anxiety and status consciousness as cognitive aspects of subjective social status. The components involved in status consciousness and status anxiety allow to analyze the specific role of different attitudes and beliefs about social status and social hierarchy. To analyze this mediating relationship, a parallel mediator analysis was applied, which allows to simultaneously analyze the indirect

influence of several mediating variables and to compare their relative effect on the dependent variable, while statistically controlling for the influence of the other mediators (Hayes, 2013).

The second mediation model is based on a theoretical review of the relationship between envy and well-being, which shows that the negative effects of envy are often mediated by anger. The serial mediation model allows us to examine both the independent mediating role of benign envy, malevolent envy, and anger relative to well-being and the serial indirect effect going through all of these variables (ibid.).

To analyze the statistical significance of indirect effects, bootstrapping method was used with 5000 replications.

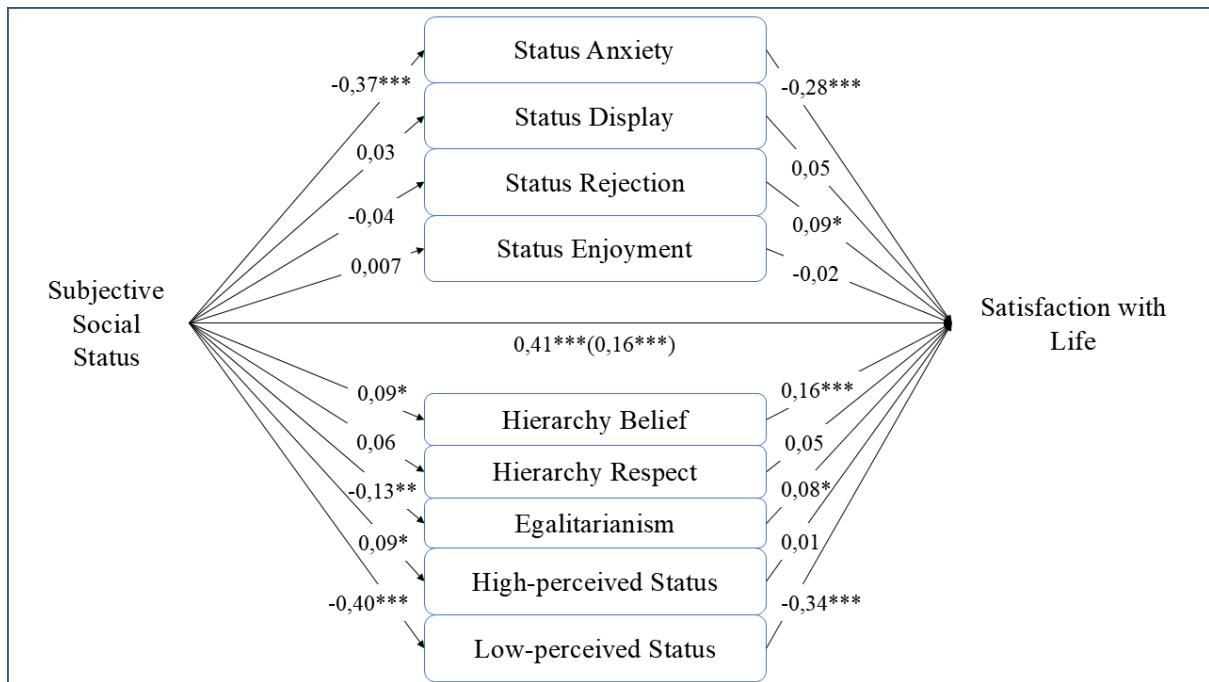
6.1. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and well-being

6.1.1. Subjective well-being

Results for the overall effect of the parallel mediator analysis, with status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in life satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.17$, $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on life satisfaction. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Figure 17.

The bootstrapping results confirmed the significant indirect effect of status anxiety (0.061 - 0.150), belief in hierarchy (0.001 - 0.034) and perception of low status (0.094 - 0.185), while the results for egalitarianism (-0.025 - 0.000) were borderline. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status retained its direct influence on life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$).

These results suggest that higher subjective social status is also associated with higher life satisfaction, with the relationship between the two variables partially mediated by status anxiety, perception of low status, and belief in hierarchy. On the one hand, high self-reported social status is independently associated with high life satisfaction. And on the other hand, people who define their social status as higher are more likely to accept the social hierarchy as an integral component of society and feel less anxiety about their social position, which also makes them more satisfied with life.



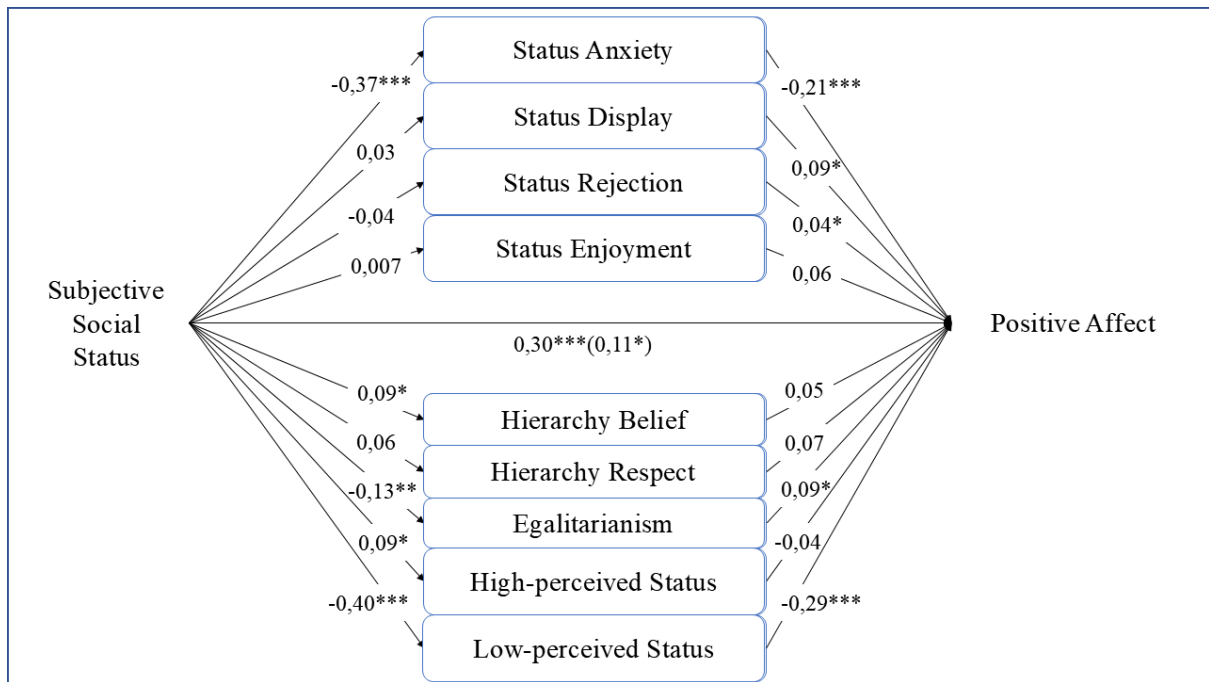
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 17. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and life satisfaction

