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## **SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

**PSYCHOSOCIAL RESOURCES IN THE ESTIMATION**  
**OF WELL-BEING IN PROFESSIONALLY ACTIVE**  
**ADULTS**

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## ***Introduction***

Well-being, frequently associated with health, longevity, positive social relationships, job performance, and creativity (Diener *et al.*, 2018), has captured the attention of researchers from various fields such as psychology, economics, philosophy, gerontology, and medicine. The topic has been extensively explored scientifically, with Google Scholar alone listing over 170,000 publications on the subjective component of well-being (Diener *et al.*, 2018). While significant progress has been made in describing the mechanisms, determinants, and consequences of well-being, the relationship between well-being and personal goals, from the perspective of the resources required to successfully achieve these goals, has been only partially clarified.

Starting from the premise that in today's fast-paced, constantly changing professional environment with diverse pressures, it is vital to understand more deeply how psychosocial resources can support employees, this doctoral thesis aims to address the relationship between resources and well-being. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of individual priorities and resources with age, which would broaden the perspective on the human development process throughout active professional life. Understanding how resources influence well-being provides insights that can be integrated into the development of psychological support programs aimed at improving quality of life and personal well-being.

Building on research that highlights the connection between well-being and the achievement of personal goals, and studies showing that individual priorities and projects change with age, it has been suggested that the resources needed to ensure success in achieving these personal goals also change over time. These achievements can contribute to increased well-being. Thus, the objective of this research is to explore and understand the role of psychosocial resources in well-being. The aim is to expand the possibilities for action and identify measures that could be recommended by organizational decision-makers by psychology specialists. Additionally, the research seeks to identify potential psychological interventions to support the improvement of adult well-being at various stages of life and career.

This research seeks to identify the psychosocial resources considered essential by adults of different ages in relation to their personal goals and to study the influence of these psychosocial resources on well-being.

The thesis is structured into four chapters:

1. **Theoretical Foundations:** This chapter presents the main theoretical and methodological approaches to the relationship between well-being and psychosocial resources.
2. **Research Methodology:** This chapter covers the research objectives, procedures, samples, and statistical analysis strategy used, along with two preliminary analyses necessary to establish the main sub-periods of active professional adulthood and to adapt an instrument for measuring psychological resources.
3. **Empirical Studies:** This chapter focuses on the role of psychosocial resources in the subjective well-being of professionally active adults at different ages. Three studies are presented here:
  - **Study 1:** Identifying essential resources considered by adults of different ages necessary for achieving personal goals.
  - **Study 2:** Exploring the predictive power of essential psychosocial resources for the well-being of adults.
  - **Study 3:** Analyzing the effectiveness of a coaching intervention focused on enhancing a key psychological resource (optimism) and its differential effects on well-being based on age.
4. **Conclusions and General Discussions:** This chapter summarizes the main results and contributions of the research, acknowledges its limitations, and suggests future research directions.

The doctoral thesis "Psychosocial Resources in the Assessment of Well-Being in Professionally Active Adults" represents a theoretical and applied research effort aimed at highlighting the extent to which resources considered essential for the personal goals of professionally active adults predict well-being in different life and career sub-periods.

The thesis synthesizes the most relevant information from specialized literature on resources and well-being and investigates the relationship between resources and well-being, with the intention of providing organizational psychologists with both theoretical and practical support in psychological assistance and managerial psychological support activities.

The added scientific value of the work lies in its applied research, which highlights that the valuation of resources changes with the inherent changes in objectives due to development and aging, and that some resources considered essential for successfully achieving objectives have the capacity to predict subjective well-being. Moreover, the results support the idea that coaching interventions focused on a key psychological resource (optimism) have different effects depending on age.

**Keywords:** well-being, psychosocial resources, professionally active adult, developmental tasks, personal goals, age differences

## Chapter 1

# **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DIRECTIONS IN ADDRESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WELL- BEING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL RESOURCES**

### **1. 1. Well-Being**

Well-being is a complex construct, consisting of two main components.

The first component is subjective well-being (SWB), which includes a cognitive-evaluative facet and an affective one. The second component is psychological well-being (PWB), which refers to the actualization of one's potential and includes aspects such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, environmental mastery, and positive relations (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Hascher, 2010).

Subjective well-being has been operationalized (Diener *et al.*, 1985; Diener *et al.*, 1999, Lyubomirsky *et al.*, 2005) by the frequency of positive affects (prevalence of positive emotions), high life satisfaction, and rare negative emotions. Thus, subjective well-being involves a cognitive-evaluative component (life satisfaction) and an affective component (positive emotions), where the cognitive aspect refers to a global evaluation of one's life, and the affective aspect refers to the pleasant and unpleasant emotions and moods experienced. The cognitive aspect refers to a global evaluation of one's life and reflects individuals' perceptions of their lives, with the degree of satisfaction varying from dissatisfaction to satisfaction (Kozma *et al.*, 1990). A person with a high cognitive well-being considers that their goals, desires, and standards are largely met by current life conditions (Tov, 2018). As Wiese and Freund (2005) point out, subjective well-being also involves an explicit or implicit comparison between current achievements and a certain reference standard, and primarily denotes the fit between goals and their achievement level.

The affective aspect involves pleasant and unpleasant emotions and the moods experienced. The affective component of well-being refers to the prevalence of positive emotions, with rare negative emotions (Diener *et al.*, 1985; Diener *et al.*, 1999, Lyubomirsky *et al.*, 2005).

Studies in the field have found that adult well-being shows relative stability throughout life (Lucas and Donnellan, 2007; Diener, 1984; Baird *et al.*, 2010; Jebb *et al.*, 2020). Theories related to subjective well-being, the cognitive-evaluative facet of well-being, focus on the mechanisms through which internal (personal) and external (social)

factors influence subjective well-being. According to these theories, any aspect that affects personal orientation, goals, needs, activities, evaluations, or emotions can influence subjective well-being. Synthesizing the specialized literature, Das *et al.* (2020) concluded that theoretical approaches regarding the factors influencing well-being can be classified into four main categories:

**Theories based on fulfillment and engagement:** These focus on explaining the influence of goals, needs, and activities on subjective well-being, considering that achieving results and obtaining success in specific activities are key factors in generating individual well-being (e.g., Maslow's hierarchy of needs - Maslow, 1954; goal-setting theory - Locke and Lathman, 1990; expectancy theory - Vroom, 1964; tripartite model - Diener in 1984; flow theory - Csikszentmihalyi, 1970; self-determination theory - Deci and Ryan, 1985).

**Theories based on personal orientation:** These suggest that not only the satisfaction of needs or the achievement of goals but also personality traits and the fit between personality and environment are determinants of well-being (Set Point Theory - Lykken and Tellegen, 1996; Easterlin, 2001).

**Evaluative theories:** These explain differences in well-being as a result of comparing one's own way of life with a specific objective or subjective standard. If the comparison is favorable, well-being is high; if not, dissatisfaction arises (multiple discrepancies theory - Michalos, 1980; hedonic treadmill theory - Brickman and Campbell, 1971).

**Emotion-based theories:** These focus on how emotional experiences, representing the affective component of SWB, are interconnected with the process of fulfillment, engagement, and evaluations (e.g., broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions - Fredrickson, 2004).

From the perspective of factors influencing SWB, despite demographic variables such as health, income, educational environment, and marital status being considered determinants and indicators of needs, goals, and activities, studies have shown that they contribute relatively little to the variation in well-being (Diener *et al.*, 2017; Siedlecki *et al.*, 2008). The distinction between internal and external factors influencing life satisfaction is important. Diener *et al.* (1999) demonstrated that there is evidence supporting that the influence of internal determinants on well-being (SWB) is much more significant than that of external determinants (social, economic environment, etc.). Das *et al.* (2020), in an effort to integrate and systematize data on the determinants of subjective well-being, identified

seven groups of factors that influence or determine changes in well-being. These factors are demographic, socio-economic status-related, health-related, personality traits, social support, religiosity and culture, and last but not least, geographical factors (infrastructure and environment).

## **1. 2. Psychosocial Resources**

The term "resources" is widely used in specialized works across many fields of study. From management science to social work, the term acquires different interpretations depending on the context in which it is used and the interest of the researchers. The concept of resources is also frequently encountered in psychology too.

Murrell and Norris (1983) defined resources as relatively stable internal or external attributes that individuals assess as available for use in coping with life conditions and maximizing well-being. For Hyun *et al.* (1993), resources can be defined as anything we use to achieve our goals. In other words, they are the materials and human attributes that satisfy our desires. According to Steverink *et al.* (2001), resources can be: physical resources (e.g., health), material resources (e.g., financial resources), social resources (e.g., social contact and support), and psychological resources (personality, intellectual abilities, self-efficacy or feelings of control, etc.), noting that a stable and varied reserve of resources allows the individual to achieve important goals and compensate for losses (such as those accompanying aging). For Diener and Fujita (1995), resources are material, social, or personal characteristics that a person possesses and can use to make progress in achieving their goals.

In theoretical and empirical works related to the field of stress and adaptation, resources are considered fundamental components of individual adaptive capacity, playing a crucial role in the context of coping (Hobfoll, 1989). In this field, resources are considered characteristics that aid in adapting to changes and protect against exhaustion and stress-related disorders (Avey *et al.*, 2009; Tugade *et al.*, 2004).

Psychosocial resources, from the perspective of stress theories, are skills, aptitudes, talents, beliefs, or personality traits that influence stress management and involve individual differences (such as optimism, self-esteem, etc.) and social relationships (e.g., social support), having beneficial effects on mental and physical health (Taylor, 2011; Taylor and Broffman, 2011). In their absence, stress has a major impact on psychological well-being, biological responses, and ultimately on health. Psychosocial resources bring a series of benefits, helping people evaluate potential stressors in benign ways (events seem less



threatening when people are armed with more psychosocial resources) and cope with the inevitable events they encounter (being linked to active coping strategies involving obtaining social support, managing emotional responses to stress, gathering information, and taking direct actions). People with numerous psychosocial resources are less likely to resort to maladaptive avoidance behaviors (such as substance abuse or withdrawal); and, last but not least, psychosocial resources increase resilience in the face of major stressors such as natural disasters and health threats.

