REVIEW

of a dissertation on the topic: " Personality predictors of perceived well-being "
for the acquisition of a scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in a professional direction 3.2.
Psychology (General Psychology - General and Age Psychology)
author: Prof. Margarita Angelova Stefanova- Bakracheva, Ph.D.
reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Stoil Mavrodiev, Ph.D., D.Sc.

Procedure and materials provided

The set of paper materials presented by Margarita Stefanova-Bakracheva is in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". All necessary documents and materials are provided. The procedure is legal.

Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks

Subjective well-being, the experience of flourishing and satisfaction, is one of the most complex existential and phenomenological problems for psychology and philosophy. It is a "problem of problems" as it relates directly to the meaning of life. The research and interpretation of these questions require high scientific competence, experience and scientific courage.

The line of existential - phenomenological perspective, which is leading in the text, gives the direction of interpretation and gives coherence to the dissertation work. The topic is placed in the field of positive psychology.

Prof. M. Stefanova-Bakracheva accepts that "mental well-being" is a multidimensional construct that has a number of dimensions: meaningful, existential, valuable.

The main task that the author sets herself is to examine holistically the main components of mental well-being and to establish how individual mental differences (personality traits and dispositions) determine them; next, to establish the personal predictors of the experience of well-being and, on this basis, to conceptualize a model involving personal characteristics in the process of self-regulation.

The theoretical-empirical research is set and implemented in the context and conditions of a crisis related to the Corona virus pandemic of 2020. The formulated goals and tasks are fully relevant to the topic and concept of the work.

Personality predictors that verify the experience of flourishing and, on the other hand, would serve as markers for predicting well-being, have not been sufficiently studied to date. Addressing these questions would give psychologists a starting point for creating programs to develop personal growth and also preventive programs to overcome problem behavior early.

I emphasize that the topic is also significant for other scientific fields.

The concept of the dissertation work is original and unexplored in the set parameters.

Everything said so far gives me reason to evaluate the subject of the dissertation work as current, significant and innovative for psychological science and practice.

Knowing the problem

Prof. Margarita Stefanova-Bakracheva has a steady interest in the phenomena under study, and proof of this is the numerous publications and projects she has realized so far. The current dissertation work is not just a continuation of previous research, but an upgrade and a qualitatively higher achievement. The author demonstrates excellent competence and awareness regarding the studied constructs. The same are examined multi-layered and in their causality.

General characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation has a classic structure with three main chapters, a concluding part, a bibliography and appendices, and is spread over a total volume of 309 pages.

The first chapter is dedicated to clarifying theoretical approaches to the study of well-being and personality patterns. An integrative approach to understanding and operationalizing well-being is adopted, presenting different perspectives and guiding concepts. With this approach, the author has emphasized the complexity and causality of well-being with other constructs meaningfully related to it. Subjective well-being is examined in relation to the concept of "happiness", the experience of corresponding emotions, etc.

A three-component model of well-being is presented, which is defined through the concept of flourishing. The bottom line is that well-being is described by different models, such as emotional and cognitive appraisals of oneself and one's life. It is associated with positive personal functioning, resilience and flourishing (p. 17).

Emphasis is placed on the relationship between positive emotions and well-being. In connection with them, phenomena such as commitment, meaning of life, achievements are also discussed.

Quite logically, in the text, the theoretical approaches to personality are deployed. The "Big Five" theory is presented as a model of personality traits. It is valuable that the links between the Big Five and well-being are highlighted because, as noted, personality traits or characteristics determine how people value their lives. Questions about happiness, correlations between well-being and neuroticism, etc. are discussed here. Based on the meta-analyses, it is concluded that the Big Five are generally significant predictors of well-being.

is extremely well presented , combining the Big Five traits into meta traits. The leading concepts are purposefully presented.

Later, in the text, a connection is made between personal dispositions, well-being and personality traits. The connecting link between them is the coping potential of the personality. I find this approach expedient. As Prof. Bakracheva points out, coping is the potential that regulates reactions and is based on the assessment of external circumstances and internal desires and opportunities (p. 43). Based on her own research, the author highlights the existence of a number of connections between coping and well-being.

Another construct that has been the subject of theoretical inquiry is mindfulness, emphasizing its relationship to mental well-being and mental health.

The relationships between mindfulness, well-being and the Big Five are presented.

Based on own research, the influence of learned helplessness, self-sabotage, reliving past mistakes and planning is highlighted on subjective well-being and its components. Here, too, the text is distinguished by thoroughness, clarity of thought, and logical coherence.

The phenomenological analysis of the questions related to the search for meaning in life, which are also an element of mental well-being, is related to the subject of the dissertation work .

The entire theoretical presentation is characterized by exceptional informativeness, purposefulness and logical connection in the presentation of various theories, studies, etc. The text is tight, without unnecessary deviations.

The design of the empirical study revealed a very well-thought-out and original conceptual framework of the work, which allowed for the formulation of logically related goals, objectives and hypotheses.

