THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE MEANING AND IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AS PREDICTORS OF LIFE SATISFACTION

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Abstract

There has been an increasing interest in the study of concepts within the domain of 'positive' psychology within the psychological research in the recent couple of decades. In contrast to the traditional focus on negative emotions such as depression and anxiety, an increasing number of researchers are focusing on the experience of happiness and/or subjective well-being and life satisfaction. The aim of this study is to determine whether the subjective experience of life meaning, rational, and irrational beliefs can predict the level of life satisfaction. The research was conducted online in 2022 and involved 189 participants of both genders, ages 18 through 70, from the general population. The instruments used were the Meaning of Life Scale (MOLS) to examine the sense of life, the Irrational and Rational Beliefs Scale (IRBS-16) to examine rational and irrational beliefs, and the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS) to measure the level of life satisfaction. The results confirm that the level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on the subjective experience of life meaning ($F=145.631$, $p<0.01$), as well as that the subjective experience of life meaning has a positive effect on the level of life satisfaction ($\beta= 0.662$, $p<0.01$). Furthermore, a negative impact of irrational beliefs ($\beta= -0.149$, $p<0.05$) and a positive impact of rational beliefs ($\beta= 0.252$, $p<0.01$) on overall life satisfaction were confirmed. It has also been shown that the level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on irrational and rational beliefs ($F=8.758$, $p<0.01$).

Key words: life satisfaction, irrational beliefs, rational beliefs, meaning of life, quality of life.

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СУБЈЕКТИВНО ИСКУСТВО СМИСЛЕНОСТИ ЖИВОТА И ИРАЦИОНАЛНА УВЕРЕЊА КАО ПРЕДИКТОРИ ЗАДОВОЉСТВА ЖИВОТОМ

Апстракт

Последњих пар деценија у психолошким истраживањима је приметно све веће интересовање за изучавање концепата у домену „позитивне" психологије. Супротно традиционалном усмерењу на негативне емоције, попут депресије и анксиозности, све већи број истраживача се фокусира на изучавање доживљаја среће и/или субјективног благостања и задовољства животом. Циљ овог истраживања јесте да се утврди да ли субјективно искуство смислености живота, те рационална и ирационална уверења могу да предвиде ниво задовољства животом. Истраживање је спроведено онлине, током 2022. године и обухватило је 189 испитаника оба пола, старости од 18 до 70 година, из опште популације. Коришћени су инструменти Скала смисла живота (ССЖ) за испитивање смисла живота, Скала ирационалних и рационалних уверења (ИРУ-16); и Скала темпоралног задовољства животом (ТСWЛС) за мерење нивоа задовољства животом. Добијени резултати потврђују да се на основу субјективног искуства смисла живота може предвидети ниво задовољства животом (F=145.631, p<0.01), као и да субјективно искуство смислености живота остварује позитиван ефекат на ниво задовољства животом (β= 0.662, p<0.01). Даље је потврђен и негативан утицај ирационалних уверења са једне стране (β= -0.149, p<0.05), а позитиван утицај рационалних уверења са друге (β= 0.252, p<0.01), на укупан ниво задовољства животом. Уједно се показало и да се на основу ирационалних и рационалних уверења може предиктовати ниво задовољства животом (F=8.758, p<0.01).

Кључне речи: задовољство животом, ирационална уверења, рационална уверења, смисленост живота, квалитет живота.

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of life is a concept that was originally developed in existential psychology and is often examined in research in the field of modern positive psychology. The significance of the meaningfulness of life for positive psychological functioning was first theoretically stated by psychologists such as Allport (1954), Maslow (1962) and Frankl (1972). An increasing number of research dealing with the study of the mentioned concept is noticeable, where the results of a significant number of studies indicate a strong connection between the meaning of life and the general well-being.

According to Adler, the meaning of life is an involuntary and innate concept, which develops in the early years of life. Frankl (1963) rejects the deterministic nature of free will, which postulates that the individual is free to find and apply the meaning of life even if his freedom is significantly limited on objective circumstances. Frankl (2010) defines the meaning of life as a basic motive that every person innately possesses.