The investigation of psychological characteristics that intervene in the relationship between stress and the development of symptoms has generated considerable interest in studies related to perceived social support, personality factors, cognitive evaluation, and coping styles. Empirical evidence suggests that each of these dimensions, operationalized in different ways, plays a role either by directly contributing to well-being (Murrell and Norris, 1983) or by buffering the impact of stress on adjustment outcomes (Cohen and Wills, 1985; Thoits, 2006).

Another approach is found in positive psychology and developmental psychology, which treat resources as factors that intervene in successful development and adaptation to environmental conditions, contributing to maintaining psychological well-being (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Organizational psychology and sports psychology consider resources as a reserve of the organism used in stressful situations to cope with exhaustion, regardless of its cause (Bakker *et al.*, 2008).

From the perspective of health psychology, psychosocial resources refer to individual personality and factors characterizing social relationships, which tend to cluster and contribute to psychological and physical health and well-being, with numerous pieces of evidence demonstrating strong links between these psychosocial resources and health (Wiley *et al.*, 2018).

Therefore, there are different conceptualizations of resources depending on the context of the study and the theoretical perspective (Dorsch *et al.*, 2017). Although there is no consensus on the conceptualization of resources, the analysis of definitions found in the specialized literature indicates a tendency to define them in terms of support for achieving goals and protection against stressors.

Despite the fact that in the Conservation of Resources Theory (1989) developed by Hobfoll, the term plays a central role as a key concept, he argues in 2018 that " There remains a great

deal of work to be done to better understand how we should appropriately define resources (p. 114)" and that defining this concept is a real challenge because resources have strong individual significance. A too general definition of resources would allow their use for a vast area of individual experiences, making scientific research impossible. Although the definition of resources over the years has been refined by Hobfoll, he has not succeeded in reaching an operational conceptualization that fully satisfies him. Initially, he defined resources as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual and that serve to obtain objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies (Hobfoll, 1989), and later as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve to obtain the things valued by them (Hobfoll *et al.*, 1990). In the most recent article, Hobfoll, the author of the Conservation of Resources Theory, defined resources as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are central to survival and goal achievement and are common to a wide group of people (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). The difficulty in defining resources is amplified by the need to analyze them in their ecological context. In a particular environment, a resource may be perceived as positive and highly valued, while in another environment it may remain latent or have negative manifestations. Moreover, with changes in the surrounding environment, demands change, prompting the individual to adapt their allocation priorities and reevaluate the importance of different types of resources.

Halbesleben (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014), in their analysis dedicated to clarifying issues related to the conceptualization, conservation, acquisition, fluctuation, and measurement of resources, propose their own definition. They define a resource as any aspect perceived by the individual as being helpful in achieving their goals. The authors emphasize that the value of a resource is relative and depends on the experiences and situation of each individual. The term "value" suggests that the respective resource leads to positive consequences. This value is likely to increase when the individual has expectations related to the help provided by it to achieve their goals, when the person already has other resources, and when the new resource complements the existing ones. The extent to which the resource helps the individual achieve goals or satisfy a need reflects its value to the individual in that context.

In evaluating the utility of resources for achieving personal goals, it is important to consider their multifunctionality, meaning a resource can be used to accomplish several different purposes, and their equifinality, in the sense that multiple resources can be mobilized by the individual to achieve the same goal. It is also important to note that some resources are limited or even irreplaceable (have a finite character) such as time, and to

achieve goals, the individual must make strategic choices regarding their allocation, adapting to the context's specifics; while others are inexhaustible, like optimism or self-esteem.

### **1. 3. The relationship between psychosocial resources and well-being**

Throughout life, individuals construct and strive to implement normative projections of their future lives and selves. These future projections can explain a portion of the variance in well-being among professionally active adults. Internal representations of desired outcomes, events, and processes—significant aspects people pursue in their daily lives—have been defined as goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). The mere existence of personal goals, regardless of their content, is positively correlated with life satisfaction (Emmons, 1986). Furthermore, actively pursuing and successfully achieving these goals is associated with well-being (Brunstein, 1993; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Research has shown that well-being is also linked to progress towards important goal attainment (Brunstein, 1993; Klug *et al.*, 2014) and the effective fulfillment of goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Wiese, 2007).

As Diener (1984) demonstrated, when individuals strive to achieve and successfully accomplish an important goal, they experience considerable happiness. Conversely, failing to achieve their most significant goals leads to unhappiness. The commitment, engagement, and concerted effort invested in goal pursuit enhance the intensity of experienced affect. Moreover, Diener (2002) concluded that individuals' evaluations of their own well-being rarely reflect raw hedonism or cheerfulness; rather, major constituents of subjective well-being seem to emanate primarily from one's goals and values. In evaluation theory Diener and Lucas (2000) hypothesized that the fulfillment of desires, especially those desires that are adopted as active goals for which the person is working, will be chronically salient standards for most people, and therefore are the most ubiquitous standard influencing SWB. " People are most likely to experience high levels of subjective well-being when they strive for and make progress toward personal goals derived from their hallowed values, rendering feelings of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment prominent predictors of subjective wellbeing" ( Diener *et al.*, 2009, p.3).

The general conceptual model, as Diener *et al.* (1999) also showed, assumes that people react positively when they achieve their goals and negatively when they fail to do so. The conscious selection of goals and the belief in their importance and meaningfulness have been found to be associated with well-being (Little *et al.*, 2017). As Emmons and Diener (1986) demonstrated, positive affect is strongly associated with both the presence of important personal goals and positive expectations regarding their attainment. Even in the

absence of progress or goal attainment, positive subjective evaluation of the possibility of success is related to well-being.

According to the motivational theory of life course elaborated by Heckhausen (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Heckhausen *et al.*, 2010, 2019), differences in well-being depend on the opportunities available at different life stages and the choice of goals in which resources are invested. The theory focuses on the continuous adjustment of goals as people go through various life stages and maintains that individuals set goals that are meaningful to them. The type of goals, personal goal structure (Sheldon *et al.*, 2004), success in their achievement, and progress in goal attainment influence well-being and serve as important reference standards for the affective system.

Individuals navigate through predetermined life paths such as education, career, and family life, adapting to institutional pressures, social norms, and stimuli. The need to prioritize goals in which resources are invested stems from the recognition that pursuing all desired outcomes is not feasible due to time and resource constraints. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize goals, decide which ones can be postponed, and which ones must be relinquished. Thus, the decision to adopt a particular goal involves an optimized decision-making process, a choice appropriate to the situational context that includes available resources (Haase *et al.*, 2021).

In the regulatory process of optimizing through the choice of appropriate life goals, the challenge lies in identifying when goal pursuit becomes maladaptive, ensured by certain monitoring processes that operate in the background. Monitoring processes rely on cognitive and affective information related to the perception of difficulties in goal pursuit, insufficient progress, or goal failure (Heckhausen *et al.*, 2010).

More recently, Bühler and colleagues (2019) tested the hypothesis that people value as important and attainable those goals that allow them to fulfill their developmental tasks and adapt these goals to personal capacities. Successfully achieving these goals anticipates subjective well-being not only in the short term but also over the medium term (2 and 4 years). Based on responses from 973 individuals aged 18 to 92 years, Bühler demonstrated that regardless of age, the ability to achieve goals, compared to the importance of these goals, has a stronger impact on subsequent subjective well-being (this effect persists even after four years). Therefore, as observed by the authors, if individuals perceive that they have no control over achieving their important goals, dissatisfaction and the risk of developing depressive disorders may arise (consistent with the learned helplessness theory, Maier, 1969).

To progress towards successful achievement of personal goals and to do so successfully, resources are required; resources are defined as any aspects perceived by individuals as helpful in achieving their goals (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). From this perspective, evaluating the resources available may play an important role in the subjective estimation of development opportunities and the likelihood of success in undertakings.

Another motivational theory centered on resources is the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989 - 2002). This theoretical perspective describes how individuals react to demands of physical, emotional, social, or organizational nature in their environment (stressors) and how coping with them requires sustained mental or physical effort from the individual, influencing well-being (Brummelhuis, 2012). According to this theory, the primary human motivation is directed towards obtaining, maintaining, protecting, and accumulating resources because individuals with resources are less vulnerable to negative life circumstances, and any losses are easier to endure (Hobfoll, 2002). When not facing adversities, people strive to acquire as many resources as possible. This activity is considered protective during more difficult periods, leading to increased well-being as it creates a sense of better managing potential stressful challenges they may encounter in the future.

However, what influences well-being is not just the abundance of resources but also possessing those resources needed to progress in achieving one's important goals (as demonstrated by Diener and Fujita in 1995), namely resources congruent with selected personal goals.

The relationship between well-being, goals, and resources is much more complex. The main assumption of the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2002) is that human motivation is directed towards obtaining, maintaining, protecting, and accumulating resources. However, human motivation is related to desired states individuals strive to achieve, maintain, or avoid (Emmons, 1986), states that conceptually fall under the notion of goals. Thus, resources could be assimilated to final states of goals, yesterday's objectives becoming today's resources. If we analyze the taxonomy of adult individuals' goals (such as that developed by Chulef *et al.*, 2001), which includes 135 goals, it is observed that many of these goals resemble many of the 74 resources included in the Conservation Of Resources - Evaluation (COR-E) inventory developed and validated by Hobfoll (Dodeler *et al.*, 2018), meaning there is a correspondence between goals and resources.

Another hypothesis exploring the link between well-being, resources, and goals is the hypothesis that the level of well-being is influenced by the degree of fit between individual

goals and available resources. This relationship was investigated by Diener and Fujita in a 1995 study. The two researchers found a correlation between the level of well-being and the availability of resources that correspond to the goals considered most relevant by individuals.

In Diener and Fujita's study (1995), the influence of 21 resources was analyzed, including personal skills, individual traits, social support, and material well-being (such as being with Self-confidence, Self-discipline for work, Social skills, Intelligence, Energetic, Assertive, Family support, Close friends, Emotional self-control, Healthy, Articulate, Strong romantic relationships, Good manner, Expert knowledge, Public speaking skills, Money, Position of authority, Physical attractiveness, Influential connections, Material possessions, and Athletic abilities), evaluated by participants (222 students and 195 friends or family members) in relation to their personal goals (identified by listing 15 goals participants intend to achieve) and their impact on their well-being.

