

**SOFIA UNIVERSITY „St. Kliment Ohridski“**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**REVIEW**

by Prof. Sonya Karabeliova, PhD, D.Sc.

Dissertation on the topic: **„PERSONAL PREDICTORS OF  
EXPERIENCED WELL-BEING“**

**On procedure for election and appointment of to obtain a  
scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in a field 3.2.**

**Psychology**

**Author: prof. Margarita Angelova Stefanova - Bakracheva**

The dissertation presented for review is in the field of general and developmental psychology, combined and enriched with the theme of well-being. Such a theme has been actively developing in the realm of health psychology in recent decades. The issue of well-being is enriched with topics such as personality traits based on the "Big Five" model, the cybernetic theory of personality traits, personality dispositions, coping strategies, and coping potential. From this perspective, Prof. Bakracheva sets an ambitious task to present an integrative model of well-being.

The subject is worthy of attention and has attracted the interest of researchers because it combines the relationship between well-being, mindfulness, the meaning of life, and the search for meaning. In this regard, the primary priorities of research directions related to enhancing mental health in the context of the

pandemic and post-pandemic conditions of COVID-19 are clearly and categorically outlined. Additionally, the focus is on enhancing personal resources for effective self-regulation through learning. Another aspect of the development that deserves attention relates to the proposed practical guidelines associated with preventive support to maintain optimal personality functioning. In this regard, I believe this is more than sufficient to justify the relevance and significance of the issue under consideration.

Prof. Bakracheva's presence in this thematic area, which is conditioned not only by the debate status and problematization of the substantive phase of this scientific field but primarily by her research opportunities at both theoretical and empirical levels, deserves attention.

The dissertation clearly exhibits a rigorous scientific approach to addressing the set tasks. The work has been developed according to strict scientific criteria within the framework of 327 standard pages. It includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The literature used is relevant to the research problem and encompasses 453 sources, including 29 in Bulgarian and 424 in English.

A distinctive feature of the dissertation is the empirical research conducted during the period of COVID-19, the crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, as well as natural disasters. The obtained results can contribute to the factual foundation at the intersection of general, developmental, and counseling psychology. The research tools and methods used contribute to the formation of a specific methodological basis for psychological knowledge.

In the theoretical part of the dissertation, Prof. Bakracheva explores personality traits according to the "Big Five" model, the cybernetic theory of personality dispositions, and their

relationship with coping strategies and well-being in conditions of uncertainty and unpredictability. All of this raises questions not only about coping with everyday difficulties in people's lives but also about adaptation and decision-making in successive crisis situations that compromise the ability to control.

The in-depth theoretical constructs presented address the need for active work by support specialists in maintaining personal resources for sustainable and effective self-regulation.

Based on a thorough analysis of numerous theoretical approaches and empirical studies, M. Bakracheva logically connects the studied phenomena, placing them within the framework of the Bulgarian sociocultural context, which contributes to and complements the picture of the in-depth and critical analysis. Using the developed theoretical framework, the author creates a specific model for empirical research, whose design assumes a higher theoretical level, operating on four levels: cultural, social, behavioral, and intra-individual.

The empirical part of the dissertation is impressive due to its wide scope, creating conditions for considering the effect of a large portion of the factors that influence the studied phenomena and the nature of the relationships between them. Overall, the design presents an ambitious theoretical and experimental project in both conception and execution. The sample and methods are described in detail and accurately. The presentation of the results follows the set tasks and describes the testing of the formulated hypotheses. The conducted statistical analyses align with the objectives, allowing for both descriptive results and those providing information on causality. The inclusion of a large number of variables and the good control over them during the analyses is commendable.

The results are presented in both tabular and graphical formats, with high-quality visual representations. The obtained results enable further analyses that could lead to practical applications and guidance for future research, as proposed in the work. Regarding the presentation of the results, some of the tables could be placed in appendices rather than in the main text to make it more streamlined and readable for both specialists and non-specialists.

It is important to note that the empirical research conducted adheres to the approach and logic of contemporary psychology, which is accepted as research value.

The results of the empirical research demonstrate numerous specific contributory relationships. In this dissertation, each result finds its place in a specific area of psychology. I would like to emphasize that by accepting and defending the fundamental idea of the dissertation, M. Bakracheva substantiates a new perspective for studying issues related to personality traits and dispositions and their connection with well-being through mediating constructs in the field of general, developmental, and counseling psychology. This brings about changes in assessment and diagnostic models and techniques, as well as support and maintenance of optimal human functioning.

The entire text of the dissertation corresponds and is comparable to real human behavior. All of this is facilitated by the proper selection of research instruments.

On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the incorporation of the unbreakable theory-method-action relationship into research activities is an important sign of methodological competence and scientific discipline by Prof. M.

Bakracheva. The work represents a valuable source of knowledge for students, researchers, and practicing consultants.

The dissertation shows that Prof. M. Bakracheva has embarked on a path of successful academic and cultural development, that she has become a specialist not only in the established field of general psychology but also in a delicate area of psychological knowledge.

The main contribution of the dissertation is the conceptual model used for in-depth critical and comparative analysis of theoretical approaches to personality traits and dispositions that predict effective coping, enhance the sense of well-being, and contribute to a higher quality of life. The extensive empirical research provides an opportunity to uncover causal relationships and dependencies, allowing for the high reliability testing of hypotheses. The summarizations and comparative analyses are adequate and have specific practical applicability. The conclusions made are relevant to the goals and tasks, objectively reflecting the findings of the study. They demonstrate Margarita Bakracheva's competence in analyzing and interpreting scientific publications. All of this is an indicator of a profound research interest in the considered issue.

The contributions are clearly formulated and well-supported with arguments, objectively reflecting the achievements of the dissertation. The presented contributions can be further expanded in terms of practical applicability of the overall development.

The abstract adheres to the requirements, adequately presenting the dissertation. I have some technical notes, but they do not affect my positive evaluation of the work.

Professor Bakracheva presents a monograph on the topic of the dissertation, along with 7 articles published in journals that are referenced and indexed in international scientific databases. There are also 8 articles and reports published in non-referenced journals with scientific review, and a total of 34 citations.

In conclusion, Professor Bakracheva is an undisputed and competent scholar with a strong presence in the field of science.

Margarita Bakracheva's dissertation represents a comprehensive and in-depth study of a current scientific topic, which is significant for the development of general, developmental, and counseling psychology in the Bulgarian socio-cultural context and its place among other branches of psychology and scientific knowledge as a whole. The dissertation meets the requirements and bibliometric criteria of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the award of the academic degree "Doctor of Sciences."

Considering the relevance of the topic, the successful empirical research, and the thorough theoretical and empirical analysis of the research data, I confidently provide my positive evaluation and recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury to cast a positive vote for the award of the academic degree "Doctor of Sciences" to Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva **in professional**

**direction 3.2. Psychology..**

20/10/2023  
Sofia

Member of the Scientific Jury:  
(Prof. Sonya Karabeliova, PhD, D.Sc.)