The meaning of life, therefore, as a concept, is not connected to specific subjects but to all life events. Frankl suggests that every life experience is associated with meaning on different levels and should therefore be explored. As such, the meaning of life is influenced by an individual's knowledge, abilities, experiences, desires, beliefs, and values (Frankl, 1963).

According to Frankl (1963), the notion of the search for meaning implies that there is a meaning to be discovered, not created. To understand how that meaning can be discovered, Frankl (1963) identifies four broad categories of values in which most people find meaning, including: (1) creative pursuits; (2) life experiences; (3) attitudes towards successes and challenges; and (4) transcendent pursuit of one's ultimate purpose in life. The creative value represents what individuals can give to the world, including volunteering, work, and other contributions. The experiential value represents what individual's experience, such as love, friendship, beauty and other positive experiences. The behavioural value represents an individual's approach to triumphs and challenges, such as acceptance, understanding, and other attitudes. The ultimate value refers to an individual's awareness that his life serves a greater purpose. This ultimate value represents the most existential dimension of the meaning of life because it exceeds the intellectual capacities of the individual (Frankl, 1963).

Maslow's theory of needs (Maslow, 1962) is also often applied in the literature on the meaning of life, with the suggestion that when basic, physiological needs are satisfied, higher needs such as finding meaning can be sought.

Baumeister (1991) proposes a motivational theory based on the assumption that four specific needs for meaningfulness – purpose, efficacy, value/justification and self-worth – act as catalysts for the search for meaningfulness. Peterson and colleagues (Peterson et al., 2005) give a general definition of a meaningful life - a life in which people feel connected to something greater than themselves, and Reker's definition of the meaning of life as "the realization of order, coherence and purpose in existence, the pursuit and achievement of worthwhile goals, and the accompanying feeling of fulfilment" (Reker, 2000), is often cited.

The results of previous research indicate that the subjective experience of the meaning of life increases during the lifespan (e.g. Steger et al., 2011), whereby changes in the subjective experience of the meaning of life are observed as a result of a continuous revision of personal values and belief systems. Elder individuals have been found to report greater purpose compared to younger individuals, who focus more on achieving future goals (Steger et al., 2009).

In addition to age, the motivation to search for meaning can also be influenced by culture (Steger et al. 2009). Culture shapes goals, values, and expectations that can influence emotional experiences, life trajectories, and the way individuals see themselves and their relationships with

the world. Thus, culture can also influence how individuals develop and experience the presence and the search for meaning.

Life satisfaction is identified as a distinctive construct representing the cognitive and global evaluation of an individual's quality of life (Pavot & Diener, 1993); hence, life satisfaction represents an evaluative judgment – a value judgment (Diener, 2000). As a component of well-being, life satisfaction is related, albeit moderately independent, to affective aspects of well-being (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996); thus, a comprehensive assessment of subjective well-being requires the assessment of both life satisfaction and affective components (Diener, 2009).

Rational and irrational beliefs influence subsequent psychological events. Rational beliefs are characterised as useful, logical, realistic, preference-based, and pragmatic, leading to functional emotions, feelings, moods, and adaptive behaviours (Ellis, 1994).

Contrary to rational beliefs, irrational beliefs are characterised as inflexible, illogically coherent, useless, unrealistic, absolutistic, dogmatic beliefs leading to dysfunctional emotions, feelings, moods, and maladaptive behaviours. Ellis initially identified fourteen different types of irrational beliefs in his therapeutic cognitive model (Ellis, 2004).

In order to understand why "some people are happier than others, we must understand cognitive and motivational processes that serve to maintain or enhance both enduring happiness and transient moods" (Lyubomirsky, 2001, p. 240). The available literature highlights that rational and irrational beliefs contribute differently to the psychological adjustment of individuals. Individuals typically, though not always, generate and construct healthy emotions by believing in rational beliefs, and they typically generate self-defeating emotions and behaviours by constructing and creating irrational beliefs (Ellis, 2003). Considering the above, it is assumed that rational beliefs contribute to experiencing adaptive emotions, while irrational beliefs, on the other hand, contribute to experiencing maladaptive emotions.