Starting from the premise that (1) individual resources alone cannot have a significant impact on well-being, as individuals have many types of resources that are weakly correlated with each other, that (2) an individual may have a certain resource at a high level, but others may be underdeveloped, and that (3) the individual may resort to alternative resources to achieve their goals, the mentioned authors argue that studying the relationship between resources and well-being should consider their influence as a whole, in an aggregated manner. Moreover, since goals can be achieved using different resources, and individuals may have multiple goals they are simultaneously trying to achieve, although each goal influences well-being to some extent, there are additional arguments supporting the need to examine the full spectrum of available resources to estimate their influence on well-being.

The main conclusions reached by the two researchers were:

- Resources taken together moderately predict subjective well-being.
- Life satisfaction was more closely related to resources than affective well-being.
- Social and personal resources had a stronger link to subjective well-being than material resources.
- Resources are more strongly correlated with subjective well-being when they are relevant to individuals' personal aspirations.
- There is a tendency for people to choose personal goals for which they have adequate resources.

- The degree of alignment between individual goals and available resources had a predictive influence on subjective well-being.

Therefore, what influences well-being is not wealth in resources but the possession of those resources needed to progress in achieving one's important goals.

## Chapter 2

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989-2018) and the Motivational Theory of Life Course (Heckhausen, 1995-2019), along with the findings from Bühler (Bühler *et al.*, 2019), Diener and Fujita (1995), and Salmela-Aro (Salmela-Aro *et al.*, 1993), have enabled the development of a research model to investigate the influence of psychosocial resources on well-being across various stages of adult professional life.

The model was based on the observation that as adults progress through life, they adapt their goals to changes in their life context. With this motivational reconfiguration, it is assumed that there are changes in the perceived utility of resources based on their alignment with modified personal goals. Additionally, it was assumed that among the resources valued as essential are key psychological resources and social support, and that the level of these psychosocial resources anticipates the level of well-being.

The current endeavor aimed to investigate the relationship between well-being and psychosocial resources through a descriptive cross-sectional design structured into three studies, each with derived partial objectives:

**Objective of the First Study:** To identify essential resources for the goals of active professionals of various ages.

**Objective of the Second Study:** To determine the predictive power of these resources concerning the level of subjective well-being.

**Objective of the Third Study:** To validate the obtained results through a coaching program.

This research framework aimed to provide insights into how psychosocial resources contribute to well-being across different stages of adult professional life, integrating theoretical perspectives and empirical findings to enhance understanding in this field.



The study design focuses on the relationship between goals, resources, and well-being, as depicted in Figure 1.1.

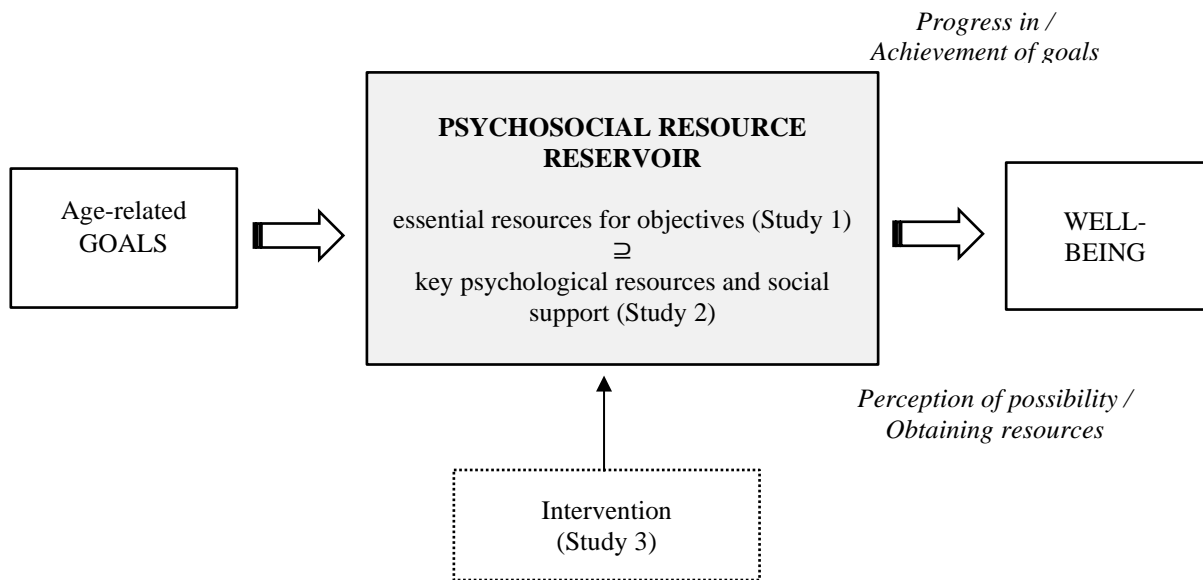


Figure 1. 1. Research design

- The first study aimed to identify essential resources perceived by actively working adults under 30, between 31 and 40, between 41 and 50, and those over 50 years old, anticipating differences associated with achieving distinct objectives.
- The second study aimed to analyze the relationship between psychosocial resources and well-being, considering their utility for personal goals across different age groups. It was anticipated that resources crucial for achieving personal goals would also predict subjective well-being.
- The third study aimed to practically validate the results by examining the optimization effect induced by a coaching program focused on an essential resource on other psychological resources and subjective well-being. It was anticipated that the coaching intervention would significantly impact both well-being and other psychological resources.

The hypotheses, procedural approach, and sample used for each study will be presented in the following pages.

## Chapter 3

# **STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOSOCIAL RESOURCES AND WELL-BEING**

### **Study 1:**

#### **Identification of Essential Resources for Goal Attainment Among Actively Working Adults Across Different Ages**

##### **3. 1. 1. Premises**

The study was based on the premise that as individuals age, their personal goals change, leading to shifts in the types of psychosocial resources perceived as most useful for these goals. The aim was to identify resources perceived to contribute most significantly to achieving the goals of actively working adults of various ages.

To achieve this aim, the hypothesis was formulated: the perceived utility of psychosocial resources depends on personal goals and age.

##### **3. 1. 2. Research Methodology**

Starting from the importance of delineating as accurately as possible certain subperiods within the active professional period and the lack of consensus regarding their beginning and end, age limits for these subperiods have been established based on data from the European Social Survey ESS Round 9 (2018/19). Using three dimensions (professional identity, family identity, and the age at which respondents consider individuals as young, middle-aged, or old), and considering the developmental tasks characteristic of life stages, age limits have been set for the professional active period (18-65 years). These limits have been delineated in decade intervals (under 30 years; between 31 and 40 years; between 41 and 50 years; and over 50 years) to account for the specific developmental tasks of different life stages.

The sample consisted of 213 professionally active adults aged between 18 and 65 years, divided into four age groups. From a socio-demographic perspective, all participants were professionally active adults, with the majority being female (63.2%), residing in urban areas (79.3%), and having a high level of education (83.8% with university degrees), as well as at least moderate to high incomes (86.3% with at least moderate incomes).

As for the methodology, in the first stage, to identify respondents' main personal goals, a list of 204 goals was used. Based on this list, respondents were asked to assess the current status of each objective in terms of achievement. The aim of this initial step was to identify the active objectives that adults are currently striving to achieve. In the second stage, starting from the list of active personal objectives, respondents were asked to assess the utility of 93 resources for their personal goals. This stage concluded by identifying the psychosocial resources with high utility, which participants consider essential for achieving their personal objectives, categorized by age groups. These resources are those without which objectives cannot be successfully achieved.

To achieve the study's objectives and hypotheses, two checklists were used:

#### **Goals List:**

The personal goals included in the list used in Study 1 were those used by Chulef *et al.* in 2001 for creating a hierarchical taxonomy of human objectives. This list was later updated by Talevich *et al.* in 2017 and supplemented with objectives related to obtaining material and energetic resources. The list used comprised a total of 204 personal goals of moderate generality. Respondents were asked to indicate which objectives they are currently pursuing (active goals), which they have postponed (frozen goals), which they have completed (achieved goals), which they continuously pursue (maintained goals), and which are currently irrelevant to them.

#### **Resources List:**

The resources included in the list were those found in the Resource Conservation Assessment questionnaire, a tool derived from Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources theory, developed to measure resource loss/gain (Hobfoll *et al.*, 1992). The 74 resources from the questionnaire were supplemented with resources used by Diener and Fujita (1995) in their study demonstrating that well-being depends on the congruence between pursued objectives and available resources. The list used in the study comprised a total of 93 resources. Respondents were asked to rate the utility (essential/useful/not important) of these resources for their objectives.

The variables analyzed in the first study were:

- Age (under 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and over 50 years)
- Personal goals that adults of different ages strive to achieve
- Resources they consider essential for achieving these personal goals

Data were analyzed using the SPSS program, employing non-parametric statistical tests. To identify typical objectives of professionally active adults of different ages, given the nominal nature of these data, the percentage of respondents selecting a specific goals relative to the number of respondents in a particular age category was analyzed. Differences were assessed using the Z-test for proportions. To establish the relevance of differences in the assessment of resource utility across different age categories, statistical analysis utilized the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests (tests for comparing differences between groups, suitable for ordinal data processing).

### **3. 1. 3. Results**

From the perspective of active personal goals, the obtained results demonstrate significant differences among adults based on their age categories.

*Adults under 30 compared to those aged 31-40:* Young adults under 30 focus on completing their studies, achieving professional status, and a sense of security. Goals related to involvement in religious community life and those related to children are less relevant to them compared to adults aged 31-40. Adults aged 31-40 have achieved certain personal goals that need to be maintained, such as forming a circle of friends who can provide emotional support, maturity, autonomy, self-acceptance, security, stability, and socially and professionally valued skills.

*Adults aged 31-40 compared to those aged 41-50:* Adults aged 31-40 focus on ensuring an adequate income to support their families. Completed goals are significantly higher among adults aged 31-40, who are considered more mature in their thinking and behavior, sufficiently practical and physically active, and satisfied both with themselves and with their lives.

