ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF SELF-SECURITY CONCERNS IN CRISES IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: Factors that influence the level of self-security concerns tested are tracked as a pre-kTOP variable when studying people's public behaviour. For this purpose, the generalized expectations (optimism and negative expectations) for the valence of the results obtained are also examined. The survey was conducted among 30 men and 76 women aged 26-65 between October May and July 2020. Methods have been applied for assessing the level of tested concerns about the own security of Radoslavova, M., A. Velichkov /2003/ and for examining the optimism and negative expectations of Radoslavova, M., A. Velichkov Rasheva, M., /1993/. Several statistical methods and procedures have been used to establish relationships and influences in the surveyed constructs, including demographic variables such as gender, age, education, total work experience and traineeship in the specific workplace, position and study period /2003. – 2020/. The data was processed with SPSS-21. The results showed in surveyed individuals from an age range under 29, single, with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, had relatively low levels of anxiety and higher levels of optimism.

Keywords: concerns about self-security, optimism, negative expectations.

Introduction

The changes in social living conditions caused by the Covid -19 crisis create the conditions for an increased sense of uncertainty about the health, life and property of citizens. They also lead to high levels of unemployment or overwork in some of the professions, increasing crime at home level and its ineffective prevention. On an individual level, people's reactions are expressed in increased caution, increased anxiety, and experiences of fear in certain situations. The consequences of this are varied: limiting the public activity of people in certain places and at certain times of the day, increased costs of protecting themselves and their property to changes in economic behavior (Petkova, Kiryakov, Dimitrov, 2019, p. 135 – 148). All this outlines the importance of the psychological study of trends and specificities at the level of self-security concerns about the quality of life and adequate decision-making. Optimism plays an important role in human behaviour as a positive aspect of thinking, but vice versa - negative influence in unrealistic assessments and depression.

People take different actions to prevent negative experiences from appearing. Such actions are based on people's cognitive abilities and are identified as concerns. These are thoughts and assessments, often effectively coloured, about the probabilities of dangerous events threatening one's behaviour, choices and strategies for behaviour. Therefore, the assessment of the level of concern is rather indicative of the frequency of thematic revision of hazard information. This assessment can be used as a means of predicting when studying people's public behaviour. When examining the reactions to a threat to personal security, anxiety is traditionally the subject of study in psychology. Anxiety is an emotional reaction or emotional state that is expressed in thought for one's safety, but it is not always necessary to experience negative emotions. This also warrants the study of the interrelationships of anxiety with optimism as a generalized expectation of positive results and the prevalence of positive events in a person's life. The hypothesis builds on the postulates in the theoretical approach of Michael Shearer and Charles Carver (Scheier&Carver, 1985, 1987). It emphasizes the positive valence of results and events, regardless of what factors and causes lead to them. They distinguish different levels of optimism depending on the object to which it is directed and examine its impact as a disposition in different crises. The degree of optimism is related to the possibility of control. The choices a person makes are made with optimism or not. In this sense, optimism is independent of the localization of control generalized expectation, which reflects only the valence of upcoming events and expected results. Thus, optimism and pessimism are not polar constructs, but relatively independent of each other generalized expectations (Selligman, 2017).

Research on optimism is aimed at revealing its buffer effects against the development of stress and protecting the self-image against the fear of failure. Optimists are more flexible in using strategies to deal with stress, and pessimistic attitudes prepare the individual for possible experiences of failure (Velichkov, 2003). This warrants the hypothesis of this study that optimism and negativity as generalized expectations influence an individual's behaviour in interactions with the environment and the level of self-security concerns experienced.

Objectives of the study

The present study aims to examine and assess the level of anxiety experienced in a crisis, tracking the impact of m on the levels of optimism and pessimism in the Bulgarian socio-cultural context. In particular, the focus is on the impact of the anxiety experienced by the anxiety and its relationship with certain demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, education.

Research hypothesis

It is assumed that the level of concern will be on average for the scale given the trend in large general populations. We accept that factors such as age, marital status, and education affect the level of anxiety. We assume that levels of anxiety affect levels of optimism.

Research methods

The sample is in the age range of 26-65 years. 30 men and 76 women with bachelors, masters, doctors and secondary education degrees were studied.

A questionnaire for assessing the level of concerns about one's security was published in Methods for Psycho diagnostics, 2005: Velichkov, A., Radoslavova. The initial version of the questionnaire contains 15 questions about specific thoughts and reactions to different sites and situations in the urban environment. The answers to each question are evaluated on a 5-point scale for the frequency of experience, ranging from 1 - never, to 5 - very often. The total score is the sum of the scores of the individual questions. The consistency check showed that a homogeneous construct - Cronbach's alpha = 0.88 is measured.

The average value of the scores is below the theoretical average. In principle, such questionnaires should not be expected to have a normal distribution, as they measure conditions rather than stable personal dispositions. Ideally (complete absence of threats) it should be strongly deviated to the left, ie. low levels of anxiety predominate.

Attached is a **Questionnaire for the Assessment of Negative Expectations**. The method was published in the Bulgarian Journal of Psychology, 1993, 3: Velichkov, A., Radoslavova, M., Rasheva, M., Method for measuring generalized expectations for the valence of the obtained results (optimism and negative expectations), 85-100. Contents of the method: 17 statements that describe different attitudes to things that happen in life, with ratings of statements on a 5-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "completely agree".