The above assumptions have been confirmed in numerous studies. Specifically, irrational beliefs have been significantly related to various indicators of psychological maladjustment in previous research. Irrational beliefs have been significantly positively associated in previous studies with various types of psychological distress, such as general distress, anxiety, depression, anger, aggression, and guilt (Gündogdu et al., 2018; Strobel et al., 2008; Visla et al., 2016), with research indicating that interventions aimed at modifying irrational beliefs effectively affect improving psychological adjustment (e.g., González et al., 2004; Şahin, & Türk, 2021).

Specifically, the results of a study by Froh and colleagues (Froh et al., 2007), which aimed to investigate the relationship between interpersonal relationships, irrational beliefs, and life satisfaction, suggested that interpersonal relationships are significant predictors of life satisfaction,

while global irrationality, measured by the Rational Behaviour Inventory (Rational Behaviour Inventory; Shorkey & Whiteman, 1977), was indirectly related to life satisfaction, measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), with interpersonal relationships acting as a mediator of the relationship between irrationality and life satisfaction. Based on the results obtained, the authors conclude that in addition to changing irrational beliefs in clients, it is necessary to carefully assess their social functioning and work on improving interpersonal relationships to increase life satisfaction.

The significant results of Spörrle and colleagues' study (Spörrle et al., 2010) are cited, which aimed to investigate the incremental validity of irrational thinking in predicting various aspects of subjective well-being – life satisfaction and subjective happiness, while controlling the influence of personality traits from the Big Five model (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The results of the study indicated that irrational beliefs have validity in predicting life satisfaction relative to personality traits, but not in predicting subjective happiness. Specifically, significant contributions to the prediction of subjective happiness were made only by personality traits in the mentioned study. The authors explain the obtained results by considering different aspects of subjective well-being assessed in the study. Namely, the Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was used to assess one aspect of subjective well-being in the study, aiming to evaluate life in general. The authors emphasise that cognitive processes, such as irrationality, likely directly influence such evaluative judgments due to their cognitive nature. On the other hand, the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) yields global assessments of happiness, which are more closely associated with temperamental and dispositional components of subjective well-being, leaving less variance in subjective happiness that can be explained by cognitive processes like irrationality. Based on the obtained results, the authors conclude that irrationality cannot be fully explained by personality traits of the Big Five model and possesses incremental validity in predicting life satisfaction relative to these personality traits.

The results of the aforementioned study by Spörrle and colleagues (Spörrle et al., 2010), besides theoretical, have very important practical implications. Namely, irrationality, which has been shown multiple times to be modifiable through therapeutic interventions, shows variable value in predicting life satisfaction beyond the influence of personality traits, which are significantly less amenable to interventions, indicating the possibility of using REBT interventions and training as an effective method to increase individuals' life satisfaction. In addition to other interventions in the field of positive psychology aimed at increasing life satisfaction, methods used in the REBT to reduce irrationality and, consequently, maladaptation, can also be very effective in enhancing individual life satis-

faction. The authors highlight that working on central irrational thoughts such as absolutistic demands, through self-talk, debates, and group discussions during training or sessions, is an appropriate way to increase individual awareness of the destructive power and illogical origin of such beliefs. Therefore, such interventions provide the basis for the successful modification of irrational beliefs, which in turn leads to fewer cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses to unpleasant events which reduce life satisfaction.

As previously mentioned, individuals have significant experiences throughout much of their lives that give meaning to it and significantly impact their well-being (Lavigne et al., 2013). Specifically, the relationship between the subjective experience of life meaningfulness and positive psychological well-being has been generally established in previous research. There is substantial evidence that the subjective experience of life meaningfulness is an important foundation of psychological well-being and overall health, and that a sense of meaninglessness represents a risk factor for psychopathology. Consistent with the foregoing, researchers in previous studies have focused on the positive outcomes of experiencing life as meaningful, as well as on the negative outcomes of perceiving life as meaningless. Numerous variables are associated with the subjective sense of life meaningfulness, with measures of well-being and its various components, such as happiness and life satisfaction, being significantly positively correlated with this construct (Diener et al., 2012; Mascaro & Rosen, 2008).