Results for the overall effect of the parallel mediator analysis, with status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in positive affect ($R^2 = 0.09$, $\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on positive affect (see Figure 18).

The bootstrapping results confirmed the significant indirect effect of status anxiety (0.037 - 0.122) and low status perception (0.07 - 0.163), while the data for egalitarianism (-0.031 - 0.000) were borderline. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status retained its direct influence on positive affect ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$).

These results suggest that higher subjective social status is also associated with more positive emotions, with this relationship partially mediated by status anxiety and perceptions of low status.



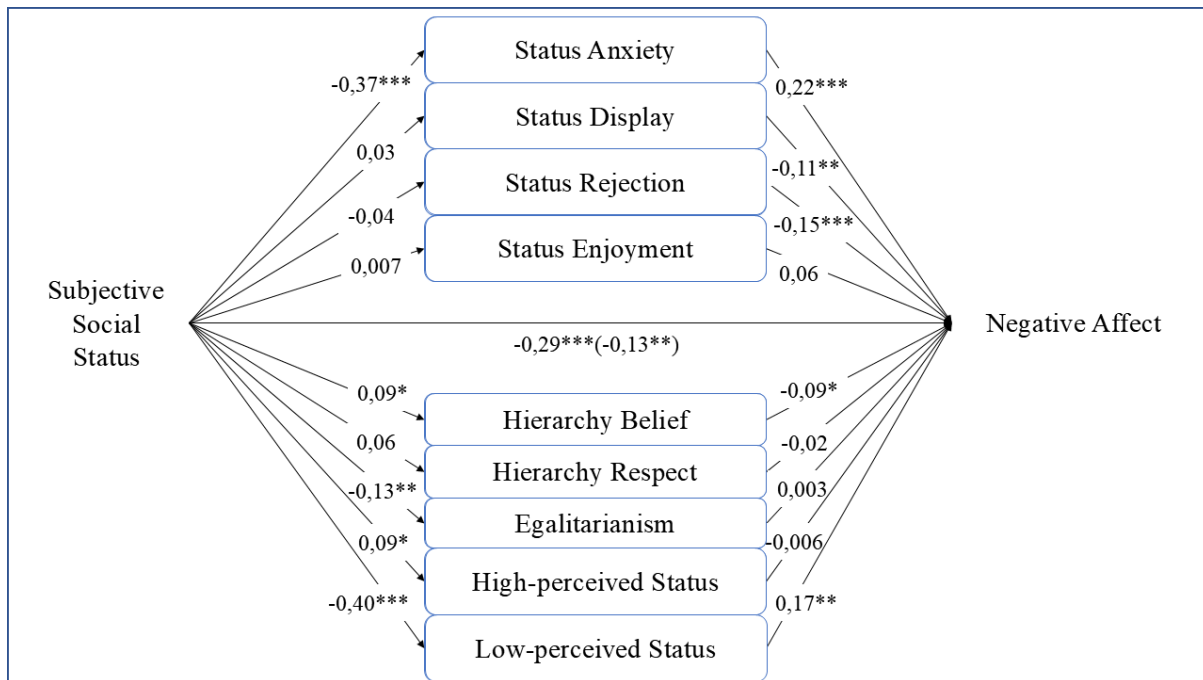
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 18. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and positive affect

Results for the overall effect of the parallel mediator analysis, with status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators, indicated that subjective social status negatively predicted changes in negative affect ($R^2 = 0.08$, $\beta = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on negative affect (see Figure 19).

The bootstrapping results show significant indirect effects of status anxiety (-0.129 - -0.040) and low status perception (-0.112 - -0.027), while the results for belief in hierarchy (-0.025 - 0.000) have borderline values. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis shows that subjective social status retains its direct influence on negative affect ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$).

These results suggest that high subjective social status is associated with fewer negative emotions, with this relationship partially mediated by status anxiety and perceptions of low status. High subjective social status is independently associated with fewer negative emotions and with less worry about social position in general, which in turn also leads to fewer negative emotions.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 19. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and negative affect

