



On the pursuit of happiness. Personality underpinnings of life satisfaction of Spanish and Polish university freshmen

W poszukiwaniu szczęścia. Osobowościowe uwarunkowania satysfakcji z życia hiszpańskich i polskich studentów pierwszych lat studiów

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Abstract: The aim of the present study was to analyse the relationship between personality traits and life satisfaction among university freshmen. Knowledge about personality determinants of life satisfaction in newly enrolled university students can be used to predict their successful adaptation to new educational requirements. Two groups of students were surveyed: Spaniards studying in Spain ($n = 164$; $M_{age} = 21.25$; $SD = 1.97$) and Poles studying in Poland ($n = 162$; $M_{age} = 22.85$; $SD = 1.24$). The following instruments were used: the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The results showed that in the group of Spanish students, life satisfaction correlated positively with Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism, while in the group of Polish students, it correlated positively with all personality traits. In both Polish and Spanish students, Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism were significant predictors of higher life satisfaction. The Polish and Spanish student groups differed slightly in the patterns of the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction, however, in both samples, higher levels of Extraversion, Conscientiousness and lower levels of Neuroticism were conducive to higher life satisfaction. The article discusses the educational implications of the reported findings.

Keywords: life satisfaction, personality traits, Polish students, Spanish students, well-being

Abstrakt: Celem artykułu jest ukazanie związków jakie zachodzą między cechami osobowości a satysfakcją z życia wśród studentów pierwszego roku studiów narodowości hiszpańskiej oraz polskiej. Wiedza na temat osobowościowych uwarunkowań satysfakcji z życia studentów rozpoczynających naukę na uczelni wyższej pozwala przewidywać jakość ich adaptacji do nowego środowiska i wymagań edukacyjnych. Przebadano dwie grupy studentów: Hiszpanów studiujących w Hiszpanii ($n = 164$; $M_{age} = 21.25$; $SD = 1.97$) oraz Polaków studiujących w Polsce ($n = 162$; $M_{wiek} = 22.85$; $SD = 1.24$). Oba kraje pomimo wielu podobieństw, mają inną historię oraz kulturę. Zastosowano następujące narzędzia badawcze: Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) i Skalę Satysfakcji z Życia (SWLS). W grupie studentów z Hiszpanii satysfakcja z życia korelowała dodatnio z ekstrawersją, sumiennością i stabilnością emocjonalną, zaś w grupie studentów z Polski, satysfakcja z życia korelowała dodatnio ze wszystkimi cechami osobowości. W obu grupach narodowościowych ekstrawersja, sumiennosc i stabilność emocjonalna były istotnymi predyktorami wyższej satysfakcji z życia. Grupa studentów z Hiszpanii i Polski różniła się pod względem wzorców powiązań między cechami osobowości i satysfakcją z życia, jednak w obu grupach wyższej satysfakcji z życia sprzyjało wyższe nasilenie cech związanych z wymiarem ekstrawersji, sumiennosci i zrównowazenia emocjonalnego. W artykule przedyskutowano praktyczne implikacje, jakie niesie za sobą wiedza o osobowościowych uwarunkowaniach satysfakcji z życia u studentów dwóch narodowości dla praktyki edukacyjnej na uczelniach wyższych.

Słowa kluczowe: satysfakcja z życia, cechy osobowości, studenci polscy, studenci hiszpańscy, dobrostan

1. Introduction

Poland and Spain both belong to Western culture and are member states of the European Union (Lipowska, Lipowski, & Jankowska, 2007). Despite these similarities, the two countries differ greatly from one another. The differences regard social, political and historical conditions, and include cultural differences described in the literature of the subject

(cf. Brooks, 2021; Hofstede, 2001; McCrae, 2017). Moreover, Poland and Spain have distinct models of university education and diverse economic situations (Kurantowicz, Nizińska, Padilla-Carmona, & González-Monteagudo, 2017). In both countries, just as in the rest of Europe, measures have been taken to increase the employability of graduates, with each

country adopting a distinct strategy. The reforms adopted in Poland mainly involved the introduction of mechanisms for controlling the quality of education, which was particularly important in the context of the rapid massification of higher education. Spain, on the other hand, focused on increasing enrolment rates, a measure of access to education expressed as a ratio of the number of students enrolled in a given level of education to the size of the population of the age group corresponding to this level of education (Kurantowicz et al., 2017).