While previous research has identified a significant positive correlation between the subjective sense of life meaning and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2012; Mascaro & Rosen, 2008), the pursuit of meaning in life in previous research has been shown to be associated with poorer well-being and psychological functioning (Park et al., 2010). However, the available literature also highlights a certain degree of complexity in the way life satisfaction is associated with the pursuit and presence of meaning, thus those who have already established a sense of life meaning and seek additional meaning tend to experience greater life satisfaction compared to individuals who are searching for meaning but have not yet established a stable sense of life meaning (Steger et al., 2011).

Contrary to the aforementioned, perceiving life as meaningless in previous research has been significantly positively related to psychopathology (Park et al., 2010), with individuals who experience life as meaningless being at greater risk of disorders such as depression and anxiety (Mascaro & Rosen, 2008), and having higher rates of suicide and substance use (Tan et al., 2018). Finally, it is necessary to emphasise that the subjective experience of life meaning is more strongly related to positive dimensions of well-being (life satisfaction and positive affect) than to negative dimensions (psychological stress and negative affect.

As previously stated, the subjective experience of the meaning of life has proven to be a complex construct, representing a significant capacity of an individual that can influence rational and irrational beliefs and life satisfaction. There is a certain degree of complexity in the way life satisfaction is related to the search for the meaning of life, rational and irrational beliefs, hence the question arises of whether they can predict the level of life satisfaction in the research sample.

The Problem and the Aim of the Research

The main problem of the research can be defined as examining the influence of the subjective experience of life meaning, rational and irrational beliefs on the level of life satisfaction. The aim of the research is to determine whether the subjective experience of life meaning, rational and irrational beliefs can predict the level of life satisfaction.

By reviewing the available literature and numerous studies on life satisfaction, a smaller number of studies dealing with variables such as one's own perception can be observed. The subjective experience of the meaning of life was chosen as a construct because it is closely related to life satisfaction and mental health, and is a frequent topic in psychotherapy and psychological practice.

METHODS

Sample of Respondents

The research sample was of a convenient type and consisted of 189 respondents of both sexes (male 49.2%; female 50.8%), ages 18 through 73 (M=37 years) from the general population. According to the respondents' place of residence, respondents who live in urban settlements (95.2%), and in suburban settlements (4.8%) are the most represented. Respondents with completed secondary education are represented by 27.0%, higher school/faculty by 51.3%, and master's/doctoral studies by 21.7% respondents. In the sample, the most represented respondents are employed (73.0%), unemployed and not looking for a job by (16.9%), and unemployed looking for a job by (16.9%). The most represented respondents are married (47.6%), in a partner relationship (29%), and without partner (20%).

Sample of Measuring Instruments

To assess the subjective experience of life meaning, the Life Meaning Scale (LMS) was used (Vulić-Prtorić & Bubalo, 2006). Given that it represents an adapted form of the PIL scale, the adaptation process occurred in three phases: 20 items from the first part of the original scale

were translated into Croatian, the response format from the original questionnaire was changed to a five-dimensional Likert-type scale in the second phase, and in the third phase, certain items were removed to avoid the repetition of items with the same or similar content. After the statistical analyses, 23 items remained that assess the emotional and cognitive aspects of life meaning. Participants were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a five-dimensional scale ranging from one to five, with ten items scored in reverse. This is a one-dimensional scale, and the result is obtained by summing the scores on all statements, with a higher number of points indicating a higher level of subjective experience of life meaning. The authors note that this scale has a high reliability of 0.892.

To assess irrational and rational beliefs, the Irrational and Rational Beliefs Scale (IRU-16; Tovilović & Popov, 2009) was used, which assesses evaluative cognitions, or the frequency of occurrence of irrational and rational beliefs defined by the REBT theory. It consists of 16 items, with eight items related to rational beliefs, which are logical, flexible, pragmatic, and reality-based, while the remaining eight items are related to irrational beliefs, which are rigid, absolutist, and harmful to the individual. Participants evaluated how often they think in this manner using a five-dimensional Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Life satisfaction was measured using the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS). The scale consists of 15 items divided into 3 subscales. Five items measure past satisfaction, five items measure current satisfaction, and five items measure expected future satisfaction with life. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with each individual statement on a five-dimensional Likert-type scale (from 1 = not at all true to 5 = completely true). The total score represents the sum of rounded scores, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. The authors note that this questionnaire, with its subscales, demonstrates satisfactory psychometric characteristics and high reliability.