*Adults aged 41-50 compared to those over 50:* Adults aged 41-50 feel they have achieved goals related to social relationships and personal development. Beyond the age of 50, the analysis of personal goals indicates a better understanding of personal limits and greater realism.

Thus, the significant differences observed in the objectives of adults across different age categories underscore that these vary with age, transitioning from goals related to establishing professional status and ensuring a certain security through adequate income for family support, to achieving personal ideals and developing harmonious social relationships as they advance in age. There is a clear evolution of priorities and concerns according to the

adult's age stages, marked by changes in active goals pursued by adults of different ages. Therefore, in accordance with Havighurst (1948) and Nurmi (1992), this research has demonstrated that individual priorities and goals evolve with advancing age.

To assess the perceived utility of resources, the study began by analyzing how responses were distributed based on the classification of resources according to Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources theory (1989, 2002), which categorizes them into personal (individual characteristics), social (conditions), energetic (energies), and material (objects) resources.

Given the aim of the study, the analysis focused on resources considered essential, with a utility rating above 2.50 (on a three-point evaluation scale where 1 = not useful, 2 = useful, and 3 = essential). Out of the 93 resources listed for participants: 15 resources (16.12%) were deemed essential regardless of age, and 57 resources (56.98%) were considered essential for personal objectives by participants belonging to at least one age group. *None of the analyzed psychological resources were considered non-essential by respondents.* Among the social resources, three were found to be useful but not essential (influence relationships, leadership roles, and erotic relationships/experiences); all other social resources included in the list were deemed essential for their personal objectives by respondents across age groups.

From the perspective of the most useful resources (resources with high average ratings) for adult objectives, the following trends were observed:

*Young adults* up to 30 years old particularly value: Free time ( $m = 2.76$ ,  $s = .43$ ), Self-confidence ( $m = 2.69$ ,  $s = .47$ ), Intelligence ( $m = 2.69$ ,  $s = .47$ ), Stamina/endurance ( $m = 2.69$ ,  $s = .55$ ), Emotional self-control ( $m = 2.67$ ,  $s = .47$ ), and Personal health ( $m = 2.67$ ,  $s = .52$ ).

*Adults aged 31-40* appreciate: Personal health (mean = 2.94,  $s = .24$ ), Time for adequate sleep ( $m = 2.83$ ,  $s = .38$ ), Family stability ( $m = 2.80$ ,  $s = .45$ ), Financial stability ( $m = 2.80$ ,  $s = .41$ ), and Spouse/partner's health ( $m = 2.83$ ,  $s = .45$ ).

*Adults aged 41-50* value: Personal health (mean = 2.79,  $s = .41$ ), Family stability ( $m = 2.74$ ,  $s = .44$ ), Health of family/close friends ( $m = 2.67$ ,  $s = .51$ ), and Time with loved ones ( $m = 2.65$ ,  $s = .48$ ).

*Adults over 50* appreciate: Personal health (m = 2.96, s = .21), ); Family stability (m = 2.87, s = .34), Health of family/close friends (m = 2.91, s = .29), and Time with loved ones (m = 2.74, s = .45).

To evaluate the relevance of these differences, the Kruskal-Wallis test (Kruskal and Wallis, 1952) was used. This non-parametric test is recommended for situations where data are skewed and when comparing more than two independent groups (Field, 2013). In the Kruskal-Wallis test, group medians are compared to assess whether there are significant differences between them. Data are converted into ranks for analysis, and the Kruskal-Wallis test measures the discrepancy between these ranks. High values of the H statistic indicate a higher probability that at least one group differs significantly regarding the analyzed variable.

Regarding psychological and social resources considered essential regardless of age—those with averages above 2.50, as presented in Table 1 - no significant differences were identified in the appreciation of utility among respondents of different ages. Only personal health and free time showed significant differences in their appreciation as essential resources across age groups.

Table 1. Significant differences in appreciation of resources valued as essential regardless of age

Resources rated as essential regardless of age	Resource type*	Up to 30 years old (N=49)		Between 31 and 40 years old (N=35)		Between 41 and 50 years old (N=57)		Over 50 years old (N=23)		Kruskal Wallis Test	
		m	s	m	s	m	s	m	s	df = 3	p
<i>Personal health</i>	E	2.67	.52	2.94	.24	2.79	.41	2.96	.21	12.03*	.00
<i>Free time</i>	E	2.76	.43	2.80	.41	2.51	.57	2.61	.50	9.23*	.02

\* E = energy resource, P = personal resource, S = social resource

Therefore, *regardless of age Self-confidence; Feeling that my life has meaning/purpose; Motivation to get things done; Sense of optimism; Self-discipline for work; Family stability; Health of family/close friends; Time with loved ones; Financial stability; Stable employment; Time with loved ones; Family support; Stamina/endurance are psychological and social resources considered essential for successfully achieving personal goals.*

For resources deemed essential only by respondents belonging to specific age categories, as presented in Table 2.

Differences based on age were identified for the following resources: Spouse/partner's health; Children's health; Good relationship with my children; Advancement in education or job training; Public speaking skills, Ability to communicate well, Feeling that I am successful; Feeling that I have control over my life; Ability to organise tasks; Medical insurance; Providing children's essentials, Sense of pride in myself, and Social skills.

Table 2. Significant differences in appreciation of resources valued as essential only at certain ages

Resources considered essential only at certain ages that are valued differently	Resource type*	Up to 30 years old (N=49)		Between 31 and 40 years old (N=35)		Between 41 and 50 years old (N=57)		Over 50 years old (N=23)		Kruskal Wallis Test	
		m	s	m	s	m	s	m	s	df = 3	p
		Sense of pride in myself	P	2.35	.60	2.61	.54	2.35	.61	2.13	.69
Feeling that I am successful	P	2.47	.54	2.58	.49	2.28	.56	2.13	.63	<b>11.23*</b>	<b>.011</b>
The feeling of personal development	P	2.49	.54	2.76	.43	2.47	.54	2.30	.63	<b>10.10*</b>	<b>.018</b>
Feeling that I have control over my life	P	2.63	.49	2.67	.47	2.37	.52	2.48	.59	<b>9.87*</b>	<b>.020</b>
The ability to speak in public	P	2.47	.54	2.55	.50	2.21	.56	2.04	.64	<b>15.34**</b>	<b>.002</b>
Ability to communicate well	P	2.63	.53	2.67	.47	2.47	.54	2.22	.60	<b>11.48**</b>	<b>.009</b>
Ability to organise tasks	P	2.57	.54	2.70	.46	2.51	.54	2.26	.54	<b>9.56*</b>	<b>.023</b>
Spouse/partner's health	S	2.45	.74	2.83	.45	2.68	.54	2.91	.29	<b>12.61**</b>	<b>.006</b>
Good relationship with my children	S	2.27	.84	2.69	.63	2.63	.62	2.78	.52	<b>11.65**</b>	<b>.009</b>
Children's health	S	2.22	.85	2.74	.61	2.72	.59	2.91	.29	<b>21.95***</b>	<b>.000</b>
Social skills	S	2.51	.58	2.67	.47	2.44	.57	2.26	.54	<b>8.28*</b>	<b>.041</b>
Advancement in education or job training	S	2.47	.58	2.66	.48	2.35	.61	2.00	.60	<b>16.60**</b>	<b>.001</b>
Medical insurance	M	2.31	.68	2.69	.58	2.54	.54	2.61	.58	<b>9.18*</b>	<b>.027</b>
Providing children's essentials	M	2.31	.74	2.74	.51	2.51	.60	2.52	.51	<b>9.07*</b>	<b>.028</b>

\* M = material resource, P = personal resource, S = social resource

Among the psychosocial resources considered useful but non-essential for the goals of active professional adults, only Role as a leader/position of authority, Influential connections, and Strong romantic relationship were identified. Other types of resources that were perceived differently included Financial assets (stocks, property, etc), Necessary home appliances, Financial help if needed, Money for extras, respectively More clothing than I need (Table 3).

Table 3. Significant differences in appreciation of resources valued as useful or irrelevant

Resources valued as useful or irrelevant	Resource type*	Up to 30 years old (N=49)		Between 31 and 40 years old (N=35)		Between 41 and 50 years old (N=57)		Over 50 years old (N=23)		Kruskal Wallis Test	
		m	s	m	s	m	s	m	s	df = 3	p
Influential connections	S	1.96	.58	2.06	.59	1.89	.62	1.61	.58	<b>8.28*</b>	<b>.04</b>
Role as a leader	S	1.82	.73	1.86	.73	1.65	.67	1.35	.57	<b>9.39*</b>	<b>.02</b>
Strong romantic relationship	S	2.10	.68	2.14	.73	1.72	.75	1.43	.59	<b>19.95***</b>	<b>.00</b>
Financial assets	M	2.18	.63	2.40	.50	2.07	.65	1.87	.55	<b>11.25*</b>	<b>.01</b>
Necessary home appliances	M	2.18	.63	2.17	.62	1.88	.54	2.22	.52	<b>10.23*</b>	<b>.01</b>
Financial help if needed	M	2.41	.54	2.29	.52	2.21	.45	2.00	.52	<b>10.16*</b>	<b>.01</b>
Money for extras	M	2.22	.55	2.26	.51	2.04	.65	1.83	.49	<b>10.12*</b>	<b>.01</b>
More clothing than I need	M	1.55	.65	1.37	.60	1.47	.63	1.09	.42	<b>12.04**</b>	<b>.00</b>

\* M = material resource, S = social resource

To investigate the significant differences highlighted by the Kruskal-Wallis test, we analyzed the variability in the assessment of resources within each age interval using a post-hoc test (Mann-Whitney U test). Given that four groups were compared (under 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and over 50 years), we applied Bonferroni correction to minimize the probability of making a type I error. Therefore, the significance threshold was divided by the number of groups ( $0.05 / 4 = 0.0125$ ;  $0.01 / 4 = 0.00625$ ), following Field's recommendations (2013). To evaluate the association between the ranks assigned to values in the two compared groups, the coefficient  $r$  was calculated.