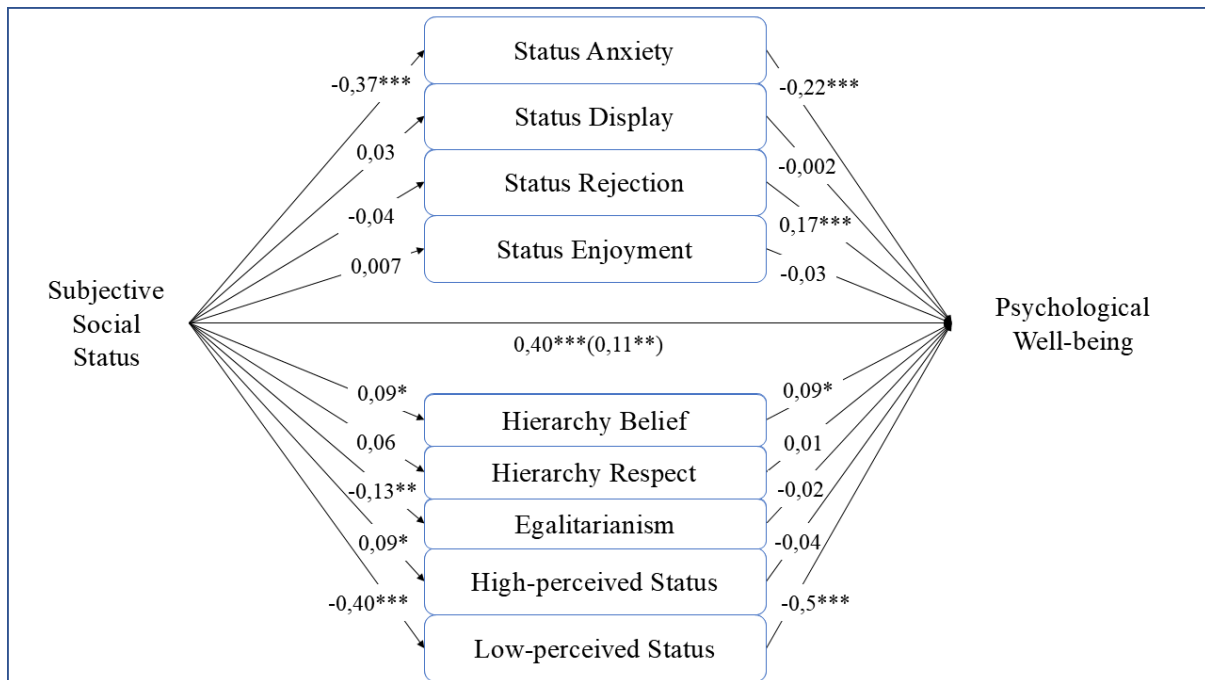
6.1.2. Psychological well-being

Results for the overall effect of the parallel mediator analysis, with status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.16$, $\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on mental well-being (see Figure 20).

The bootstrapping results confirm the significant indirect effect of status anxiety (0.043 - 0.122) and low status perception (0.147 - 0.256), while the data for belief in hierarchy (0.000 - 0.021) show borderline values of the indirect effect. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis shows that subjective social status retains its direct influence on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$).

These results suggest that higher subjective social status is associated with overall higher psychological well-being, with this relationship partially mediated by status anxiety and perceptions of low status. On the one hand, high self-reported social status independently predicted high overall psychological well-being. On the other hand, the relationship between the two variables is explained by the anxiety and worry about one's position in society.

Individuals who rate their social status as higher experience less worry relative to their social position, leading to higher psychological well-being.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 20. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and psychological well-being

As for the different aspects of psychological well-being, the results indicate that perceived low status (across all aspects), status anxiety (in environmental mastery, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance), and belief in hierarchy (environmental mastery and purpose in life) are the factors that mediate the relationship with subjective social status. With respect to autonomy, positive relationships, and purpose in life, there is a complete mediation in which subjective social status loses its predictive role and the relationship is explained entirely by the mediating variables.

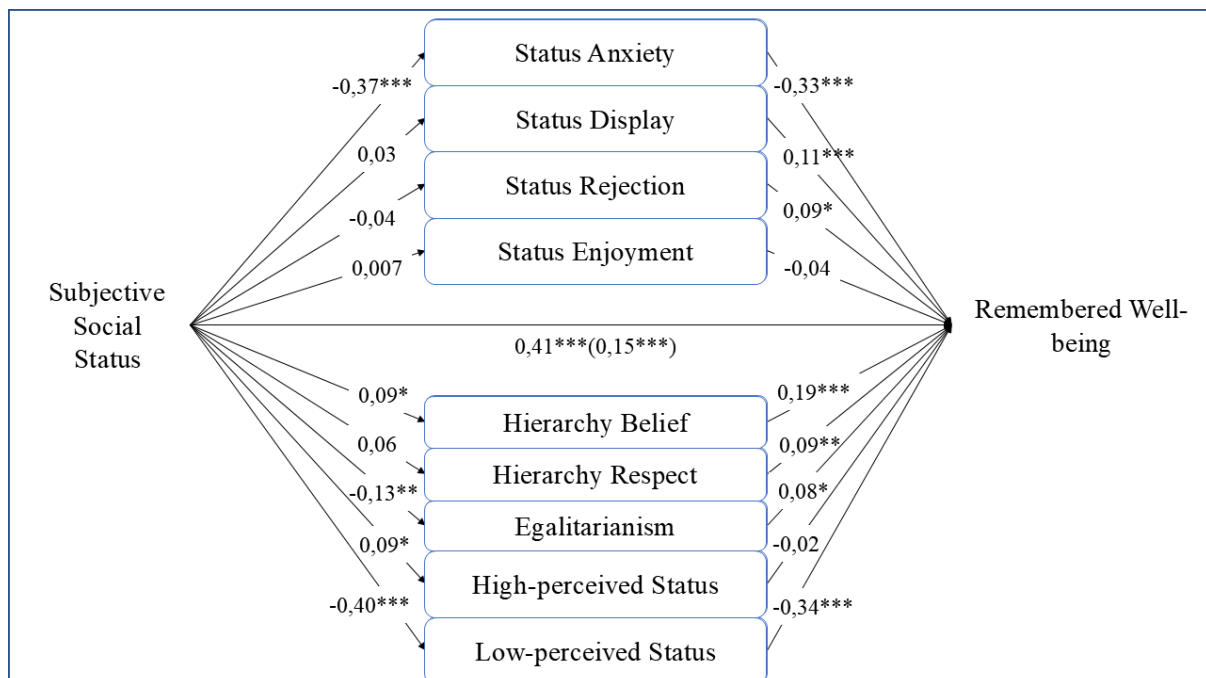
6.1.3. Remembered well-being

Results for the parallel mediator analysis, with status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in remembered well-being ($R^2 = 0.17$, $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on self-concept (see Figure 27).

The bootstrapping results showed significant indirect effects of status anxiety (0.077 - 0.166), belief in hierarchy (0.001 - 0.039), egalitarianism (-0.026 - -0.001), and perception of

low status (0.094 - 0.182). Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status retained its direct influence on remembered well-being ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.001$).

