

## **Review**

**by Prof. Rumen Ivanov Stamatov –**

**Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"**

on the dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree  
**“Doctor”**

in the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences

Professional field: 3.2. Psychology

Doctoral Program: *Health Psychology*

**Author: Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov**

**Topic: "Subjective Social Status – Envy, Anger, and Well-being"**

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Petrov

### **1. General Description of the Submitted Materials**

I was appointed as a member of the academic committee by decision of the scientific jury for the dissertation defense on the topic: *"Subjective Social Status – Envy, Anger, and Well-being"*, for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program *Health Psychology*. The author of the dissertation is Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov, PhD candidate at the Department of Psychology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." The submitted materials by Mr. Hristov are in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its implementing regulations, and the internal rules of Sofia University. The materials include the dissertation, an abstract, and attached publications.

### **2. Relevance of the Topic and Appropriateness of Goals and Tasks.**

The exploration of the relationship between objective and subjective factors offers a deeper understanding of their influence on the dynamics of well-being, which underscores the importance of this research. Specifically, the study investigates the impact of various affective and cognitive mechanisms that highlight the role of subjective social status in well-being, while also offering

alternatives to explanations focused solely on objective indicators. The inclusion of constructs such as status anxiety, envy, anger, and status awareness shapes a framework to understand subjective social status and enhances comprehension of well-being and ways to improve it, thereby confirming the relevance of the topic.

### **3. Knowledge of the Problem**

The dissertation is structured in two parts – theoretical and empirical. The theoretical section provides an in-depth analysis of the constructs of subjective social status and well-being. Recognizing the differences between subjective and objective dimensions of social status and well-being, as well as inconsistencies in empirical research, the analysis introduces additional constructs – envy, anger, status anxiety, and status awareness – to bridge these conceptual gaps.

Social status is examined within the context of contemporary research, including different approaches, concepts, empirical studies, and the relations between objective and subjective indicators of social status.

Focusing on the subjective dimension of social status, the analysis tracks the influence of cognitions and affects, outlining the relationships among subjective social status, negative emotions such as status anxiety, envy, and anger, and cognitive assessments interpreted through status awareness and the cognition-emotion relationship.

I would like to highlight the internal coherence of the analysis of social status, enriched with additional constructs that contribute to a heuristic approach to understanding its relation to well-being.

Well-being is also analyzed through various approaches and conceptual frameworks, maintaining the distinction between subjective and psychological well-being. Noteworthy is the analysis of well-being's effects on mental and physical health. The interrelations between constructs form the conceptual framework of the research, within which goals, hypotheses, and tasks are formulated.

The empirical part is distinguished by accurate statistical analysis, using instruments with the necessary psychometric characteristics, yielding results that align with the research hypotheses.

I also wish to note the depth of the study, evidenced by the inclusion of diverse constructs in the analysis, although the justification for some of their inclusion could be more clearly articulated. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the value of the research.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The methodology reflects the fundamental design and conceptual framework of the study.

The empirical research was conducted using the following instruments:

- MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000);
- Status Anxiety Scale (Keshabyan & Day, 2020);
- Status Awareness Scale (Alba et al., 2014);
- Benign and Malicious Envy Scale (Lange & Crusius, 2015);
- "Anger" subscale from the Multidimensional Aggression Scale (Kalchev, 2009);
- Various well-being assessment tools covering different conceptualizations of well-being:
  - Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS – Diener et al., 1985; Ivanova, 2011),
  - Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE – Diener et al., 2009),
  - Psychological Well-being Questionnaire (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Silgidjiyan, Karabelova & Zankova, 2007),
  - “Mindful Well-being” subscale from the Pemberton Happiness Index (Hervas & Vazquez, 2013).

The selected instruments are entirely appropriate for the constructs being studied.

#### **5. Characteristics and Evaluation of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is 265 pages long, containing 38 figures and 27 tables. Its structure includes an introduction, three main chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and appendices. The bibliography lists 341 sources, including 20 in Cyrillic and 321 in Latin script.

The research is structured into theoretical and empirical parts: the theoretical part presents the main constructs, and the empirical part outlines the research goals, tasks, hypotheses, instruments (with detailed psychometric characteristics), and analysis corresponding to the hypotheses.

## **6. Contributions and Significance for Science and Practice**

The contributions of Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov are substantial and correspond to the conducted research. I would highlight the following:

- A comprehensive analysis of the studied constructs and their relationship to various dimensions of well-being and health;
- An in-depth analysis of social status, with emphasis on its subjective dimension and the advantages of this conceptualization for studying its connection to well-being;
- Identification of the effects of subjective social status on various aspects of well-being via different affective variables;
- Adaptation and development of instruments to assess subjective social status, enabling future research in the well-being domain;
- The results reflect precise analysis using original tools, ensuring the validity of conclusions and supporting their practical applicability in enhancing well-being.

## **7. Assessment of the Dissertation Publications**

The publications related to the dissertation topic are in the form of five articles, published in scientific journals, and meet the requirements.

## **8. Doctoral Student's Personal Contribution**

Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov independently conducted the entire dissertation research. The text, results, and contributions are entirely his own work.

## **9. Abstract**

The abstract includes the core points of the dissertation, results, and their analysis. It accurately reflects the theoretical analysis and the main findings of the study.

## **10. Personal Impressions**

I would like to note that Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov possesses deep knowledge in the studied field, combined with responsibility and an original

approach to the empirical exploration of the topic, enriching the understanding of the relationship between subjective social status and well-being.

### **11. Recommendations for Future Use**

I would recommend expanding the research by incorporating additional constructs, particularly exploring how materialistic orientations influence the perception of differences in social status.

### **Conclusion**

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate, Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov, has profound knowledge of the topic. I believe that he meets the requirements for being awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its regulations, and the internal rules of Sofia University. Based on the above arguments and the overall positive evaluation of the dissertation, I propose that the academic jury vote in favor and confer the degree of **Doctor** on Svetoslav Kaloyanov Hristov, for which I cast my affirmative vote.

12 May 2025

Prepared by:

/ Prof. Rumen Stamatov/