The results of the analyses revealed the following differences in the appreciation of psychological and social resources based on respondents' age:

*Under 30 years versus 31 - 40 years*

- Spouse/partner's health is considered a useful social resource but not essential for achieving personal goals by adults under 30 years old. Young adults (mean rank = 69.50) value it less (Mann-Whitney  $U = 622.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .28$ ) compared to adults in the next age bracket (31 - 40 years, mean rank = 92.39).
- Children's health is less valued by young adults (mean rank = 62.30) (Mann-Whitney  $U = 565.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .33$ ) compared to adults in the next age bracket (31 - 40 years, mean rank = 90.73).



- Medical insurance is less valued (Mann-Whitney  $U = 589$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .30$ ) by those under 30 years old (mean rank = 69.21) compared to those aged 31 - 40 years (mean rank = 95.70).
- Providing children's essentials is less valued (Mann-Whitney  $U = 579.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .31$ ) by those under 30 years old (mean rank = 71.46) compared to those aged 31 - 40 years (mean rank = 99.13).
- No resource analyzed was valued more by young adults under 30 years old compared to adults aged 31 - 40 years.

*Under 30 years versus 41 - 50 years*

- Children's health is a less appreciated resource by young adults compared to adults aged 41 to 50. Young adults (mean rank = 62.30) find it less useful (Mann-Whitney  $U = 950$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .32$ ) compared to adults aged 41 to 50 (mean rank = 88.26).
- Feeling that I have control over my life is much more appreciated by young adults compared to adults aged 41 to 50. Young adults (mean rank = 90.56) find it more useful (Mann-Whitney  $U = 1043$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .25$ ) compared to adults aged 41 to 50 (mean rank = 69.80).
- Strong romantic relationships are much more appreciated by young adults compared to adults aged 41 to 50. Young adults (mean rank = 95.77) value them more (Mann-Whitney  $U = 999$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .26$ ) compared to adults aged 41 to 50 (mean rank = 72.51).

*Under 30 years versus over 50 years*

- Spouse/partner's health is less appreciated by young adults compared to adults over 50 years old. Young adults (mean rank = 69.50) find it less useful (Mann-Whitney  $U = 375.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .33$ ) compared to adults over 50 years old (mean rank = 97.30).
- Children's health is less appreciated by young adults compared to adults over 50 years old. Young adults (mean rank = 62.30) value it less (Mann-Whitney  $U = 312$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .41$ ) compared to adults over 50 years old (mean rank = 98.74).
- Good relationship with my children is less appreciated by young adults compared to adults over 50 years old. Young adults (mean rank = 67.24) find it less useful (Mann-Whitney  $U = 373.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .31$ ) compared to adults over 50 years old (mean rank = 95.33).

- Ability to communicate well is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 358$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .33$ ) by young adults under 30 years old (mean rank = 90.83) compared to those over 50 years old (mean rank = 60.33).
- The ability to speak in public is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 369$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .31$ ) by young adults under 30 years old (mean rank = 91.69) compared to those over 50 years old (mean rank = 62.85).
- Advancement in education or job training is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 345$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .34$ ) by young adults under 30 years old (mean rank = 86.99) compared to those over 50 years old (mean rank = 55.24).
- Role as a leader is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 362.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .31$ ) by young adults under 30 years old (mean rank = 89.55) compared to those over 50 years old (mean rank = 59.96).
- Strong romantic relationships are much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 281$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .43$ ) by young adults under 30 years old (mean rank = 95.77) compared to those over 50 years old (mean rank = 55.70).

#### *31 - 40 years versus 41 - 50 years*

- No resource analyzed was valued less by adults aged 31 to 40 years compared to those aged 41 to 50 years.
- Free time, an essential energy resource regardless of age, is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 735$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .26$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 93.30) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 77.80).
- Feeling that I am successful is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 720$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .26$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 97.40) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 74.86).
- Feeling that I have control over my life is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 704$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .28$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 93.61) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 69.80).
- The ability to speak in public is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 685$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .29$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 98.14) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 72.92).
- The feeling of personal development is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 728$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .26$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 100.83) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 78.89).

- Strong romantic relationship are much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 696$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .27$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 97.81) compared to those aged 41 to 50 years (mean rank = 72.51).

*31 - 40 years versus over 50 years*

- No psychosocial resource analyzed was valued less by adults aged 31 to 40 years compared to those over 50 years.
- Social skills are much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 247$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .36$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 96.14) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 65.13).
- The ability to speak in public is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 232.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .39$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 98.14) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 62.85).
- The feeling of personal development is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 246$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .38$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 100.83) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 68.24).
- Advancement in education or job training skills is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 184$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .51$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 100.10) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 55.24).
- Feeling that I am successful is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 248$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .36$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 97.40) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 65.48).
- Ability to organise tasks is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 236$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .39$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 95.06) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 61.57).
- Ability to communicate well is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 241.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .38$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 92.90) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 60.33).
- Sense of pride in myself is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 248$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .35$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 99.43) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 66.96).
- Influential connections are much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 254.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .35$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 92.53) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 62.09).

- Strong romantic relationships are much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 198$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .45$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 97.81) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 55.70).
- Role as a leader is much more appreciated (Mann-Whitney  $U = 247.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = .35$ ) by adults aged 31 to 40 years (mean rank = 92.03) compared to those over 50 years (mean rank = 59.96).

#### *41 - 50 years versus over 50 years*

- No psychosocial resource analyzed was appreciated differently (less/more) by adults aged 41 to 50 years compared to those over 50 years.

### **3. 1. 4. Conclusions**

The changes observed in the valuation of resources (both general and psychosocial) across different age groups support the hypothesis that the perception of resource value evolves with age-related changes in life goals. Therefore, the main hypothesis of this study has been confirmed. As individuals age, resources deemed essential (with high utility) for achieving personal goals vary in accordance with the major developmental goals described in the literature, which has significant implications in organizational and managerial contexts.

The results highlight that the resources necessary for successfully achieving personal goals in professional adulthood vary across age categories. These differences suggest that priorities and resources shift with advancing age, reflecting the specific developmental stages and life needs of each age group.

From an organizational perspective, these findings underscore the need to implement measures and actions that consider age-related differences. This approach can better align organizational practices with the needs and objectives of employees at different life stages (for instance, it could involve differentiated professional development programs, flexible work arrangements and benefits, recognition and appreciation programs, and retirement transition programs).

### **Study 2:**

### **Determining the Predictive Capacity of These Resources on Subjective Well-being Levels**

### **3. 2. 1. Premise**

The second study aimed to determine to what extent high-utility psychosocial resources (essential for adult goals) predict well-being. To achieve this, a correspondence was established between the high-utility psychosocial resources identified in the first study and key psychological resources measured by the Positive Functioning Questionnaire. Additionally, social resources and perceived social support (from family, friends, and other specific individuals) were measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support.

To address the objective, the hypothesis was formulated: *high levels of well-being are anticipated by the availability of age-appropriate essential resources.*

### **3. 2. 2. Research Methodology**

The sample consisted of 514 working adults aged between 18 and 65 years, divided into four age groups: under 30 years old, 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old, and over 50 years old.

For achieving the goals and hypotheses set for the second study, the following instruments were used:

#### *1. Positive Psychological Functioning Questionnaire*

The Positive Psychological Functioning Questionnaire (Merino & Privado, 2015) is a relatively new instrument that provides an assessment of the psychological resources available to adults. The questionnaire measures 11 key resources, which are crucial because they facilitate the selection, modification, and implementation of other resources. These key psychological resources are characteristics that enable more effective coping styles or facilitate the optimal use of other resources. The questionnaire measures levels of autonomy, resilience, self-esteem, sense of life purpose, cheerfulness, optimism, curiosity, creativity, humor, environmental control, and vitality. According to analyses conducted by the authors who developed the instrument, the questionnaire demonstrates good psychometric properties and is suitable for research purposes. It has been adapted and validated in Portugal (Oliveira *et al.*, 2018) and Mexico (Merino *et al.*, 2015). Validation studies conducted in different cultural contexts have reaffirmed both the factorial structure and the psychometric properties related to construct validity and questionnaire reliability.

Due to the lack of identified psychological instruments for measuring these resources, similar to the first study, the second study involved a preliminary phase aimed at translating, adapting, and validating the questionnaire proposed by Merino and Privado. For the current research, the scale was obtained from the authors, Professor Dolores Merino Rivera of the

Social Psychology Department at Complutense University of Madrid, and was translated, adapted, and validated for the Romanian population. Based on data from 258 subjects, the psychometric qualities of the instrument used in the extensive second phase of the research were analyzed. The internal consistency, indicated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was found to be .91, and the internal structure comprises 11 primary factors (representing the 11 key psychological resources) organized into a hierarchical model with one secondary factor (positive psychological functioning).

### *2. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support*

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet *et al.*, 1990) consists of 12 items measured on a 7-point Likert scale. This scale is designed to assess the level of perceived social support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. The psychometric properties of the scale have been confirmed by numerous studies across different countries, establishing it as an internationally recognized instrument (Zimet *et al.*, 1990; Dahlem *et al.*, 1991; Kazarian & McCabe, 1991; Dambi *et al.*, 2018). The scale was adapted for the Romanian population by Marian Mihai (2006). For this research, the scale was obtained from Professor Gregory Zimet of the School of Medicine at Indiana University (USA) and was used with permission from both the author and Associate Professor Marian Mihai of the University of Oradea.

### *3. The Satisfaction with Life Scale*

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener *et al.*, 1985) consists of five items measured on a 7-point Likert scale, designed to assess global cognitive satisfaction with one's life. According to studies by Pavot and Diener (1993, 2008), the scale accurately measures life satisfaction levels without being biased by life events' fluctuations. The scale's psychometric properties have been confirmed cross-culturally, establishing it as an internationally recognized instrument (Pavot *et al.*, 1991; Maluka & Grieve, 2008). The scale was adapted for the Romanian population by Stevens and colleagues (2012), and its psychometric qualities have been further validated by more recent studies (Beatrice Balgiu, 2019). For this research, the scale was obtained from Professor Michael Stevens of Weber State University (USA), and used with his written permission.

The variables analyzed in the second study included:

- Key psychological resources (optimism, self-esteem, autonomy, vitality, cheerfulness, environmental control, curiosity, creativity, resilience, sense of purpose in life, and humor).