For young people who enrol in a higher education institution, the academic environment becomes one of the basic contexts of their daily functioning. This new milieu is to young adults what the school environment is to adolescents or what the workplace is to adults. This means that satisfaction with this area of life may be an important component of their well-being (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2019). The new educational and social setting imposes on students requirements that they need to adapt to, which may temporarily lead to difficulties and potentially lower the level of their satisfaction with life. Effective functioning and coping with challenges at this stage of life is determined, among others, by personality traits (Cabras, & Mondo, 2018; Jovanović, 2019).

1.1. Personality traits

According to the Big Five model, personality is a dimension of individual differences which encompasses traits that are responsible for the characteristic ways individuals feel, think and behave (McCrae, 2017; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020; Yunus, Wahab, Ismail, & Othman, 2018). Moreover, personality traits are viewed as biological dispositions that manifest themselves in how people react in various situations (Andrei, 2020; McCrae, & Sutin, 2018). Although the traits are independent of culture, they can manifest themselves differently depending on the patterns of socialization, values, and moral norms prevailing in a given culture and the type of culture (traditional *vs* western; Bleidorn et al., 2020; Rudnev, Magun, & Schwartz, 2018; Vignoles, Smith, Becker, & Easterbrook, 2018).

The Big Five model comprises five universal personality traits: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness to experience. *Extraversion* is related to the quantity and quality of social interactions. *Neuroticism* refers to balance, coping skills and the level of anxiety. *Conscientiousness* involves being ready to work tirelessly and persistently towards distant goals. *Agreeableness* is associated with harmonious coexistence with other people and avoiding conflicts, while *Openness to experience* refers to the desire to experiment, seek novelty and ponder over the world's contradictions. This last trait is also associated with the level of creativity and mental flexibility (Dalpé, Demers, Verner-Filion, & Valleurand, 2019; McCrae, 2017; McCrae, & Sutin, 2018).

1.2. Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive component of subjective well-being and is a generalized assessment of one's own life (Heintzelman, & Diener, 2019; Jansi & Anbazhagan, 2017; Tov, 2018; Vladislavljević, & Mentus, 2019). This assessment is made against one's values and social norms (Li, Zuckerman, & Diener, 2019) and covers such aspects of life as work and earnings, level of education, relationships with family and friends, and free time activities (Jansi & Anbazhagan, 2017; Lachmann, Sariyska, Kannen, Błaszkiwicz, Trendafilov, Andone, Eibes, Markowicz, Li, Kendrick, & Montag, 2018; Yin, Lepinteur, Clark, & D'Ambrosio, 2021). Some studies indicate that life satisfaction is a relatively constant human quality, as it is largely genetically determined. It has also been shown that age plays an important role in the way individuals assess their life satisfaction (Lachmann, Doebler, Sindermann, Sariyska, Cooper, Haas, & Montag, 2021; Røysamb, Nes, Czajkowski, & Vassend, 2018). Some research indicate that relationship between age and life satisfaction is U-shaped (Batz-Barbarich et al., 2018) as young people view their lives differently than older people, who have experienced more adverse changes or failures in their lifetime. Other studies suggest on inverted U—shaped or linear relationship (Lachman et al., 2021). From this reason a sole age is not the sufficient factor in explaining the level of life satisfaction. The significant correlates of life sat-

isfaction are among all: life events, health, economic status, social interactions and religiosity (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2018; Jebb, Tay, Diener, & Oishi, 2018; Szcześniak, Sopińska, & Kroplewski, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021). Some research indicates that gender can also be a variable which can be linked with life satisfaction as men and women differ in some determinants of life satisfaction. Generally, marital status and interpersonal relationships are stronger predictors of life satisfaction in women, whereas employment and education-related factors are more important factors of life satisfaction in men (Joshano, 2018). Life satisfaction is also connected to personality traits (e.g. Lachmann et al., 2018; Røysamb, et al., 2018). In this light, it seems that life satisfaction is a product of both biologically determined personal factors and external factors (Diener et al., 2018; Hosseinkhanzadeh & Taher, 2013; Jebb et al., 2018). Among internal, subjective factors, the most important role is played by personality traits (Larsen & Buss, 2020; Røysamb, et al., 2018).