A sociodemographic questionnaire was created for the purposes of this research, consisting of questions about the gender, age, education, place of residence, as well as the marital and employment status of the participants.

The reliability of all scales used in the research was tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. The results are presented in the following table. It is noticeable that all scales have satisfactory reliability, as indicated by high values of reliability coefficients.

Table 1. Reliability of measurement instruments

Scale	Number of Items	Reliability
Meaning of Life Scale (MOLS)	23	.888
Temporal Life Satisfaction – Past	5	.849
Temporal Life Satisfaction – Present	5	.900
Temporal Life Satisfaction – Future	5	.833
Overall Life Satisfaction	15	.881
Irrational Beliefs	8	.824
Rational Beliefs	8	.857

Statistical Data Processing

The data obtained in the study was analysed using the SPSS 25.0 (*Statistical Package for Social Sciences*) software package. Before proceeding with the analysis, data preparation, logical data inspection, examination of missing values and invalid entries were conducted. The following statistical methods were used:

- descriptive statistical techniques: minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, to determine the degree of expression of the basic research variables; and
- linear regression analysis - to predict criteria.

RESULTS

The research results will be presented as follows, organised in several segments for easier navigation according to the defined research hypotheses. The results are presented in textual, tabular form.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Rational beliefs	10	39	28.7	5.66
Irrational beliefs	9	39	19.0	5.47
MOLS	60	113	91.9	11.25
TSWLS-past	5	25	16.5	4.37
TSWLS-present	5	25	16.8	4.58
TSWLS-future	5	25	16.5	3.87
TSWLS	15	74	49.7	11.04

MOLS - Meaning of Life Scale, TSWLS- Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale

It is observed that rational beliefs (M=28.7; SD=5.66) are much more expressed among the respondents than irrational beliefs (M=19.0; SD=5.47). Furthermore, it is noted that the participants have a high average score on the meaning of life scale (M=91.9; SD=11.25 ; min=60.0 ; max=113.0). Life satisfaction is quite consistent for all three aspects

(past, present, and future). All values are around the average, i.e., within the expected ranges.

Table 3. Model evaluation

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
.662*	0.438	0.435

*The criterion variable observed is the total level of life satisfaction, while the predictor is the subjective experience of life meaning.

The R2 and adjusted R2 values show that around 40% of the variance in life satisfaction can be explained by the meaning of life.

Table 4. Model significance

	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1	10023.274	145.631	.000
Residual	187	68.826		
Total	188			

Table 4 displays the significance of the model tested by the ANOVA test. Based on the F value (F=145.631; p<0.05), we can determine that the constructed model is statistically significant, indicating that the level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on the subjective experience of life meaning.

Table 5. Predictor coefficients in the model

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	B		
Constant	-9.947	4.979		-1.998	0.047
MOLS	0.649	0.054	0.662	12.068	0.000

The predictor is statistically significant (p<0.05), meaning that the subjective experience of life meaning significantly determines the level of life satisfaction. This effect is positive, indicating that as the subjective sense of life meaning increases, so does the level of life satisfaction.

Table 6. Model evaluation

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
.293*	0.086	0.076

* criterion: overall level of life satisfaction, predictors: irrational and rational beliefs

The coefficient of determination indicates that a small percentage of the dependent variable, around 8% of the level of life satisfaction, can be explained by the predictors in the model.

Table 7. Model significance

	Degrees of freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2	985.150	8.758	.000
Residual	186	112.492		
Total	188			

The model's performance, tested by ANOVA, shows that the model, although explaining a small variance, is statistically significant (F= 8.758; p<0.05). The level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on irrational and rational beliefs.