- Social resources (perceived social support from family, friends, or other significant individuals), identified as a crucial social resource for well-being (Gülaçti, 2010; Khan & Husain, 2010; Matsuda *et al.*, 2014; Kyprianides & Easterbrook, 2019).
- Subjective well-being (SWB).
- Age (under 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and over 50 years).

The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software, employing parametric methods. The distributions of variables were examined, and Pearson's linear correlation coefficients were calculated. Following the verification of the conditions for applying regression methods (Field, 2013), multiple linear regressions were performed to identify the influence of psychosocial resources on well-being. To explore potential mediation and/or moderation effects, the Process Macro developed by Hayes (2017) was utilized. This allowed for a more in-depth investigation into the relationships among variables, considering possible indirect and interactive effects in the model.

### **3. 2. 3. Results**

The analysis began by examining trends in the variation of psychological and social resources across different age groups. The results highlighted significant differences and underscored the importance of considering positive psychological functioning and age in understanding and addressing various aspects of well-being.

To estimate the influence of psychological resources on well-being across different age groups, multiple linear regression was employed as an explanatory method to identify the optimal solution from a statistical-explanatory perspective.

For young adults under 30 years old, actively engaged in their professions, it was found that 66% of the variance in well-being could be explained by the levels of five key psychological resources: autonomy, optimism, self-esteem, vitality, and positive mood. Autonomy emerged as the most significant predictor. The model presented in Table 4 proved to be statistically significant,  $F(5, 236) = 95.29, p < .001$ .

These five central resources act as mediators in the relationship (fully or partially mediating) between other psychosocial resources and subjective well-being: optimism, self-esteem, positive mood, autonomy, and vitality fully mediate the influence of life purpose, environmental control, resilience, creativity, family social support, and support from other significant individuals on subjective well-being. They partially mediate the influence of

humor and curiosity. Additionally, optimism, positive mood, autonomy, and vitality fully mediate the influence of social support from friends on subjective well-being.

Table 4. Regression coefficients for predicting well-being (adults up to 30 years old)

	<i>Regression coefficients</i>							
	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized		Standardized			
			B [CI 95%]	standard error B	β	t	Sig.	Partial cor. coeff.
MODEL	.669	.662						
Constant			.28	1.31		.21	.828	
Optimism			.37	.12	.16	2.91	.004	.18
Self-esteem			.48	.13	.22	3.52	.001	.22
Enjoyment			.43	.15	.19	2.85	.005	.18
Autonomy			.57	.12	.22	4.59	.000	.28
Vitality			.34	.12	.17	2.89	.004	.18

N = 242

In the case of actively employed professionals aged between 31 and 40 years, 48% of the variance in well-being can be explained by the levels of three key psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and vitality. Self-esteem emerged as the most significant predictor. The model presented in Table 5 was statistically significant,  $F(3, 94) = 30.89$ ,  $p < .001$ . Self-esteem, vitality, and environmental control fully mediate the influence of humor and life purpose on subjective well-being. Self-esteem and vitality fully mediate the influence of resilience, positive mood, optimism, autonomy, curiosity, creativity, and social support from significant others on subjective well-being. Additionally, vitality fully mediates the influence of family social support on subjective well-being.

Table 5. Regression coefficients for predicting well-being (31 - 40 years)

	<i>Regression coefficients</i>							
	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized		Standardized			
			B [CI 95%]	standard error B	β	t	Sig.	Partial cor. coeff.
MODEL	.496	.480						
Constant			9.88	2.08		4.74	.000	
Self-esteem			.67	.18	.36	3.68	.000	.35
Vitality			.54	.18	.28	3.01	.003	.29
Environmental control			.36	.19	.17	1.87	.064	.19

N = 98



In the case of actively employed professionals aged between 41 and 50 years, 44% of the variance in well-being can be explained by the levels of three key psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and positive mood. Positive mood emerged as the most significant predictor. The model presented in Table 6 was statistically significant,  $F(3, 115) = 32.71, p < .001$ . Self-esteem, environmental control, and positive mood fully mediate the influence of vitality, optimism, life purpose, autonomy, humor, creativity, and resilience on subjective well-being. They partially mediate the influence of curiosity on subjective well-being. Self-esteem and positive mood partially mediate the influence of family social support on subjective well-being, while positive mood fully mediates the influence of social support from friends on subjective well-being.

Table 6. Regression coefficients for predicting well-being (41 - 50 years)

	<i>Regression coefficients</i>							
	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized		Standardized		Partial cor.coeff.	
			B [CI 95%]	standard error B	β	t		Sig.
MODEL	.460	.446						
<i>Constant</i>			6.98	2.24		3.11	.002	
Self-esteem			.57	.19	.27	2.93	.004	.26
Environmental contro			.42	.17	.21	2.36	.019	.21
Enjoyment			.77	.22	.31	3.38	.001	.30

N = 119

For the actively employed adult aged over 50, the model that best explains the variance in subjective well-being includes two key psychological resources: self-esteem and cheerfulness. Approximately 67% of the variance in well-being can be explained by the levels of these two psychological resources. The model presented in Table No. 7 proved to be significant,  $F(3, 115) = 32.71, p < .001$ .

Table 7. Regression coefficients for predicting well-being (41 - 50 years)

	<i>Regression coefficients</i>							
	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Unstandardized		Standardized		Partial cor.coeff.	
			B [CI 95%]	standard error B	β	t		Sig.
MODEL	.684	.670						
<i>Constant</i>			3.70	2.45		1.50	.139	
Self-esteem			1.11	.23	.53	4.73	.000	.56
Enjoyment			.84	.26	.35	3.14	.003	.41

N = 50

Self-esteem fully mediates the influence of resilience and social support from significant others on subjective well-being. Self-esteem and cheerfulness fully mediate the influence of life meaning, vitality, autonomy, humor, creativity, environmental control, and optimism on subjective well-being.

### **3. 2. 3. Conclusions**

In young adults under 30 years old, 66% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by the levels of five key psychological resources: optimism, self-esteem, cheerfulness, autonomy, and vitality. For adults aged 31-40, 48% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by three psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and vitality. Adults aged 41-50 show that 44% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by three key psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and cheerfulness. In adults over 50 years old, 68% of the variance in subjective well-being can be explained by two psychological resources: self-esteem and cheerfulness. Psychological resources, crucial for well-being, fully (or partially) mediate the influence of other psychological resources, as well as social support. This relational model was observed across all four age groups analyzed.

So, the influence of key psychological resources on well-being varies with age, highlighting the importance of adapting interventions according to the specific needs of each age group.

From the comparative analysis between resources deemed essential for personal objectives in active professional adults from the first study, and the psychosocial resources best predicting well-being, it is evident that there is no exact overlap between these two sets of resources. Some resources deemed essential for achieving personal goals also have the capacity to predict subjective well-being. Although not all resources have the same predictive value, they interact.

Therefore, from the perspective of the research objective, the hypothesis of the study was partially confirmed. It is evident that there is complexity in interpreting and associating psychological resources with subjective well-being, and certain discrepancies may arise from individual perceptions and varied interpretations of these resources. Overall, these conclusions emphasize not only the importance of psychological resources in predicting subjective well-being, but also the complexity and interconnections between psychological and social resources, offering significant implications for practical approaches and psychological interventions.

### **Study 3:**

## **Validation of Results Achieved from a Coaching Program**

### **3.3.1. Premise**

The aim of the third study was to practically validate the results obtained in the first two studies by examining the optimization effect induced by a brief coaching program focused on a key resource on other psychological resources and subjective well-being. It was anticipated that the coaching intervention would have a significant impact on well-being and other psychological resources, thus reinforcing the findings from previous studies and emphasizing the importance of developing essential psychological resources for individuals' subjective well-being. The hypothesis formulated to achieve this objective was that *positive changes in a key resource would lead to changes in the level of well-being and optimize the level of other psychological resources.*

### **3.3.2. Research Methodology**

The confirmation of hypotheses from the first two studies, namely demonstrating that at different ages and depending on personal objectives, psychosocial resources anticipate adult well-being differently, led to the premise that optimizing an essential psychological resource at one age (but less essential at another age) would lead to different increases in well-being levels and would differently influence other resources.

To achieve this, based on classical coaching models (Goodman, 2002; Cox and Jackson, 2014), a program was developed focused on enhancing a resource with varying predictive power for well-being across two age groups.

Taking into account the results and observations of the meta-analysis by Zyl *et al.* (2020) and following the model used by Peláez *et al.* (2020), the program targeted four major themes: Significance and purpose, Problems and obstacles, Options and opportunities, and realization and success, abbreviated as SPOR (which in Romanian means growth).

The positive psychological coaching program consisted of four sessions conducted over one week, individually, online, and flexibly, with each session lasting approximately 60 minutes per day. Each session built upon the previous one, providing a comprehensive and integrated experience of personal development, starting from identifying and clarifying goals in the first session to establishing a concrete action plan in the final session.

The main objectives of the program were:

- Stimulating exploration of current personal concerns and objectives.

- Identifying and becoming aware of obstacles and barriers that may hinder the achievement of personal goals.
- Developing an optimistic perspective and mobilizing personal resources to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities.
- Developing a specific and achievable action plan.

In the third study, the sample consisted of 64 actively employed adults recruited online, who consented to participate without remuneration. Participants were randomly assigned to either a coaching group or a control group. Both groups were balanced numerically and in terms of chronological age ( $t = -0.55$ ,  $p = 0.58$ ) and gender (Chi-Square = 0.25,  $p = 0.79$ ).

The study utilized two instruments previously described in the earlier studies: the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Positive Psychological Functioning Questionnaire. The variables analyzed included the 11 psychological resources that constitute the positive psychological functioning construct and subjective well-being.

Data were subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS software. Given the relatively small sample size (16 participants per group) and deviations from normality in data distribution, non-parametric methods were also employed. Descriptive statistics were presented as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. Normality of data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, suitable for samples smaller than 50 participants (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). Group differences were analyzed using either independent t-tests (for normally distributed parametric data, confirmed by non-significant Shapiro-Wilk test) or the Mann-Whitney U test, following recommendations in the literature (Sava, 2011, p.85). Pre- and post-intervention differences were evaluated using paired t-tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, depending on the normality or non-normality of data distribution, as recommended (Sava, 2011; Field, 2013). Effect sizes for paired t-tests were calculated using the formula described by Field (2013), and for Wilcoxon tests, effect sizes were determined similarly as per Field's approach.