These results suggest that high subjective social status is associated with overall higher well-being, with this relationship partially mediated by status anxiety, perception of low status, belief in hierarchy, and egalitarianism. That is, on the one hand, high subjective social status is independently associated with high remembered well-being, and on the other hand, this relationship is mediated by concerns about one's position and acceptance of social hierarchy as a structural phenomenon. The indirect effect through egalitarianism is interesting, showing that higher subjective social status is associated with weaker egalitarian beliefs, and in turn, high egalitarianism is associated with higher well-being.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 27. Status anxiety and status consciousness as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and remembered well-being

6.2. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and well-being

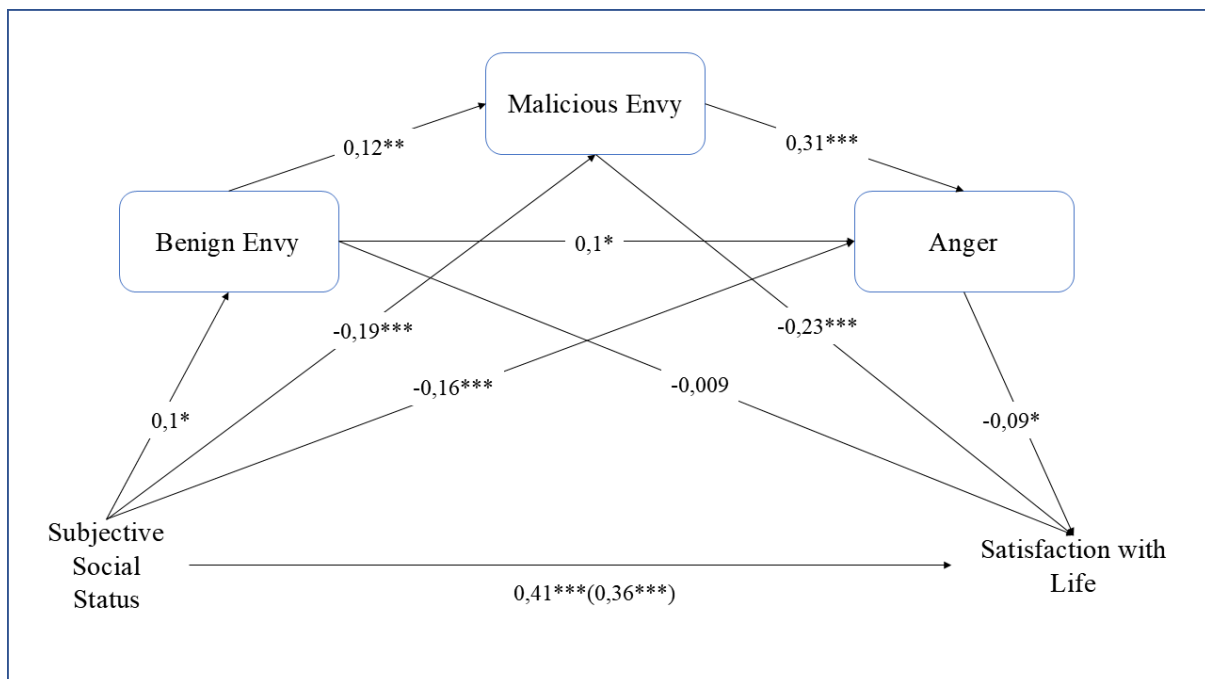
6.2.1. Subjective well-being

Results for the overall effect of the serial mediation analysis, with benign envy, malicious envy, and anger as mediators, showed that subjective social status positively

predicted changes in life satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.17$, $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on life satisfaction. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Figure 28.

The bootstrapping results strongly confirm the significant indirect effect through malicious envy (0.019 - 0.073), while the other indirect effects have borderline values - benign and malicious envy (-0.007 - 0.000), benign envy and anger (-0.003 - 0.000), malicious envy and anger (0.000 - 0.014), and the entire mediating path through benign envy, malicious envy, and anger (-0.001 - 0.000). Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status retained its direct influence on life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$).

These results suggest that there is a direct, independent relationship between self-defined social position and life satisfaction, as well as a partially mediated relationship between the variables that is realized through malicious envy. This suggests that lower life satisfaction is associated with both lower subjective social position and a disposition toward more negative emotions that follow this lower social position.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

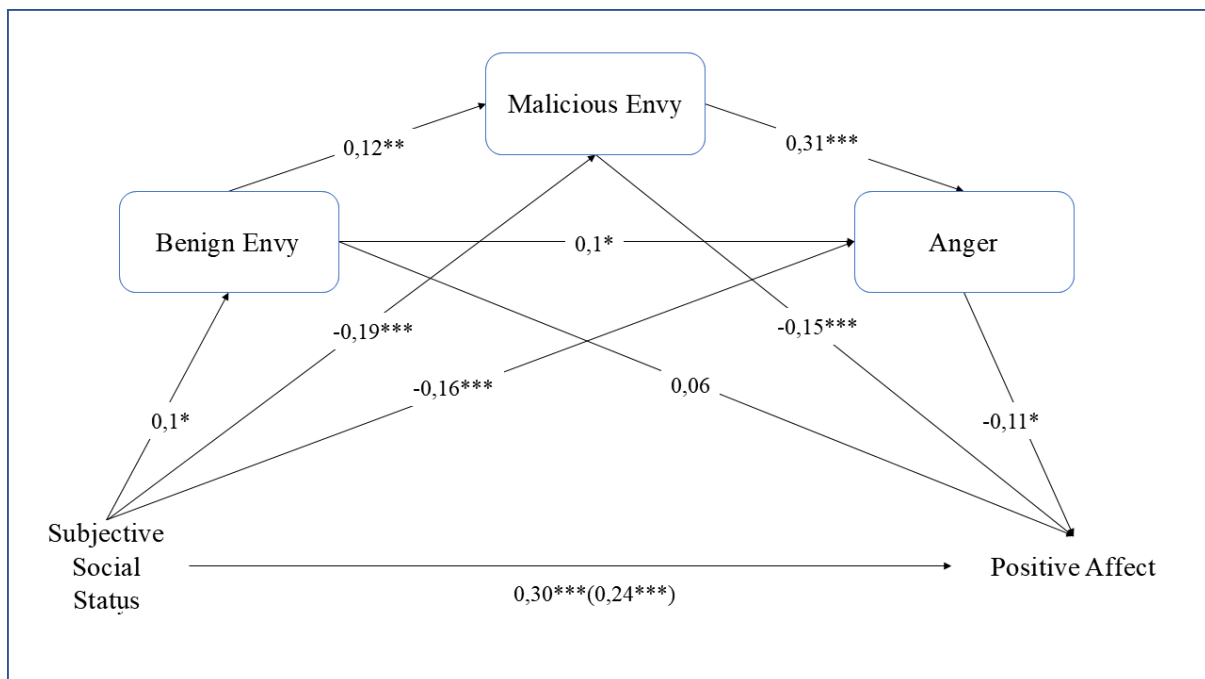
Figure 28. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and life satisfaction