Table 8. Predictor coefficients in the model

	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	B		
Constant	41.281	4.826		8.554	0.000
Rational beliefs	0.492	0.137	0.252	3.601	0.000
Irrational beliefs	-0.301	0.141	-0.149	-2.132	0.034

Upon examining the table showing the contributions of each predictor individually, we can notice that both predictors stand out as statistically significant. Specifically, both rational and irrational beliefs significantly determine the level of life satisfaction. The coefficients indicate that rational beliefs have a positive effect (t=3.601, p<0.05), while irrational beliefs (t=-2.132, p<0.05) have a negative impact on the level of life satisfaction. Thus, it can be concluded that with an increase in rational beliefs, the overall level of life satisfaction rises, whereas it declines with an increase in irrational beliefs.

DISCUSSION

Through the presented analysis, the obtained results indicate that the subjective experience of life meaningfulness has a statistically significant positive effect on the level of life satisfaction, and that the level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on the subjective experience of life meaningfulness. A standard linear regression analysis was conducted. A model was constructed where the criterion was the overall level of life satisfaction, and the predictor consisted of the subjective experience of life meaningfulness. The research results showed that the constructed

model is statistically significant and that the subjective experience of life meaningfulness explains 40% of the variance in life satisfaction, which can be considered a high level, given that there is only one predictor in the model. When considering the predictor's contribution to the model, besides statistical significance, the direction of this influence is also important. The obtained coefficient is positive, indicating that with an increase in subjective life meaning, the level of life satisfaction also increases. Since the results showed that the established model is statistically significant and that the predictor positively influences life satisfaction, the obtained results confirm the relationship that has already been established. Numerous studies have shown a positive relationship between life satisfaction and subjective sense of life meaning, as presented in studies by Diener et al. (2012), and Mascaro and Rosen (2008), where measures of well-being and its various components, such as happiness and life satisfaction, are significantly positively correlated with the subjective sense of life meaning. There are confirmations that life meaning is an important element of psychological well-being and overall life experience, meaning that individuals who have established a sense of life meaning also exhibit higher life satisfaction.

Next, the relationship between irrational and rational beliefs and life satisfaction was examined. Similarly, a linear regression was conducted. The constructed model contained the overall level of life satisfaction as the criterion, and irrational and rational beliefs as predictors. The results showed that the established model is statistically significant but explains very little variance; only 8% of the variance in the level of life satisfaction can be explained by rational and irrational beliefs. Both predictors stand out as statistically significant, with rational beliefs making a slightly greater unique contribution. When observing the signs of the obtained coefficients, rational beliefs positively, and irrational beliefs negatively influence the level of life satisfaction. Thus, it can be concluded that with an increase in rational beliefs, the overall level of life satisfaction rises, whereas it declines with an increase in irrational beliefs. Although to a small extent, the level of life satisfaction can be predicted based on rational and irrational beliefs, and irrational beliefs have a negative, while rational beliefs have a positive effect on life satisfaction. As previously mentioned, research focusing on specific cognitions as predictors of subjective life satisfaction is limited. However, it is well-established in the available literature that rational and irrational beliefs contribute differently to people's psychological adaptation. It is important to note the theoretical premise that individuals generally construct healthy emotions by believing in rational beliefs, while they develop mostly self-defeating emotions by forming irrational beliefs (Ellis, 2003). Thus, it is justified to assume that rational beliefs positively, and irrational beliefs negatively contribute to life satisfaction. Perhaps here we can refer to

some mentioned studies, such as the research by Spörrle et al. (2010), which indicated that irrational beliefs are valid in predicting life satisfaction in relation to personality traits. It is significant to note that irrational beliefs are susceptible to change, as shown, for example, in the research by Froh et al. (2007), as well as in the aforementioned study by Spörrle and a few others (e.g., González et al., 2004; Şahin & Türk, 2021), suggesting that interventions aimed at changing irrational beliefs can effectively influence the improvement of life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to demonstrate the nature of the relationship between life satisfaction, subjective life meaning, and rational and irrational beliefs, as well as the possibility of predicting life satisfaction based on these variables. Rational and irrational beliefs were selected because, as part of the REBT theory, they encompass multiple aspects of people's behaviour, including cognition, emotions, and actions, and their interaction. According to this theory, irrational and rational beliefs are the most important factors in psychological events and experiences. Therefore, we were interested in their relationship with life satisfaction. The subjective experience of life meaning was chosen as a construct because it is closely related to life satisfaction and mental health, and is a common topic in psychotherapy with significant practical implications.

