

REVIEW

from Assoc. Prof. Daniel Lyudmilov Petrov, PhD

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for dissertation of

Maria Petrova Vassileva

On the subject:

"The role of compassion for self and others in career success and life satisfaction"

for the award of PhD in professional field 3.2. Psychology

Scientific supervisor: Prof. I. Zinovieva, DSc

The dissertation is published in English with the title "Role of compassion to self and others for career success and life satisfaction" and is devoted to the interrelationships and specificities in the forms of compassion (compassion to others, compassion to self, helpfulness and fear of compassion to others) and objective and subjective career success and life satisfaction. The topic is actual given the growing focus in the professional managerial class over emotional experiences in work environments, the importance of emotional intelligence, and the self-regulation of career and life satisfaction.

The purpose of this dissertation research is to examine the role that various constructs of compassion play in life satisfaction and objective and subjective career success and provides valuable empirical information from Bulgarian sociocultural setting. The work consists of 208 pages. The scientific literature covers 362 sources in English and Bulgarian. A total of 38 tables and one figure are included. There is no appendix with questionnaires.

The dissertation is structured in three chapters. The introductory part of the text introduces the importance of the topic, indicates the relevance of constructs related to compassion and presents the structure of the dissertation research by chapters.

Chapter One is devoted to a theoretical review of the existing international research literature on compassion for others, self-compassion, life satisfaction, and career success. The definitions of the constructs, the multidimensional nature in the processes of compassion, its emotional and motivational aspects, and its relationships with empathy, sympathy, and prosocial behavior are included. A separate paragraph provides a theoretical overview of self-compassion, the origins and flow of sympathy, and links to other constructs such as temperament, social class, attachment style, and emotion regulation. A significant portion of the review is devoted to the constructs of compassion and their interrelationship with personality, self, and culture, including personality traits and self-esteem. Another important section is devoted to existing research on the role that compassion for others and self-compassion play in well-being and career success. The interrelationships are presented through the major theoretical perspectives of well-being (subjective, objective, and eudemonic well-being) and career development (subjective and objective).

Following an excellently structured overview of the topic and its related constructs, Chapter 2 details the design of the empirical study: hypotheses, theoretical model, procedure, sample, and scales with their psychometric characteristics. A total of 18 hypotheses are advanced, grouped into five categories according to the constructs involved: hypotheses related to the relationship between compassion and (1) life satisfaction, (2) objective career success, (3) subjective career success, (4) personality dispositions and self, and (5) demographic variables. A theoretical-empirical model of the expected influences of the variables included in the study is presented graphically. A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of the study which included the following scales:

1. **Compassion to others** - Pommier, Neff and Toth-Kiraly, 2019; Sprecher and Fehr (2005).
2. **Self-Compassion Short form** (Raes et al., 2011).
3. **Fear of Compassion to others** (Gilbert et al., 2011).
4. **Helpfulness**- developed by the author.
5. **Satisfaction with Life Scale** (Diener et al.. 1985).
6. **Objective Career Success** - The scale was developed by the author with the addition of two questions from other authors (Li et al., 2014; Gattiker and Larwood, 1986).

7. **Subjective Career Success** (Greenhaus et al., 1990).

8. Personality traits scale based on the Big Five model (**MINI IPIP** - Karabeliova et al., 2016).

9. **Self-liking and Self-competence Scale** (Tafarodi and Swann, 1995, 2001).

The characteristics of the sample (320 subjects) are presented in tabular form. The factor structure of the scales was examined by applying exploratory factor analysis using the principal components method with Varimax rotation. The results of structural organization are presented in tabular and graphical form. The psychometric properties of the scales and subscales as well as their internal consistency are described.

Chapter three describes the results of the statistical analyses used to address the research objectives and hypotheses. Establishing relationships between variables and testing hypotheses was conducted using correlation analysis, regression analyses, T-tests, and one- and two-factor analysis of variance (with post hoc analyses and degrees of freedom reported). This chapter concludes with a summary of the results, a general discussion and their detailed interpretation.

At the end of the text, M. Vassileva draws a brief conclusion, in which she outlines the limitations of the presented work. An advantage for the thesis would be the presentation in a separate paragraph of applied conclusions and guidelines for psychological practice, career guidance and organisational counselling.

The work is well written and has many strengths. Among them, I would highlight the actual theme, the well-structured theoretical and empirical parts, the relevant psychological interpretation and the review of contemporary world scientific literature. Four scales have been adapted for Bulgarian conditions (Self-compassion - short format, Compassion to others, Fear of compassion and Career satisfaction). Two new scales were constructed (Helpfulness and Objective Career Success). An integrative model was developed to demonstrate the role of self-compassion in objective and subjective career success. The author highlights the limitations of the current empirical study and provides directions for future research, which reveals scientific integrity, sets a realistic framework, and a future perspective. Specialized statistical procedures were used. Empirical data has been collected from Bulgarian socio-

cultural settings. The results have applied relevance in consultative, educational and organizational settings and successfully complement the data in the scientific field.

The abstracts in Bulgarian and English reflect the main highlights of the dissertation: the theoretical analyses, the stages in the empirical research and the summaries of the research work. The scientific contributions are correctly formulated. Maria Vassileva presents six publications (4 articles and 2 studies) in English on the topic of the dissertation, two of which are co-authored. The dissertant has four participations to international scientific conferences. In accordance with the minimum national requirements, M. Vassileva has 57.5 points.

In conclusion, the dissertation represents a comprehensive study and contains scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution and meet the requirements for the third degree. Maria Vassileva demonstrates competence in the subject matter and the ability to plan, conduct, analyse and publish empirical research.

I give my positive opinion and recommend the Honourable Scientific Jury to award Maria Vassileva the degree of Doctor of Psychology in the professional field "3.2. Psychology".

14 May 2024

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. D.Petrov, PhD