The answers to each question are evaluated on a 5-point scale for the frequency of experience, ranging from 1 - never, to 5 - very often. The total score is the sum of the scores of the individual questions. The test for consistency of the method in 2003 gives satisfactory results: the optimism scale has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.79, and the negative expectations scale has an Alpha coefficient = 0.78. When checking the consistency of the method in 2020 gives the following results: the optimism scale has a coefficient a Cronbach's = 0.83, and the scale for negative expectations has a coefficient a = 0.75.

The hypothesis of the study is optimism and negativism as generalized expectations affect the behaviour of the individual in interactions with the environment.

However, the empirical distribution shows that the concerns in the urban environment depend on both individual differences and living conditions. A bridge of the average values shows that there are significant differences between men and women (Velichkov and Radoslavova, 2005).

Based on other empirical research, higher levels of security needs should be expected to be associated with more frequent activation of threat cognitions. This hypothesis is confirmed - the correlation between the two variables is r = 0.36, p < .000. The obtained correlation coefficient is moderate, which is indicative of the fact that a significant part of the variation should be sought in the features of the urban environment and the context it sets.

The results

The measured average value of anxiety is 37.627, which is significantly higher than the average value obtained during the period of creating the scales, but also the optimism compared to negativism - 41.4706.

After conducting a linear regression analysis to check the impact of anxiety on optimism, it was found that optimism is a significant, negative, but also a weak predictor of anxiety. Only 4.2% of anxiety is influenced by optimism. However, it can be argued that a slight increase in optimism will slightly reduce anxiety. The result confirmed the assumption of the influence of anxiety on optimism.

Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	38.178	13.316		2.867	.006
Optimism	332	.257	177	-1.294	.202
Negativism	.652	.262	.339	2.483	.017

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.427ª	.182	.148	8.89021

a. Predictors: (Constant), Optimism

Negativism

ANOVA

Constructs	Gender	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Anxiety	Man	35.33	11.52	.615	.437
	Women	38.12	9.27		
Optimism	Man	44.00	3.87	2.752	.103
	Women	40.93	5.24		
Negativism	Man	23.56	4.85	4.919	.031
	Women	19.62	4.83		

The hypothesis of the dependence of anxiety and optimism on gender was tested by applying a one-way analysis of variance. The data show insignificant differences between men and women in anxiety and optimism and significant differences in negativity in women.

Constructs	Age	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Anxiety	Up to 29 years	38.00	4.24		
	From 29 to 60 years	37.00	9.12	.431	.652
	Over 60 years	40.33	12.73		
Optimism	Up to 29 years	40.00	5.66		
	From 29 to 60 years	41.90	4.56	.641	.531
	Over 60 years	39.89	7.39		
Negativism	Up to 29 years	17.50	2.12		
	From 29 to 60 years	20.58	5.23	.410	.666
	Over 60 years	19.78	4.58		

ANOVA

The results confirm that in people in the age range up to 29 years, as well as over 60 years, anxiety is lower and optimism is stronger compared to persons aged 29 to 60 years.

ANOVA

Constructs	Education	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Anxiety	High school	36.75	10.53		
	Bachelor degree	38.07	8.44	199	004
	Master degree	38.61	10.64	.100	.904
	Doctorate	35.71	9.25		
Optimism	High school	42.92	3.23		
	Bachelor degree	41.29	4.83	601	569
	Master degree	41.44	6.32	.001	.506
	Doctorate	39.43	5.22		
Negativism	High school	18.83	4.99		
	Bachelor degree	18.64	4.05	1 000	0.141
	Master degree	21.72	5.88	1.909	0.141
	Doctorate	22.57	2.82		

The assumption of the dependence of anxiety and optimism on education and the different levels of education was verified by applying a one-way analysis of variance. It can be argued that education is a factor of optimism in people with bachelor's and master's degrees. People with secondary education have the highest levels of optimism and low levels of anxiety. The educational and scientific wall "Doctorate" brings the lowest level of anxiety, optimism and high levels of negativity compared to all levels of education.

ANOVA

Constructs	Marital status	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Anxiety	Married	38.78	9.50	1 772	0.190
	Single	34.87	9.72	1.//2	0.189
Optimism	Married	41.53	5.42	015	0.02
	Single	41.33	4.51	.015	.905
Negativism	Married	20.83	4.89	1 201	0.256
	Single	19.07	5.27	1.321	0.250

With the application of one-factor analysis of variance, the assumption of the dependence of anxiety and optimism on marital status was checked. There is no significant difference in the homogeneity of the dispersions. Marital status is a weak factor for anxiety in the sample. Family members experience higher levels of anxiety than non-family members, as well as levels of negativity.

Correlations

Constructs	Optimism	Negativism
Anxiety	278*	.392**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The observed gender differences confirm the discriminant validity of the method. The construct-validity of the questionnaire was checked by correlation with the assessments of the need for optimism for the future. Empirical research should be expected to have a negative high correlation with optimism and a positive correlation with negativism. This hypothesis is confirmed - the correlation between anxiety and optimism is r = -0.278, p < .001, and for anxiety and pessimism is r = 0.392, p < .000. The obtained correlation coefficient is moderate, which is indicative of the fact that a significant part of the variation should be sought in the features of the urban environment and the context it sets.

The results confirm that people under the age of 29, single, with a bachelor's and master's degree have relatively low levels of anxiety and higher levels of optimism. The data confirm a link between levels of anxiety and levels of optimism due to the social context.

Conclusion

Possible prospects for further research are related to the study of the relationships and mechanisms by which optimism and negative expectations influence the processes of social cognition, decision-making, risk behaviour, perception and assessment of hidden threats and others. No significant gender differences were observed. Comparisons by age groups show a tendency with increasing age to decrease optimism and increase negative expectations. The established age differences outline guidelines for more detailed research in the field of age psychology.

Citation

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