### **3. 3. 3. Results**

To assess the extent of the intervention's impact, the statistical significance of the differences between pre- and post-intervention scores was examined for participants *under the age of 30* who were part of the coaching group.

Table 8. Statistical differences between the scores of the participants (under 30 years) pre and post-intervention

Variable	Coaching group under 30 years old (pre-intervention) N = 16				Coaching group under 30 years old (post-intervention) N = 16				t paired test/ Z Wilcoxon	Effect size r
			Shapiro-Wilk				Shapiro-Wilk			
	m	s	Stat.	p	m	s	Stat.	p		
Meaning in life	4.29	.48	.93	.25	4.52	.34	.88	.04	Z = 2.20* p = .027	.39
Optimism	4.02	.58	.83	.01	4.21	.50	.76	.00	Z = 2.49* p = .013	.44
Positive Psychological Functioning	4.18	.35	.92	.20	4.30	.30	.91	.12	t (15) = 3.98** p = .001	.71

Based on the findings presented in Table 8, the average scores on the scales of life meaning, optimism, and positive psychological functioning were significantly different before and after the coaching intervention in the group that received coaching. Although improvements were observed across all measured variables, statistically significant differences between pre- and post-intervention scores were not identified for the other psychological resources measured. Therefore, for young adults, the program had an effect in increasing dispositional optimism and life meaning, but did not influence overall well-being.

Life satisfaction, as a cognitive-evaluative dimension of well-being, tends to be relatively stable and less influenced by circumstantial or dispositional factors. It may potentially be mediated by time and other variables related to perceived progress in achieving valued personal goals.

To determine the extent of the intervention's effectiveness, the statistical significance of the differences between pre- and post-intervention scores was verified for participants *over 30 years* old who were part of the coaching group. This involved using appropriate statistical tests, such as paired t-tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, depending on the normality of the data distributions, to assess whether there were significant changes in the measured variables following the coaching sessions.

The outcomes from this analysis would provide insights into how the coaching intervention specifically impacted participants over 30, shedding light on its effectiveness in enhancing psychological resources and subjective well-being in this age group.

Table 10. Statistical differences between participants (over 30 years) pre and post-intervention

Variable	Coaching group over 30 years (pre-intervention) N = 16				Coaching group over 30 years (post-intervention) N = 16				t paired test/ Z Wilcoxon	Effect size r
			Shapiro-Wilk				Shapiro-Wilk			
	m	s	Stat.	p	m	s	Stat.	p		

Autonomy	3.77	.81	.91	.12	4.10	.37	.90	.14	t (15) = 2.44*	.53
									p = .027	
Positive Psychological Functioning	4.00	.40	.83	.00	4.18	.41	.90	.10	Z = 3.27**	.56
									p = .001	

Based on the findings presented in Table 10, the average scores on the autonomy scale and positive psychological functioning were significantly different before and after the coaching intervention in the group that received coaching.

In comparison to adults under 30 years old, adults over 30 did not show increases in all measured dimensions. Therefore, for working adults over 30 years old, the program had an effect in increasing the level of autonomy, but it did not influence overall well-being.

This suggests that while the coaching intervention successfully enhanced autonomy, which is a crucial psychological resource, it did not lead to improvements in subjective well-being among the older adult participants. The findings indicate a selective impact of the coaching program on specific psychological dimensions, highlighting potential differences in how different age groups respond to such interventions.

### 3.3.4. Conclusions

In the aftermath of this coaching intervention focused on enhancing optimism, significant increases in the average scores across all psychological resources were evident among young adults (particularly in optimism and sense of life purpose). However, not all identified changes reached the threshold of statistical significance, indicating that some may be due to chance. Conversely, changes among adults over 30 years old were more moderate, with the exception of autonomy.

Although the study hypothesis was not fully confirmed, the results highlighted how psychological resources are interconnected and demonstrated that positive psychological coaching interventions can have varying impacts depending on clients' age. Short coaching interventions appear to exert a stronger influence on the affective-dispositional dimension, while the cognitive-evaluative component of well-being may require more advanced psychological interventions.

## Chapter 4

# CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

### 4. 1. Synthesis of results

**STUDY I** of the research was based on the premise that the value of resources is identified in relation to goals, and goals change according to life stage. The aim of this initial study was to highlight differences in the perceived utility of psychosocial resources for achieving personal goals among actively working adults of various ages.

This exploratory study involved investigating the different contributions of psychosocial resources to the accomplishment of personal goals across different age groups of working adults. Given that the relative importance of resources in successive life stages had not been previously explored, and resources were not studied as a unified whole (typically focusing on quantifying the influence of a limited subset of resources on outcomes of interest to researchers), the study aimed to identify the resources perceived as most useful relative to personal goals of actively working adults at different ages, starting from a comprehensive list of nearly one hundred different types of resources identified in the specialized literature.

This first study involved two main stages: reviewing a list of objectives and selecting active goals, and reviewing a list of resources and identifying those perceived as essential for successfully achieving the selected personal objectives in the first stage. The analysis aimed to identify essential resources (with high perceived utility) for each sub-period of active age and to investigate differences.

The sample consisted of 213 professionally active adults aged between 18 and 65 years, divided into four age groups (under 30 years; between 31 and 40 years; between 41 and 50 years; and over 50 years).

From the perspective of active goals and resources considered most useful (essential) for achieving them, statistically and practically significant differences were identified.

The *results confirmed the hypothesis* that the perceived utility of psychosocial resources depends on personal goals and age, supporting the idea that personal goals change with age, and along with them, changes occur in the resources considered particularly useful (essential) for successfully achieving these goals.

Psychosocial resources do not have the same importance or relevance throughout adult life. They change with life stages and the personal and professional evolution of adults. While psychological and social resources remain fundamental for personal and professional success throughout active adult life, priorities and emphasis on certain resources vary with age and individual experiences, reflecting the specific needs and objectives of each life stage.

These findings suggest that priorities and appraisals related to essential resources for the goals of actively working adults evolve as individuals progress through different life stages. In youth, the focus is on developing skills that support integration and performance at work, later on achievements (success/achievement) become important, as well as meeting family needs. Family, health, and income security are considered important resources for successfully achieving personal goals that adults set for themselves, even after retirement.

These conclusions highlight the need to adapt support and development strategies according to the specific needs of each age group. Psychological specialist recommendations that take into account the resources valued by each age group can help organizations better align with the needs and objectives of employees based on their life stage. Thus, identifying and adapting measures to better suit the needs of different age groups become essential in optimizing the organizational climate and supporting employee development. They can contribute to creating a work environment where employees of all ages feel valued, supported, and encouraged to achieve their personal and professional goals.

In **STUDY II** of the research, to achieve the proposed objectives and validate the hypotheses, the following plan was used: since no psychological instrument was identified for measuring psychological resources, similar to the first study, the second study involved a preliminary stage aimed at translating, adapting, and validating a questionnaire recently proposed by Merino and Privado in 2015. The Positive Psychological Functioning Questionnaire measures 11 psychological resources considered essential because they are used for selecting, modifying, and implementing other resources—those characteristics that allow for more effective coping styles or facilitate the optimal use of other resources (autonomy, resilience, self-esteem, sense of life, joy, optimism, curiosity, creativity, humor, environmental control, and vitality).

The study aimed to establish the extent to which high utility psychosocial resources (essential for adult goals) anticipate well-being. The research hypothesis assumed that high levels of well-being are anticipated by the availability of essential resources corresponding to age.



To test this hypothesis, life satisfaction (the cognitive-evaluative component of subjective well-being), levels of positive psychological functioning represented by 11 key psychological resources (autonomy, optimism, vitality, curiosity, creativity, environmental control, humor, self-esteem, resilience, joy, and sense of life), and social support from three sources—family, friends, and other significant individuals—were measured. A total of 514 professionally active individuals participated in the research. Participants responded to items from three instruments: the life satisfaction scale, the positive psychological functioning scale, and the multidimensional perceived social support scale.

Among young adults under the age of 30, it was found that 66% of well-being variance could be explained by the level of five psychological resources: optimism, self-esteem, enjoyment, autonomy, and vitality. The most significant change in well-being occurs with a 1-point increase in autonomy score, resulting in a 0.57-point increase in the well-being scale. Given that the literature supports the hypothesis of different pathways through which different types of resources (psychological and social) operate, the analysis continued by verifying a model in which a limited set of psychological resources (with the highest predictive power) mediate the influence of other analyzed resources. The results confirmed that optimism, self-esteem, enjoyment, autonomy, and vitality fully mediate the influence of life meaning, environmental control, resilience, creativity, family social support, and social support from other individuals on subjective well-being, and partially mediate the influence of humor and curiosity. Optimism, joy, autonomy, and vitality fully mediate the influence of social support from friends on subjective well-being.

The variance in well-being of professionally active adults aged 31 to 40 can be explained to a proportion of 48% by the level of three psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and vitality. The most significant change in well-being occurs with a 1-point increase in self-esteem score, resulting in a 0.67-point increase in the well-being scale. The three central psychological resources (self-esteem, environmental control, and vitality) fully or partially mediate the influence of environmental control, creativity, curiosity, humor, resilience, life meaning, and perceived family and other individual social support on subjective well-being. Thus, self-esteem and vitality fully mediate the influence of resilience, joy, optimism, autonomy, curiosity, creativity, and social support from other individuals on subjective well-being; while vitality fully mediates the influence of family social support on subjective well-being.

For adults aged 41 to 50, 44% of well-being variance can be explained by the level of three psychological resources: self-esteem, environmental control, and enjoyment. The most

significant change in well-being occurs with a 1-point increase in the enjoyment/positive disposition score, resulting in a 0.77-point increase in the well-being scale. The mediation role of resources, which are the strongest predictors of well-being, was identified, similar to young adults and professionally active adults aged 31 to 40. Self-esteem, environmental control, and enjoyment fully mediate the influence of vitality, optimism, life meaning, autonomy, humor, creativity, and resilience on subjective well-being, and partially mediate the influence of curiosity on subjective well-being. Self-esteem and enjoyment partially mediate the influence of family social support on subjective well-being; while enjoyment fully mediates the influence of social support from friends on subjective well-being.