The purpose of the research suggests to study the mediated and mediating effects of personality traits and dispositions on well-being and its components, which sets a very voluminous and complex research agenda. The tasks are formulated precisely. The number of variables at stake that have been investigated is impressive – a total of 31. The training design created complements the conceptual framework.

The research procedure is correctly described. The sample of the examined persons is representative - 455 in total.

Research methods are relevant to the purpose and tasks – an impressive 14 scales are used. The training is described in detail with the main topics.

The raised hypotheses are 5 and determine the dissertability of the research. They imply the search and establishment of complex interrelationships between variables.

I hasten to emphasize that the analysis and interpretation of the results of my own research reveals the high research and analytical competences of the author.

First, the structural organization of the used scales is presented in detail and informatively, and the factor analysis and reliability analysis are derived. Additional data are contained in the respective appendices. Statistical data processing meets all standards. In a very clever way, the results are presented in tabular form, which makes it easier to perceive them.

An important component of the analysis is uncovering the relationships between personality traits, personality dispositions, and well-being. After the relationships between the components of well-being are inferred, the data on interrelationships between personality traits and well-being are presented; interrelationships between personality dispositions. The direct linear effects of personality traits and personality dispositions are clearly delineated.

Of interest are the results and their analysis of patterns of predictors of well-being, which is one of the undisputed contributions of the paper. In this connection, the predictors of life satisfaction, predictors of happiness, positive and negative effects, affective balance, etc. have been derived.

the predictive ability of personality traits in relation to personality dispositions are presented and interpreted . And here the author's ability to present the data in a very good way for perception is evident.

It is focused on personal dispositions, predictors of well-being with an independent effect.

Direct and indirect predictors of flourishing are indicated, with the model with the highest explanatory strength - 68% - is with predictors self-esteem , proactive coping , meaning on life , benevolence and mindfulness . In the same way, the data on the direct and indirect predictors of life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, negative affect, affective balance, etc. were revealed. Models with the highest and, accordingly, lower explanatory power are well differentiated.

All results are extremely informative.

The influence of individual variables such as income, occupation, gender, age, family status, etc. is revealed. on well-being and its components.

Data on the effectiveness of the training are presented by tracking the profiles of its participants.

The direct linear effects of personality traits and personality dispositions are derived. Predictors of well-being and the effects of interval variables on it and its components are summarized .

Relevant conclusions and more global generalizations are made regarding: models of predictors of well-being, as well as models of explaining flourishing, life satisfaction, happiness, etc.; the dynamics of personality traits and more specifically how age changes and life events cause personality traits to change.

Relevant are the conclusions regarding changes that occurred from the process of adaptation to the prolonged crisis. Here own research is compared with similar research by other authors.

Conclusions and generalizations are formulated regarding the dynamic model of well-being. A comparison of the results of the own study and meta-analysis studies on the relationships between the Big Five and subjective well-being suggests that they show the expected differences but also some similarities, which is confirmation of the universal effect of personality traits, and their place in predicting well-being (p. 231).

The conclusion of the paper and the raised discussion questions once again show the high level of research competence of the author.

Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

I fully accept the self-assessment of the contributions outlined by M. Stefanova-Bakracheva. They can be summarized as follows:

An original concept for the theoretical-empirical research was created.

The studied constructs and their substructures are examined in their dynamics and causality, through the use of a holistic approach.

A model has been created to measure and maintain well-being. A model of personality predictors of the experience of well-being is conceptualized .

The impact of the crisis and expectations on adaptation choices and self-regulation has been established. The determining role of personality traits in this process is brought out.

self-regulation in relation to the considered variables are revealed .

Several psychological tests have been tested.

A model has been created and tested to increase well-being that is also part of mental health prevention.

The obtained results have scientific-theoretical and practical value and significance.

Assessment of dissertation publications

Prof. Margarita Bakracheva presents 18 publications that are directly related to the topic of the dissertation work. The same have been published in renowned magazines, including international and also in proceedings of scientific conferences. Among them there is also a monograph.

Personal contribution of the author

M. Bakracheva independently carried out the theoretical and empirical research, as well as the analysis and interpretation of the results.

Plagiarism is not found in the dissertation.

Abstract

The abstract correctly reflects the main points of the dissertation in terms of structure and content.

The literary sources are cited according to the standards established for such a scientific work; the bibliographic reference is also presented at the end. The bibliographic sources are up-to-date and are in Cyrillic and Latin.

Stylistically, the work is very well done.

Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical notes; I recommend that the dissertation work be issued in the form of a monograph.

Conclusion:

The dissertation work of Prof. Margarita Angelova Stefanova- Bakracheva was realized at a very high scientific level. Work is indisputably enriching existing knowledge , at the same time new results are obtained, new conceptualizations and research models are reached.

The author categorically confirms her high scientific status.

All this gives me reason, convinced, to vote positively for the acquisition of a scientific degree Doctor of Sciences by Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva in a professional direction 3.2. Psychology (General Psychology - General and Age Psychology). I recommend the other members of the scientific jury to also give their positive vote.

Reviewer:

05.X.2023   Assoc. prof. Stoil Mavrodiev, Ph.D., D.Sc.