Results for the overall effect of the serial mediation analysis, with benign envy, malicious envy, and anger as mediators, showed that subjective social status positively predicted changes in positive affect ($R^2 = 0.09$, $\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial

mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on positive affect. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Figure 29.

The bootstrapping results showed significant indirect effects through malicious envy (0.009 - 0.055), anger (0.001 - 0.037), and malicious envy and anger (0.001 - 0.016). The results for the remaining indirect effects have borderline values - benign and malicious envy (-0.005 - 0.000), benign envy and anger (-0.003 - 0.000), and the entire mediating path through benign envy, malicious envy, and anger (-0.001 - 0.000). Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status maintained its direct influence on positive affect ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$).

These results suggest that experiencing more positive emotions is directly associated with higher subjective social position. On the other hand, higher subjective social status is associated with stronger dispositions toward experiencing malicious envy and anger, which quite logically leads to lower positive affect.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

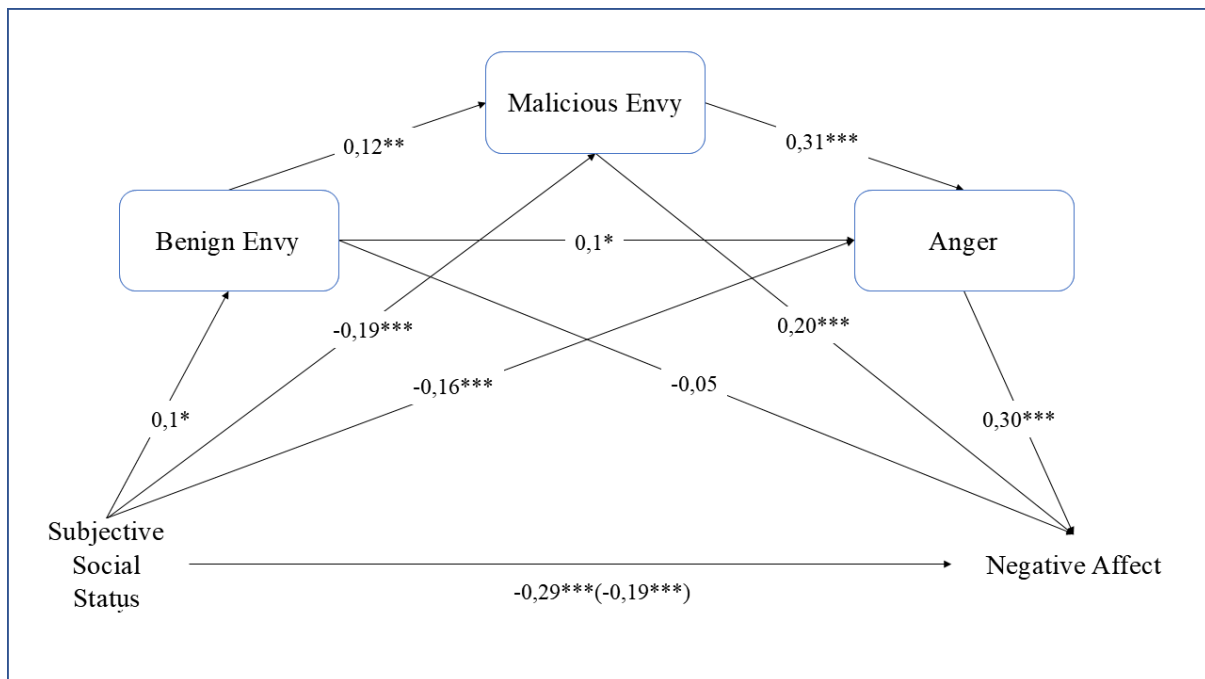
Figure 29. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and positive affect

Results for the overall effect of the serial mediation analysis, with benign envy, malicious envy, and anger as mediators, showed that subjective social status negatively predicted changes in negative affect ($R^2 = 0.08$, $\beta = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial

mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on negative affect (see Figure 30).

The bootstrapping results confirm significant indirect effects through malicious envy (-0.065 - -0.015), anger (-0.076 - -0.020), and malicious envy and anger (-0.033 - -0.007). The remaining indirect effects through benign and malicious envy (0.000 - 0.007), benign envy and anger (0.000 - 0.008), and the entire mediating path through benign envy, malicious envy, and anger (0.000 - 0.003) have borderline values. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis shows that subjective social status retains its direct influence on negative affect ($\beta = -0.19, p < 0.001$).

