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Integrated Approach to Personality and Well-being

This special issue of the Polish Psychological Bulletin is devoted to well-being (WB) considered within the context of an integrated approach to personality. We believe the articles in this special issue increase our understanding of well-being in two ways. First, they provide new knowledge about the functions of eudaimonic well-being and subjective well-being and about the relationships between them. Second, they extend our understanding of individual differences in well-being by examining relationships between subjective well-being (SWB) and personality in a broader meaning, an integrated approach to personality.

The research described in the papers of this special issue examined if characteristic adaptations (socio-cognitive personality constructs) mediate relationships between basic, biologically determined traits, and SWB. This possibility was suggested by McCrae (1996; McCrae & Costa, 1999; McCrae & Suttin, 2018) in the Five Factor Theory of Personality (FFT) and by McAdams and Pals (2006) in the New Big Five Theory of Personality. Both of these theories include two components of personality: traits and socio-cognitive constructs. In these models, traits are defined as they have been traditionally, as predispositions in thinking, feeling, and behavior that are relatively constant across time. Socio-cognitive constructs (e.g., values, attitudes, skills, beliefs about self, other people and world) concern individual differences that develop in the course of the lifespan as a result of experience, and such constructs are called “characteristic adaptations” in both models (McAdams & Pals, 2006; McCrae & Costa, 1999; McCrae & Suttin, 2018). Additionally, McAdams and Pals (2006) suggest that relationships between well-being and both traits and characteristic adaptations may vary as

a function of various components included in their model (such as traits, characteristic adaptations or environmental factors).

Despite the advantages these two theories provide over previous trait-only theories, they do not integrate concepts or constructs of personality that have been developed in various domains. Nowadays, a strong need for developing a consensual and integrative paradigm in personality psychology has been recognized (e.g., Back, 2017). A call for more dynamic models of personality (including emotion-regulation and self-regulation processes as constructs of personality) was also called for during the last conference of the International Society for the Study of Individual Differences (ISSID 2017).

The present papers focus on well-being. Interest in and research on WB has increased meaningfully over the past two decades in part because well-being is a universal goal (e.g., Diener & Diener, 1996). Contemporary research focuses on two types of well-being, subjective well-being, a construct that was introduced by Diener (1984), and eudaimonic well-being. SWB refers to a broad spectrum of phenomena, including different affective (momentary and long-term) evaluations and cognitive (general and more field-specific) appraisals of one’s own life (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2003). Much of the research on the antecedents of SWB has found that individual differences in SWB (represented by Life satisfaction, Positive and Negative Affect) are related to individual differences in basic biologically conditioned personality traits (“happy personality”, Costa & McCrae, 1980; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), in temperament traits (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2017), and to configurations of temperament traits (types) responsible for

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stimulation control (“happy temperament” – Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016).

The second type of well-being is frequently referred to as eudaimonic well-being (EWB). EWB is defined in terms of human fulfillment and the striving to achieve the best that is within us, following two great Greek imperatives “know thyself” and “become what you are” (Ryff & Singer, 2008). In the objective approach offered by Ryff (1989), the key dimensions of EWB are treated as objective virtues (e.g., self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy, life engagement), and their level determines if someone is well and fully functioning. In contrast, other conceptualizations of EWB (Keyes, 2002, 2013; Seligman, 2011; Waterman et al., 2010) propose what is called a mixed approach (Veenhoven, 1991). In each of these approaches EWB is expressed in terms of striving toward excellence based on one’s unique potential. The phrase mixed is used because such approaches include objective eudaimonic functioning (e.g. self-discovery, the pursuit of excellence and self-realization) and subjective experience (Zalewska, 2018, this volume for a more detailed explanation of this distinction).

The present papers are the result of a research project that was inspired by the Five Factor Theory of Personality and the New Big Five theory of personality. The studies in this project sought to integrate trait theories and socio-cognitive constructs of personality called characteristic adaptations. It was designed to find out how and under what conditions different levels of personality (traits and various socio-cognitive constructs) relate to SWB. The studies were guided by two general hypotheses: 1) characteristic adaptations (among them beliefs about self, other people and world that can be understood as indices of EWB) will mediate relationships between traits and SWB and 2) relationships between the two levels of personality and SWB will be moderated by different factors such as traits, characteristic adaptations, age, activity, and environmental factors. The project was supported by the Polish National Science Centre Grant NSC 2013/11/B/HS6/01135. Researchers from this project and scientists interested in that subject were invited to submit articles for this issue of PPB. In this special issue we present five articles from this project.

The first article, *Relationships between personality traits, general self-efficacy, self-esteem, subjective well-being, and entrepreneurial activity*, by Zięba, Surawska, and Zalewska, examined relationships among personality traits, general beliefs about self (self-esteem and self-efficacy), general beliefs about the world (basic trust), and subjective well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect) in two groups of unemployed people, one of which had received a grant to start their own business. They found that beliefs mediated relationships between traits and SWB, although these relationships varied as a function of the beliefs being examined. Moreover, whether people had received a grant or not moderated the mediating roles of Self-efficacy – the other mediating relationships were similar in the two groups despite differences in traits, self-beliefs, life satisfaction, and life situations.

In the second article, *Personality traits and subjective well-being with regard to problem of infertility: The mediating role of implicit self-theories and life-engagement*, Brygoła provides new insights into the very important problem of infertility. She found that problems with infertility moderated relationships between two levels of personality: traits and beliefs (implicit self-theories and life-engagement), and subjective well-being. Moreover, couples that had problems with fertility differed from couples without such problems in terms of life satisfaction and in terms of traits and beliefs.

In the third article, *The Big Five and Burnout among Teachers: the Moderating and Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy*, Zawadzka, Kościelniak, and Zalewska examined relationships among the Big-Five personality traits, perceived self-efficacy (GSES), and dimensions of occupational burnout among teachers relying on Maslach’s three-factor burnout model (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). They found that Self-efficacy played a complex role – it mediated and moderated relationships between personality traits and the perceived lack of one’s accomplishments. Moreover, it was also a suppressor of the relationship between neuroticism and emotional exhaustion.

In the next article, *Relationships among Orientation to Exercise, Personality, Well-being, and Self-Efficacy among Recreational Runners*, Cypryńska and Nezlak examined how Self-efficacy, SWB (life satisfaction), and EWB (life engagement) mediated relationships between the Five Factor Model of personality and two kinds of motivation to exercise, task-oriented and ego-oriented motives. They found that SWB and EWB mediated relationships between task-oriented motives and personality, whereas self-efficacy mediated relationships between personality and ego-oriented motives.

In the last article, *Big-Five and Subjective Well-Being: The mediating role of Individualism or Collectivism beliefs and the moderating role of life periods*, Zalewska found that Individualism and Collectivism beliefs (as characteristic adaptations beyond EWB components) mediated relationships between the Big-Five traits and SWB among adolescents and young and middle-aged adults; however the relationships were different among adolescents and adults. The results indicated that the meaning of the traits and beliefs, relations between basic traits and SWB, traits and beliefs (especially as regards Openness and Agreeableness) as well as between personal beliefs and SWB components (especially in reference to Horizontal Collectivism and Vertical Individualism) were moderated by periods of life. Moreover, the relationships were different for cognitive and affective SWB indices.

The articles presented in this special issue of the Polish Psychological Bulletin provide highlights of research on well-being conducted within the context of an integrated approach to personality by both young and established researchers. We hope that the ideas and findings collected in this issue will be of value to the global community and to scholars who devote their time and effort to the absorbing and socially important topic of well-being.

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