1.3. Personality and life satisfaction in students

Many researchers call attention to relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction (Jovanović, 2019; Lachmann et al., 2018; Steel et al., 2019). The personality traits that are pivotal for subjective satisfaction with life are Extraversion, Neuroticism and Conscientiousness (Ali, 2019; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Lachmann et al., 2018; Odaci, & Cikrikci, 2019; Røysamb et al., 2018; Szcześniak et al., 2019). Extraversion characterizes people who are sociable and enjoy interacting with others and therefore are more likely to evaluate their lives more favourably. Neuroticism (low emotional stability), in turn, correlates negatively with life satisfaction, as it promotes such emotions as sadness, irritation, aversion towards others (Kim, Schimmack, & Tsutsui, 2018; Szcześniak et al., 2019). Conscientiousness is associated with making efforts to effectively achieve goals and then drawing satisfaction from them, which also promotes satisfaction with life (Abdullahi, Orji, Rabi, & Kawu, 2020; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). Agreeableness and Openness to experience are slightly less strongly related to satisfaction with life. Agreeableness influences

satisfaction with life in as much as it allows people to derive satisfaction from being with others. Openness to experience, on the other hand, favours engaging in actions that follow from a person's individual needs (Ali, 2019; Hayes & Joseph, 2002; Sato, Jordan, Funk, & Sachs, 2018; Stephan, 2009), and the possibility of pursuing activities that are in line with one's individual needs and goals increases life satisfaction.

Relationships between the Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction in young people, including students of different nationalities, have been extensively described in the literature. For example, Joshano and Afshari (2011), who studied a group of Iranian students, found that Extraversion and Neuroticism explained 25.4% of the variance in life satisfaction. Also, a study conducted in a group of Indian female students revealed that Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness significantly correlated with life satisfaction, but only Extraversion and Neuroticism turned out to be significant predictors of life satisfaction (Jansi & Anbazhagan, 2017). Similarly, Fagley (2012) observed that the Big Five personality traits explained 31% of the variance in life satisfaction in a sample of American students, and that Extraversion, Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were the strongest predictors of life satisfaction. There are studies that show that the influence of personality traits on satisfaction with life is even greater. In Lounsbury, Saudargas, Gibson and Leong's study (2005) of a sample of American students, the Big Five personality traits were found to explain as much as 45% of the variance in life satisfaction. Relationships between personality and life satisfaction have also been shown to be moderated by gender: in a study by Suldo et al. (2014), higher levels of Agreeableness were associated with higher life satisfaction scores in girls, but not in boys. In a more recent study of Ali (2019) conducted on a group of 613 Pakistani students revealed a positive influence of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience on satisfaction with life. Neuroticism was negatively related to life satisfaction. In the research of Altalihin (2021) conducted on 220 Jordanian students revealed that extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness were linked with the level of life satisfaction whereas there

was no statistically significant impact of neuroticism and agreeableness on life satisfaction. Cross-cultural studies also point to the importance of the cultural context in evaluating one's own life (Kim et al., 2018; Kryś, et al., 2021; Lachman et al., 2018). Therefore, research conducted in culturally distinct groups may provide interesting and scientifically valuable findings. In the present article, we report the results of analyses of surveys conducted in two groups of students: Poles and Spaniards.