The model that best explains the variance in subjective well-being in adults over the age of 50 assumes the influence of two psychological resources: self-esteem and enjoyment. 68% of the variance in well-being of professionally active adults over the age of 50 can be explained by the level of these two psychological resources. The most significant change in well-being occurs with a 1-point increase in self-esteem score, leading to a 1.11-point increase in the well-being scale. Similar to the pattern highlighted in other age groups, self-esteem fully mediates the influence of resilience and social support from other individuals on subjective well-being for adults over 50; while self-esteem and enjoyment fully mediate the influence of life meaning, vitality, autonomy, humor, creativity, environmental control, and optimism on subjective well-being.

From the comparative analysis of resources appreciated as essential for the personal objectives of adults, resources identified in the first study, and psychosocial resources that best anticipate well-being, it was found that there is no exact overlap between psychosocial resources appreciated as essential for achieving successful goals and those that predict well-being. Some of the resources considered essential for successfully achieving goals have the ability to anticipate subjective well-being. Even though not all resources have the same predictive value, they interact. Psychological resources, which are fundamental for well-being, fully (or partially) mediate the influence of other psychological resources and also the influence of social support. This relational model was observed in all four analyzed sub-periods.

Therefore, from the perspective of the objective of this study, *the research hypothesis was partially confirmed*. Although the data obtained did not allow for the full confirmation of the research hypothesis, from the perspective of specialized intervention, the results obtained in this study are extremely important because they provide a detailed perspective

on how psychological resources and their interactions differ by age and can guide intervention strategies to improve the well-being of clients in different stages of adult life.

In conclusion, the results underline the necessity of personalizing psychological interventions according to the characteristics and individual needs of adults in various age groups. Tailored interventions should focus on central psychological resources, such as self-esteem, recognizing them as significant factors in promoting well-being. Understanding the different ways in which psychological and social resources act and interact in determining well-being highlights the need for a holistic approach, with special attention to the social context and demographic factors, such as age.

In **STUDY III** considering the results of previous studies in this work, which indicated that optimism is a significant predictor of well-being, especially in younger individuals (under 30 years old), and that this aspect is less central in older individuals, the following working hypothesis was formulated: a positive psychological coaching session focused on developing a psychological resource (optimism) will lead to differentiated increases in well-being, depending on how strong optimism is in predicting subjective well-being in adults (with a more pronounced impact on adults under 30 years old). In other words, positive changes in this essential resource will result in changes in the level of well-being and will optimize the level of other psychological resources. Therefore, it was assumed that if optimism is a stronger predictor of subjective well-being in younger adults, then the intervention will generate a more significant increase in well-being among younger employees compared to those in other age categories.

To test these hypotheses, a short-term positive psychological coaching program was implemented on a sample of 32 adult employed subjects: 16 under the age of 30 and 16 over the age of 30. For comparison, pre- and post-intervention assessments were also completed by a control group (also consisting of 32 individuals) who did not participate in the program. Both before and after the intervention, well-being and positive psychological functioning (which includes optimism, self-esteem, resilience, environmental control, autonomy, curiosity, creativity, humor, vitality, joy, and sense of life) were measured in both the intervention and control groups.

Following this optimism-focused coaching intervention, significant increases were observed in the mean values of all psychological resources among young adults (especially in optimism and sense of life scores), although not all identified changes reached statistical

significance thresholds, indicating that some may be due to chance. In contrast, changes in adults over the age of 30 were more moderate.

In conclusion, *the hypothesis was partially confirmed* in this study, demonstrating that intervening through a coaching intervention on a key psychological resource (such as optimism) influences other psychological resources (positive psychological functioning), and the effects vary depending on the subject's age category.

Based on the results obtained in these three studies, several important conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Changing valuation of resources with age and evolving goals:** The studies have highlighted that psychological resources considered essential for successfully achieving personal goals vary in importance as individuals age and progress through different stages of adulthood. Priorities and valued resources adapt to the specific needs of each period of adult life.
2. **Anticipation of subjective well-being by certain essential resources:** Within this framework, it was found that certain resources considered essential for successfully achieving goals have the capacity to anticipate subjective well-being.
3. **Impact of interventions focused on key psychological resources (such as optimism):** Moreover, interventions focused on a key psychological resource (e.g., optimism) have the ability to influence other resources (such as positive psychological functioning), and their effects vary according to the age category of the subjects. Advanced psychological interventions are required to influence the cognitive-evaluative component of well-being.

These conclusions underline the dynamic nature of psychological resources across adulthood and emphasize the potential of targeted interventions to enhance well-being, tailored to the specific developmental needs and goals of individuals at different stages of life. These results are of significant importance from several perspectives. First, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolution of priorities and individual resources as people age, offering a comprehensive perspective on human development throughout the active lifespan. Second, they provide essential insights into the impact of psychological resources on subjective well-being. Identifying these resources and understanding how they positively influence well-being provides valuable knowledge that can be integrated into the development of psychological support interventions and programs aimed at enhancing

quality of life and personal well-being. Third, the current results can guide the development of effective and personalized interventions. They can serve as a basis for designing and implementing coaching and therapy programs aimed at improving specific psychological resources and, consequently, individual well-being. In addition to these aspects, the conclusions drawn from these results offer essential guidance for adapting social services and policies to the varied needs and requirements of different age groups.

Overall, the findings contribute to improving our understanding of human development processes and can be used to support individual development and enhance quality of life throughout the lifespan.

From the perspective of practical utility, the current results can be applied in multiple fields and contexts. Firstly, in the field of psychology and mental health, the data obtained can be integrated into clinical and therapeutic practice to develop personalized and effective interventions aimed at improving individual psychological well-being. Secondly, in human resource management, understanding the dynamics related to changes in resources and individual priorities throughout life can provide guidance for developing career development programs and human resource management strategies tailored to the needs and characteristics of different age groups. In addition to these practical applications, in education and personal development, this information can be integrated into educational and personal development programs to support individuals in becoming aware of and cultivating the personal resources necessary for achieving goals and enhancing well-being. Furthermore, in the realm of social policies, these results can be used to guide the development of policies and social programs that better meet the needs and aspirations of different age groups within the community. In future studies, the current findings can serve as a foundation for further research in the fields of psychology, sociology, and other social sciences, contributing to advancing knowledge about human development and its influences on individual and social well-being.

#### **4. 2. Limits of research**

The limitations of this research need to be considered in interpreting and applying the results. Firstly, the study focused exclusively on professionally active adults in Romania, which may restrict the generalization of findings to other populations or cultural contexts. Secondly, the exclusive use of self-assessment for measuring variables could affect the precision of the identified associations, suggesting the need for complementary data

collection methods in future research. Additionally, the relatively small sample sizes limited the possibility of conducting more detailed analyses and deeper exploration of relationships between variables (such as through network analysis).

Furthermore, the use of a cross-sectional approach does not allow for causal conclusions, with a better understanding of causal relationships requiring longitudinal investigations. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic could be a disruptive factor, influencing the perception of resources across all age groups (especially health-related resources). Certainly, there are also limitations in terms of methodology and research approach. However, being a pioneering study among those conducted in Romania on this topic, it can certainly pave the way for further studies and empirical research to scientifically investigate the complex and dynamic relationship between the studied variables.

### **4. 3. Conclusions and future directions**

The present work represents an initiative aimed at addressing the practical needs of organizational psychologists who are tasked with formulating collective strategies to enhance organizational well-being, as well as the need for effective tools and techniques for personalized interventions aimed at developing human resources within the organization. The originality of this approach lies in integrating two distinct theories - the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 2002) and the Motivational Theory of Lifespan Development (Heckhausen, 2010) - which explore the interdependence between resources and well-being across various life stages.

Concluding the results obtained from the three studies, they underscore the age-related changes in essential resources for successfully achieving major personal goals and highlight the essential role of psychological resources in anticipating and influencing subjective well-being. Moreover, they demonstrate that interventions focused on key resources such as optimism can have a significant impact on positive psychological functioning, with varying effects depending on the age category of individuals. These findings provide guidance for the development of programs and policies aimed at improving individual and social well-being, with implications across diverse fields such as mental health, human resource management, education, and research.

Although some of the hypotheses formulated were only partially confirmed, this research can serve as a starting point for further investigations. From the perspective of potential future research directions, the first study could serve as a solid foundation for future research through a simplified methodology that would reduce the time required for applying

instruments and increase the sample size, allowing for a more complex data analysis. Designing and implementing longitudinal studies to explore the relationship between resources and goals, evaluating to what extent achieved goals can be considered resources for other objectives, could be another valuable direction. Additionally, considering that some resources, especially psychological ones, may be perceived differently from their operational definition, another research direction could involve supplementing the data obtained through interviews to explore how personal resources are perceived and understood by individuals. A qualitative approach could provide contextualization of the results and allow for a deeper investigation of the relationship between resources and personal goals.

Analyzing the research potential, the second study could provide a starting point for future investigations, for example, by including a broader spectrum of social resources in the analysis, not just perceived social support, and investigating more psychological resources, such as self-efficacy. Another research direction could explore the relationship between psychological resources and well-being in a longitudinal design to clarify the causal direction of their interaction. Highlighting how psychological resources interact to promote improved well-being represents a research direction worthy of in-depth investigation. Moreover, a multi-method and multi-source research approach could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between resources, goals, and well-being, contextualizing the results and providing a deeper perspective on the interdependence of these variables.

Regarding research directions for the third study, extending it could involve quantifying changes in a wider range of psychological resources, such as perceived self-efficacy, and measuring the affective component of well-being. Additionally, including external indicators of positive psychological functioning and subjective well-being, such as external feedback, could provide an additional perspective on the complex relationships between resources and well-being. Another possible research direction could be to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed program in a group format, which could provide valuable insights into the role played by the interaction of psychological resources in promoting well-being.

In conclusion, through the results obtained, this work makes a significant contribution to understanding how professionally active adults value psychosocial resources and illustrates their interdependence with well-being. It also expands theoretical knowledge in the field of factors influencing the well-being of employees in Romania, providing useful information for specialists in organizational and managerial psychology.

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