These data suggest that the relationship between subjective social status and negative affect is realized both directly and indirectly through maladaptive envy and anger. On the one hand, higher subjective social status is independently associated with fewer negative emotions. On the other hand, higher subjective social status is associated with higher malicious envy and anger, which both individually and in serial sequence are associated with increased negative affect.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

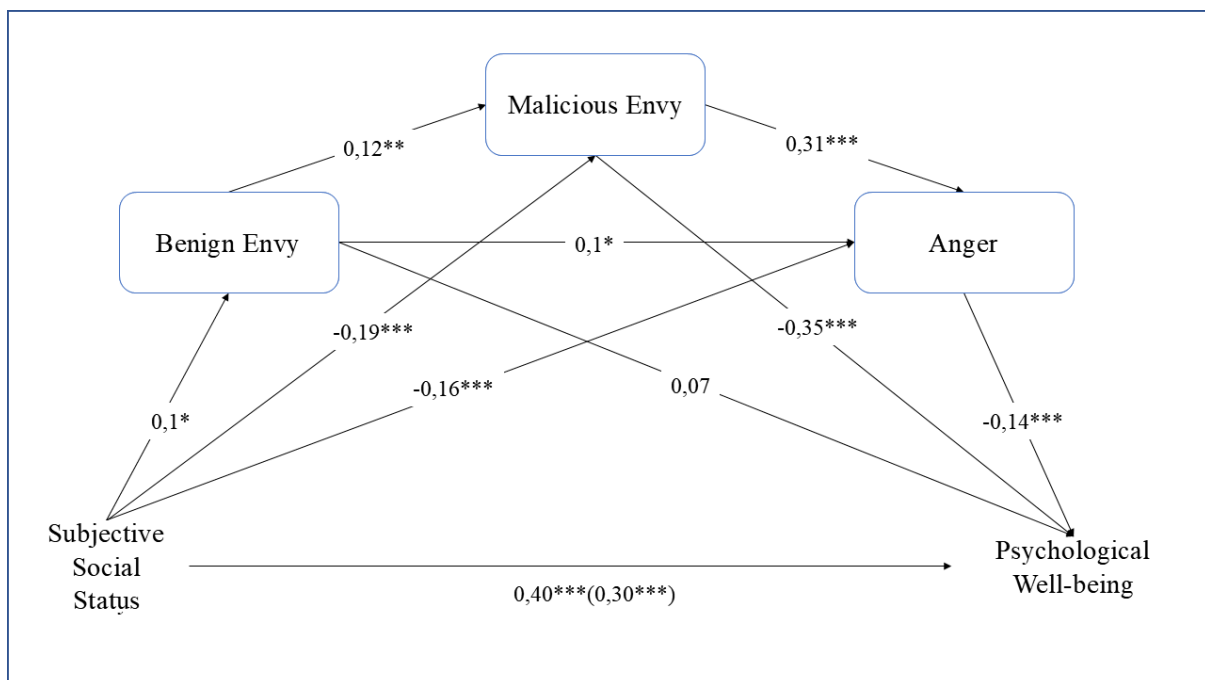
Figure 30. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and negative affect

6.2.2. Psychological well-being

Results for the overall effect of the serial mediation analysis, with benign envy, malicious envy, and anger as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in psychological well-being ($R^2 = 0.16$, $\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on psychological well-being. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Figure 31.

The bootstrapping results showed significant indirect effects across malicious envy (0.032 - 0.106), anger (0.006 - 0.041), and malicious envy and anger (0.002 - 0.017). On the other hand, the indirect effects through benign and malicious envy (-0.011 - 0.000), benign envy and anger (-0.004 - 0.000), malicious envy and anger (0.002 - 0.017), and the entire mediating path through benign envy, malicious envy, and anger (-0.002 - 0.000) demonstrate borderline values for statistical significance. Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis shows that subjective social status retains its direct influence on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$).

These results suggest that the relationship between subjective position in the social hierarchy and psychological well-being is realized both directly and indirectly through malicious envy and anger. On the one hand, higher subjective social status is independently associated with higher psychological well-being. On the other hand, a higher subjective position in the hierarchy leads to a less pronounced disposition toward malicious envy and anger. In turn, these lower emotional dispositions were associated with higher psychological well-being, both parallelly and in serial sequence.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 31. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and psychological well-being

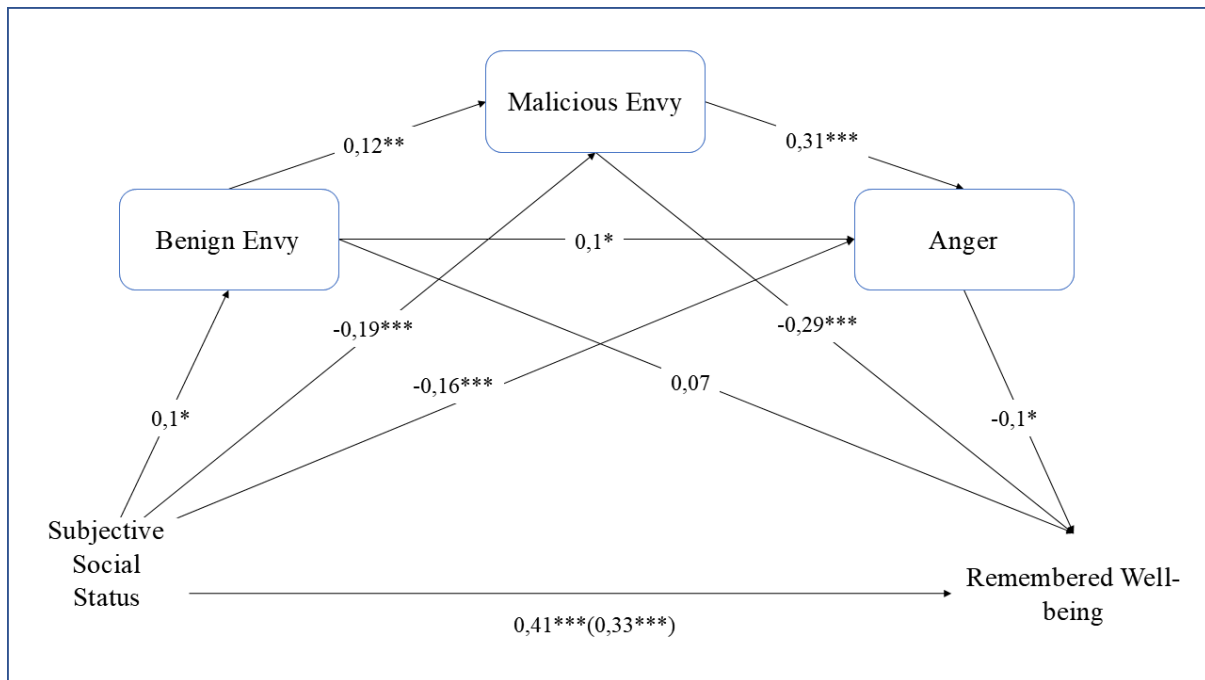
As for the different aspects of psychological well-being, results indicated that malicious envy (for all aspects), anger, and the serial path from malicious envy through anger (for environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance) and benign envy (for autonomy and purpose in life) were the factors that mediated the relationship with subjective social status. With respect to autonomy, there is full mediation, in which subjective social status loses its predictive role and the relationship is explained entirely by the mediating variables.