In the literature to date, similarities and differences between Polish and Spanish students have been analysed in regards to selected determinants of life satisfaction, e.g. relationships between morningness and life satisfaction (Días-Morales, Jankowski, Vollmer, & Randler, 2013), relationships between level of stress and quality of life of nursing students (Kupcewicz, Grochans, Kadučáková, Mikla, Jóźwik, 2020), and the role of global self-esteem in predicting life satisfaction of nursing students (Kupcewicz, Grochans, Mikla, Kadučáková, & Jóźwik, 2020). Because Poland and Spain differ in cultural terms, we expected that students from the two countries would show distinct patterns of relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction.

2. Present study

Educational mobility of Polish and Spanish students is becoming more and more common in contemporary education. Getting to know Polish and Spanish people's personality determinants of life satisfaction allows for better preparation of academic teachers to work with students representing a different culture, because it makes it possible to optimize their process of adaptation to new educational requirements. Moreover, it also allows to prepare high school students from both countries to start education in the international environment. The aim of the study was to analyse the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction in two groups of students: Poles studying in Poland and Spaniards studying in Spain. Previous research shows that personality traits are important predictors of life satisfaction (e. g. Steel et al., 2019; Røysamb et al., 2018), although the patterns of de-

pendence between these variables may differ among people coming from different cultural backgrounds (Bleidorn et al., 2020; Hofstede, 2001; Rudnev, et al., 2018; Vignoles et al., 2018). We expected that the Polish and Spanish students would show distinct patterns of relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction (see Hofstede, 2001; McCrae, 2017).

We hypothesized that: a) in the group of Spanish students, life satisfaction would correlate positively with Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (Ruiz, 2005) and that b) in the group of Polish students, life satisfaction would be positively associated with Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience (Tychmanowicz, Filipiak, & Sprynska, 2018).

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants and procedure

We report the results of a survey conducted in November and December 2019 in a sample of Spanish ($n = 164$) and Polish ($n = 162$) freshmen. The group of Spaniards consisted of 164 individuals aged 18 to 23 ($M = 21.25$; $SD = 1.97$), including 125 women and 39 men. They were students of one public university in Valencia and were majoring in psychology ($n = 152$) and occupational therapy ($n = 12$). Most of the respondents came from large cities ($n = 83$), slightly fewer lived in villages ($n = 43$), and the fewest were residents of small towns ($n = 38$).

The group of Poles comprised 162 students of one public university in eastern Poland in Lublin. The group included 145 women and 17 men. The subjects' age ranged from 18 to 24 years ($M = 22.85$, $SD = 1.24$). They were majoring in education ($n = 95$), musical education ($n = 18$), social work ($n = 38$), and special education ($n = 11$). Most of the Polish respondents lived in villages (88 people) and small towns (53 people), and a few came from large cities (20 people). The survey took 30 minutes to complete and was administered in groups on the university campuses. The respondents were asked to fill in two questionnaires and a short questionnaire pertaining to demographic variables. They were informed about the scientific purpose of the study, the confidentiality

of the information provided, voluntary participation, and the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any stage. All respondents signed an informed consent form before participating. The present study was conducted in compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee for Scientific Research (No 19/2019).

2.1.2. Measures

The following instruments were used: the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), which measures the Big Five personality traits, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), which measures life satisfaction.

Two translations of the TIPI (Gosling, Rentfrow, Swann, 2003) were used: the Polish translation by Sorokowska, Słowińska, Zbieg and Sorokowski (2014), and the Spanish translation by Renau, Gosling, Oberst, Rusiñola and Chamarroc (2013). The TIPI consists of 10 items comprising five scales: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C) and Openness to Experience (O). The participants responded to each item on a scale of 1–7 (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The reliabilities of the subscales in the Polish sample were: $\alpha = .45$ (E), $\alpha = .64$ (N), $\alpha = .23$ (A), $\alpha = .67$ (C), $\alpha = .58$ (O). The reliabilities of the subscales in the Spanish sample were: $\alpha = .61$ (E), $\alpha = .60$ (ES), $\alpha = .20$ (A), $\alpha = .51$ (C), $\alpha = .48$ (O).

