



BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Abstract of dissertation thesis Intimate partnership patterns and psychological well-being
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The dissertation thesis is focused on outlining the main prerequisites for development of satisfactory relationships in the intimate couple and the family. It is structured in three chapters: a theoretical review in the field of well-being and partnerships in the couple; research design; and results, with introduction, conclusion, references and schedules.

The first chapter presents the theoretical approaches to the study of psychological well-being and relationships in the couple and generated models for understanding family and psychological well-being in three paragraphs. The first paragraph is devoted to the development of models of psychological well-being and the change in the focus on the search for the positive outcomes. The second paragraph treats the partnering patterns in the intimate couple as a predictor of the well-being of the individuals. The third paragraph briefs the theoretical models for studying family and individual well-being.

The second chapter contains the design of the study. The empirical model reflects the main expectation that the partnering model will influence the choice of form of partnering, which in its turn will affect the quality of partnerships, expressed in the degree of connectedness between partners in the couple, flexibility in relationships and quality of communication. The couple's relationship itself is expected to affect the degree of experienced satisfaction, which determines individual well-being in emotional, mental and social aspects.

The research objective is study of the characteristics of partnerships in different models of intimate partnering (short-term and uncommitted relationships, serious relationships without cohabitation, cohabitation, and marriage) and their relation to and influence on the individually experienced well-being of the partner in the couple. The general hypothesis is that the partnership in an intimate couple has a specific pattern, depending on the model of partnering and that individual well-being is related to the specific features of these relationships and the resulting satisfaction and perceived quality of communication.

The third chapter presents the results of the survey, comprising 426 volunteers and the analysis of the results, collected with two instruments: the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales and the Psychological Well-being Scale.

The results of the study emphasize the importance of intimate partnership and psychological intimacy, as this universal need is effected by age and related social experience, as well as by the different needs and expectations of both genders. In parallel, this is determined mainly by the quality of the relationship, not by the partnership model itself. Regardless of the partnership model, when respondents feel to be in a serious relationship, even in a short-term relationship, they self-report to be satisfied.

The key implication is that the different models of partnership are flexible and preconditioned by a lot factors, leading among which is the search for the most satisfactory aspects of interaction. Individual choices are differentiated as a group that is separate from choices, which are influenced by external factors and the form of partnering. This outlines the basic needs of the couple and the partnership, regardless of the common environmental patterns. Marriage and cohabitation continue lead to highest degree of satisfaction.

Both the positive and the negative aspects in the various partnering models are outlined, which has a key practical significance. The direction of work in the consulting and therapy can be located in the field between the two polarities described for each of the partnering models.

Despite the limitations of the study, the results are an important step that describes the dynamics in the partnering models and the individual benefits that each model brings. We consider that conclusions give ideas for new areas for in-depth research.