6.2.3. Remembered well-being

Results for the overall effect of the serial mediation analysis, with benign envy, malicious envy, and anger as mediators, indicated that subjective social status positively predicted changes in remembered well-being ($R^2 = 0.17$, $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). There was partial mediation and there was a statistically significant direct and indirect effect on remembered well-being (see Figure 38).

The bootstrapping results strongly support the significant indirect effects of malicious envy (0.025 - 0.089) and anger (0.001 - 0.034). The remaining indirect effects have borderline values for statistical significance - benign and malicious envy (-0.009 - 0.000), benign envy and anger (-0.003 - 0.000), malicious envy and anger (0.000 - 0.015), and the entire mediating path through benign envy, malicious envy, and anger (-0.001 - 0.000). Controlling for mediator effects, the analysis showed that subjective social status retained its direct influence on remembered well-being ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$).

These results allow for the reasonable conclusion that the relationship between subjective social status and remembered well-being is binary. On the one hand, subjective social status, independent of the influence of other variables in the model, is associated with higher remembered well-being. On the other hand, the relationship is separately realized through the mediating variables malicious envy and anger. That is, examinees with higher subjective social status will be less likely to experience malicious envy and anger, and in turn, this decrease in the disposition toward negative emotions will be associated with increased remembered well-being.



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;

Figure 38. Envy and anger as mediators of the relationship between subjective social status and remembered well-being

CONCLUSION

The study of social inequalities and their relation to health and well-being is of utmost importance, especially in Bulgarian socio-cultural conditions. The theoretical review conducted shows that social inequalities are a fundamental feature of social animals and can be found at all stages of economic development in humans as they are conditioned in the evolutionary development and the adaptive value they possess (Boehm, 1999; Silk, 2007; Smith et al., 2010; Moosa & Ud-Dean, 2011; Markham & Gesquiere, 2017; Global Wealth Report, 2024). A historical review of the evolution of social inequalities shows that they have predominantly followed a steady growth trend that has been pronounced in recent decades (Piketty, 2018; Alfani, 2021; Alfani, Gierok & Schaff, 2022). The situation is similar in Bulgaria, where there has been a strong rise in inequality in recent decades, and Bulgaria is currently the country with the highest income inequality in the European Union (Hallaert, 2020; Eurostat, 2023). Also, Bulgaria is the country from the European Union in which the respondents define themselves as the most dissatisfied with their lives (Eurostat, 2023). The in-depth study of social inequalities might not be so pressing if they were simply an objective reflection of inequalities between people, but they are closely linked to a range of individual and social problems, with the focus of the present study being their relationship to health and

well-being (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). Where one is positioned in the social hierarchy predicts and determines one's life. And while much of the policies and measures to address this problem view it through a materialist lens, empirical evidence suggests that objective indicators of social status that capture an individual's material capabilities are insufficient to explain variation in health and well-being (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). In the initial stages of economic development, when individuals' basic needs are not met, increases in material capabilities play a key role, but beyond the threshold of basic needs, the effect of social status is strongly mediated by subjective and cognitive-affective mechanisms (Anand & Ravallion, 1993; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2014). At this stage, the key to understanding social inequalities is the subjective perception of social status, or where one believes one is in the social hierarchy. This individual interpretation involves a cognitive appraisal and affective experience of the subjective conditions that accompany the social and material environment (Adler et al., 2000; Singh-Manoux et al., 2003).

The results of this dissertation support these conclusions in Bulgarian socio-cultural conditions. The empirical data shows that subjective social status is significantly related to all aspects of well-being, and this relationship holds after statistically controlling for the effects of objective indicators of social status and socio-demographic variables. Analysis of the explained variance across regression models shows that, relative to all aspects of well-being except personal growth, subjective social status explains a larger percentage of the variance than objective indicators of social status. Anxieties and worries about social status, as well as the tendency to experience negative emotions that accompanies low position in the hierarchy, are the main factors mediating this relationship.

These results demonstrate the important role that personal perceptions of social status play in better understanding the relationship between social inequalities and well-being. The analysis of social inequalities should not remain confined to the field of objective status indicators because they do not reveal the capabilities, desires and goals that guide people's lives. Over-reliance on 'objective' indicators can present a distorted and unrealistic picture of the individual, subjective world. The results of this dissertation research suggest that objective indicators of social status lose their predictive role when juxtaposed with individual, subjective perceptions of social status. Therefore, subjective social status should be used as a complementary tool in the assessment of social inequalities because it allows to capture the individual, personal side of the phenomenon that remains unreflected in objective indicators of social status. This suggests that a more complete understanding of social inequalities requires

rethinking of the problem and revisiting it through a different paradigmatic framework, namely that of psychology.

Applicability of the dissertation results

The results of this dissertation research help inform adequate social and health policies to address social inequalities and their negative consequences. Also, the results contribute to further develop the theoretical framework and methodological apparatus of well-being.

A good knowledge of the subjective components of social status and their interaction with well-being allows to adequately address the factors that negatively affect health and well-being. Position in society is not an objective index that can be calculated using various indicators derived from outside the individual. It is a consequence of the individual's interpretation and involves a cognitive-affective assessment of the subjective conditions that accompany the individual in his or her social and material environment. Therefore, to address social inequalities more effectively in societies where people's basic needs are met, the focus in designing adequate social and health policies must be on the psychological mechanism that mediates the negative effects of social inequalities.

Also, the results of the analyses of variance suggest that social equality is more important for those who have low social status, while increasing social status is associated with distancing from the social hierarchy and social comparisons. This suggests that the design of adequate policies to address social inequalities must take into account the different attitudes and beliefs towards social status that different layers of society have. Otherwise, there is a risk of social tensions resulting from policies, which may be further fuelled and directed by economically interested circles that benefit from high social inequalities and stratification in society.