Two language versions of the SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Larson, Griffin, 1985) were used: the Polish translation by Juczyński (2012) and the Spanish translation by Vazquez, Duque and Hervas (2013). The SWLS measures life satisfaction understood as subjective well-being in different aspects of life (Juczyński, 2012). The scale has five items. The respondents rate how each item relates to their life on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's coefficients of reliability for this scale were $\alpha = .812$ for the Polish sample and $\alpha = .837$ for the Spanish sample.

2.2. Data analysis

Raw results were analysed using the statistical package SPSS v. 24. We first examined the distributions of the variables. Since they did not differ from the normal distribution, the relationships between the variables were analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient r ; a linear regression was also performed. Significance of differences between the correlations was tested using Fisher's Z-test. Then, linear regression analysis was performed separately for the Polish and the Spanish sample; personality traits were used as predictors of life satisfaction.

Table 1. Life satisfaction and personality trait levels in Polish and Spanish students

| | Spanish students (n=164) | | | | Polish students (n=162) | | | | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>d</i> Cohen |
|------------------------|--|------------|----------|----------|--|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) <i>Min-Max</i> | <i>Ske</i> | <i>K</i> | α | <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) <i>Min-Max</i> | <i>Ske</i> | <i>K</i> | α | | | |
| Extraversion | 5.01 (1.40) 1.00–7.00 | -.67 | .23 | .61 | 5.09 (1.32) 1.00–7.00 | -.59 | .06 | .45 | -.55 | .580 | .006 |
| Agreeableness | 5.39 (1.02) 3.00–7.00 | -.27 | -.87 | .20 | 5.27 (1.06) 2.50–7.00 | -.19 | -.66 | .23 | 1.09 | .278 | .011 |
| Conscientiousness | 4.76 (1.42) 1.50–7.00 | -.21 | -.86 | .51 | 3.83 (1.42) 1.00–7.00 | -.50 | -.09 | .67 | .27 | .791 | .002 |
| Neuroticism | 4.13 (1.45) 1.00–7.00 | -.13 | -.60 | .60 | 3.83 (1.42) 1.00–7.00 | -.01 | -.56 | .64 | 1.88 | .061 | .002 |
| Openness to experience | 5.59 (1.09) 2.50–7.00 | -.76 | -.07 | .48 | 4.99 (1.31) 1.00–7.00 | -.47 | .00 | .58 | 4.56 | .000 | .049 |
| Life satisfaction | 25.58 (5.58) 5.00–35.00 | -.98 | .76 | .84 | 20.56 (5.50) 5.00–35.00 | -.44 | -.07 | .81 | 8.13 | .000 | .088 |

3. Results

As a preliminary step in the analysis, we measured the levels of life satisfaction and the Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience) in the groups of Polish and Spanish students. The results of the analyses are shown in Table 1.

Spanish students were better satisfied with their lives and more open to experience than Polish students. The differences in the levels of these two variables were statistically significant, but Cohen's *d* shows that the effect size was very small in both cases. As for the remaining personality traits, the differences between the Spanish and Polish samples were not statistically significant.

Next, we analysed correlations between personality traits and life satisfaction in Polish and Spanish students. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 2.

The data in Table 2 show that in the Polish sample, all correlations between personality traits and life satisfaction were statistically significant. They were mostly weak and very weak correlations. Life satisfaction was most strongly associated with Neuroticism. In the group of Spanish students, life satisfaction was significantly correlated with Extraversion and Neuroticism (a moderate correlation) as well as Conscientiousness (a weak correlation). No differences were found between the two groups in the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction.