The study started from the goal and problem of investigating whether the subjective experience of life meaning, as well as rational and irrational beliefs, can predict the level of life satisfaction. We concluded that the subjective experience of life meaning has a statistically significant positive effect on the level of life satisfaction. Irrational beliefs have a statistically significant negative effect on the level of life satisfaction, while rational beliefs have a statistically significant positive effect on the level of life satisfaction.

The obtained results largely align with existing theory and with the results of previous research conducted on similar topics, providing additional encouragement to continue research in this direction. In this manner, more factors explaining life satisfaction could be identified, thereby contributing to helping people realise their true potentials, achieve levels of optimal functioning, and improve their quality of life.

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СУБЈЕКТИВНО ИСКУСТВО СМИСЛЕНОСТИ ЖИВОТА И ИРАЦИОНАЛНА УВЕРЕЊА КАО ПРЕДИКТОРИ ЗАДОВОЉСТВА ЖИВОТОМ

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Резиме

Последњих пар деценија у психолошким истраживањима је приметно све веће интересовање за изучавање концепата у домену „позитивне" психологије. Супротно традиционалном усмерењу на негативне емоције, попут депресије и анксиозности, све већи број истраживача се фокусира на изучавање доживљаја среће и/или субјективног благостања и задовољства животом. Циљ овог истраживања јесте да се утврди да ли субјективно искуство смислености живота, рационална и ирационална уверења могу да предвиде ниво задовољства животом. Велики број истраживања задовољства животом бавио се негативним стањима (на пример, анксиозношћу, депресијом) и њиховим утицајем на задовољство животом, као и економским и социо-демографским показатељима, односно објективним индикаторима, док је број оних истраживања која се баве позитивним аспектима и оним варијаблама које су заправо повезане са срећом - у мањини. Из тог разлога истраживања у испитивању задовољства животом последњих година све више истичу субјективну компоненту, односно сопствену перцепцију. Постоји велики број дефиниција и одређења задовољства животом, и овај сложени конструкт се разлаже на више компоненти: емоционалну, когнитивну, евалуативну као и на повезаност са објективним и субјективним индикаторима. У овом истраживању дат је покушај да се покаже природа међуодноса задовољства животом, субјективног искуства смислености живота и радионалних и ирационалних уверења, као и могућност предикције задовољства животом на основу поменутих варијабли. Рационална и ирационална уверења су одабрана зато што као део РЕБТ теорије обухватају више аспеката понашања људи, односно обухвата когницију, емоције и деловање, то јест понашање као и њихову интеракцију. Ирационална и рационална уверења, према овој теорији су најважнији чиниоци на психолошке догађаје и доживљаје. Стога нас је интересовало у каквом су односу са задовољством животом. Субјективни доживљај смислености живота је одабран као конструкт јер је уско повезан са задовољством животом и менталним здрављем, и честа је тема у психотерапији, те се види велика примена у раду са људима. Истраживање је спроведено онлајн, током 2022. године и обухватило је 189 испитаника оба пола, старости од 18 до 70 година, из опште популације. Коришћени су инструменти Скала смисла живота (ССЖ), (Вулић-Пртпрић & Бубало, 2006) за испитивање смисла живота, Скала ирационалних и рационалних уверења (ИРУ-16; Товиловић и Попов, 2009), за испитивање рационалних и ирационалних уверења и Скала темпоралног задовољства животом (ТСWЛС) за мерење нивоа задовољства животом. Добијени резултати потврђују да се на основу субјективног искуства смисла живота може предвидети ниво задовољства животом, као и да субјективно искуство смислености живота остварује позитиван ефекат на ниво задовољства животом. Даље је потврђен и негативан утицај ирационалних уверења са једне стране, а позитиван утицај рационалних уверења са друге, на укупан ниво задовољства животом. Уједно се показало и да се на основу ирационалних и рационалних уверења може предиктовати ниво задовољства животом.