The results of this study contribute to inform counseling and therapy practice. Social position is a key characteristic of personality yet remains poorly understood or even misunderstood in counselling and therapy practice. Evidence suggests that psychotherapists notice status differences with their clients and this can have a negative impact on their attitudes and work (Smith et al., 2011). Also, therapists demonstrate an overwhelmingly objective understanding of social status, viewing it primarily through its financial perspective and missing the connection between finances and their clients' worldviews, values, beliefs, and attitudes (Cook & Lawson, 2016). When social inequalities and the stresses caused by them are actively discussed during the session, in a way that acknowledges and integrates them into

the process, this leads to a positive outcome for the client (Falconnier & Elkin, 2008; Thompson et al., 2012).

Limitations of the dissertation research

The main limitations of this dissertation study are the cross-sectional design of the study, which does not allow for causal inferences between variables; the self-report nature of the instruments used, which might be influenced by cognitive distortions, social desirability, and others; and the sample of the study, which is not representative and the results of which allow for only limited generalization.

Guidelines for future research

First of all, as a guideline for future research, I would point to the need for the models constructed in the dissertation research to be tested in new samples, the socio-demographic profile of which should approach representativeness. Also, such an extended study would do well to include a social desirability scale to help register responses with a minimum level of defensive or socially desirable responding. Such an approach would allow empirical results to be more definitively confirmed or rejected and their conclusions to be generalized with a greater degree of reliability.

Another area in which future research can be directed is the collection of additional data on the adaptation of the psychometric instruments, which have been translated for the first time into Bulgarian in this study. These additional studies will help to accumulate firm data on the validity of the instruments and ensure their adequate use. This dissertation study presented preliminary construct validity data for all instruments that were used for the first time in Bulgarian, but there is a need to replicate these results in new samples, as well as to accumulate convergent and divergent validity data for the instruments.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The scientific contribution of the dissertation can be reported at theoretical, empirical and practical level.

- In theoretical terms, the contemporary scientific discussions on the subjective perception of social inequalities and the multidimensional models for the assessment and optimization of well-being are analyzed and systematized, which justifies the applied methodological framework of the study. A reconceptualization of social status through its subjective aspects is made. The

advantages and limitations of different approaches to well-being assessment are compared and their integration into a common construct is attempted. An original theoretical and conceptual model is proposed to analyze the role of status and affective variables in the relationship between social status and well-being.

- A questionnaire was developed combining instruments validated in the Bulgarian sociocultural context and new adapted questionnaires for measuring status anxiety, status consciousness, benign and malicious envy, and remembered well-being. Results for the psychometric indices of the adapted questionnaires show good construct validity and internal consistency in the present sample. Convergent validity data is presented for the instrument measuring remembered well-being. Data from the psychometric procedures conducted support the use of these scales as reliable and valid instruments in the Bulgarian research practice.
- The results of the empirical study enrich the available research achievements in Bulgarian socio-cultural conditions, revealing the key role that subjective social status has on well-being. A role whose effect persists even after statistically controlling for the influence of objective indicators of social status. We also analyze the mediating effects of status anxiety, the components of status consciousness, envy, and anger in the relationship between subjective social status and well-being. The analyzed theoretical-conceptual model of interactions presents a new in-depth view of the studied phenomena.
- The study enriches empirical knowledge on the differential role of sociodemographic characteristics in relation to subjective social status, the attitudes towards social hierarchy and social status, envy, anger and well-being.
- The findings contribute for informing adequate social and health policies to address social inequalities and their negative consequences, as well as helping to improve counselling and therapeutic work.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

On the topic of the dissertation:

Hristov, S. (2022). Subjective Social Status and Health - The Mediating Role of Sadness and Anxiety. *Yearbook of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", book Psychology*, 112(1), 170-191.

Hristov, S. (2023). Subjective Social Status, Self-Perceived Health and Life Satisfaction - The Mediating Effect of Negative Emotions. *Current Challenges in Psychological Science - Conference Proceedings*, 18, 36-51.

Hristov, S. (in press). Social Inequalities - Ethological Preconditions and Historical Development. *Proceedings of Doctoral Readings*.

Petrov, D. & Hristov, S. (in press). Status Anxiety, Status Consciousness, and Psychological Well-being. *Proceedings of the 10th Jubilee International Congress of Psychology*.

Hristov, S. & Petrov, D. (in press). The Prognostic Role of Subjective Social Status for Well-being. *Psychological aspects of health inequalities and quality of life*.

Outside the scope of the dissertation:

Hristov, S. (2021). Stress and Myopia. *Proceedings of the National Scientific and Practical Conference on Psychology - Theory and Practice*, 244-255.

Petrov, D. & Hristov, S. (2022). Personality and Socio-demographic Aspects of Attitudes Towards Punishment. *Psychology - Tradition and Modernity. Scientific Proceedings of the Jubilee Conference of St. Kliment Ohridski*", 77-86.

PARTICIPATION IN SCIENTIFIC FORUMS

- National Scientific and Practical Conference on Psychology: Theory and Practice - Varna, 2021.
 - Topic of the report: Stress and Myopia
- Psychology - Tradition and Modernity - Sofia, 2022.
 - Topic of the report: Personality and Socio-demographic Aspects of Attitudes Towards Punishment - with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Petrov
- XIII National School for Doctoral Students and Young Researchers in Social Sciences - Sofia, 2022
 - Topic of the report: Subjective Social Status - Individual Perception of the Position in The Social Hierarchy
- Third Interdisciplinary Doctoral Forum - Kyustendil, 2022
 - Topic of the report: Subjective Social Status as a Predictor of Health in Bulgaria
- XVIII International Conference - Days of Applied Psychology - Niš, 2022.
 - Topic of the report: Subjective Social Status and Health - The Mediating Role of Negative Emotions
- Doctoral Readings - The New (In)Normality - Sofia, 2022.
 - Topic of the report: Social Inequalities - Ethological Preconditions and Historical Development
- X Jubilee International Congress of Psychology - Sofia, 2023.
 - Topic of the report: Status Anxiety, Status Consciousness and Psychological Well-Being - with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Petrov