Table 2. Correlations between personality traits and life satisfaction in the Spanish sample (n=164) and the Polish sample (n=162), and differences between correlations

| | Life satisfaction | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|-----|
| | Spanish sample | Spanish sample | Z | p |
| Extraversion | .34** | .22** | 1.88 | .12 |
| Agreeableness | .08 | .23** | -1.39 | .08 |
| Conscientiousness | .26** | .24** | 0.19 | .42 |
| Neuroticism | .31** | .28** | 0.30 | .38 |
| Openness to experience | .14 | .17* | -0.37 | .35 |

Note: * p < .05 ** p < .01

Table 3. Regression analysis for SWLS in the Spanish sample (n=164) and the Polish sample (n=162)

| Group | Variables | Beta | β | β Error | t | p |
|---|------------------------|------|------|---------|------|-------|
| Spanish students | Extraversion | .32 | 1.33 | .29 | 4.66 | .000* |
| | Agreeableness | -.17 | -.10 | .40 | -.25 | .803 |
| | Conscientiousness | .24 | 1.01 | .28 | 3.65 | .000* |
| | Neuroticism | .298 | 1.20 | .28 | 4.33 | .000* |
| | Openness to experience | .05 | .25 | .38 | .67 | .502 |
| R= 0.522, R2 = 0.273, F(5,159)=12.449, p=.000 | | | | | | |
| Polish students | Extraversion | .21 | .86 | .32 | 2.70 | .008* |
| | Agreeableness | .13 | .68 | .39 | 1.76 | .082 |
| | Conscientiousness | .16 | .68 | .31 | 2.21 | .029* |
| | Neuroticism | .25 | .98 | .28 | 3.46 | .001* |
| | Openness to experience | .05 | .22 | .32 | .68 | .499 |
| R= 0.439, R2 = 0.193, F(5,157)=7.60, p=.000 | | | | | | |

As the last step in the study, we performed regression analysis. The results are shown in Table 3.

In the group of Spanish students, life satisfaction was significantly predicted by Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism, which altogether explained 27.3% of the variance in life satisfaction. A similar result was obtained for the Polish sample, though the percentage of variance in life satisfaction explained by the same personality traits was lower at 19.3%.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction among students of Spanish and Polish nationality. First, we examined whether the two groups of students differed in terms of the analysed variables. A preliminary analysis of the results showed that Spanish students were characterized by significantly higher levels of life satisfaction and Openness to experience compared to Polish students. This finding is consistent with previous studies in which Spaniards demonstrated higher well-being compared to Poles (Marks et al., 2006; Kupcewicz et al., 2020). A study by Marks, Abdallah, Simms and Thompson (2006) showed that Spaniards were characterized by a high level of well-being, while Poles demonstrated a moderate level of well-being. Compared to Spain, Poland has undergone a considerable political change over the past 20 years, associated, among others, with the overthrow of communism, which may have reduced the subjective sense of well-being of Polish citizens. The well-being of citizens is strongly correlated with the Human Development Index (HDI) and the gross national income per capita. The HDI, which consists of three core indicators: life expectancy, education level and standard of living, is higher in Spain than in Poland: Poland was ranked 32 and Spain 22 in the 2019 Human Development Report¹ (Yin, et al., 2021). The finding regarding the Spanish students' higher Openness to experience is interesting, but the literature offers little information on Openness to experience viewed from an intercultural perspective

(McCrae, Costa, Terracciano, Parker, Mills, DeFruyt, & Mervielde, 2002; Woo, Chernyshenko, Longley, Zhang, Chiu, & Stark, 2014). It has been shown, however, that individuals who are more open to experience are more likely to engage in activities that facilitate the fulfilment of their desires and goals, and thus Openness to experience may, indirectly, increase life satisfaction (Christensen, 2020; Hayes & Joseph, 2002; Silvia, & Christensen, 2020; Stephan, 2009). It can therefore be said that Spanish students, compared to their Polish peers, are more versatile and focused on seeking diversity and life experiences related to the achievement of vital goals. This observation has important implications for educators working with university students, especially Polish nationals; it shows that more focus should be placed on improving the well-being of freshmen. Students should be encouraged to actively look for various ways of achieving goals, while being provided with a sense of security and stability in the new educational setting. The results of the present study show that such an approach may contribute to increasing students' life satisfaction.

With regard to the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction, we showed that there were both similarities and differences between the two groups. However, it should be emphasized that these differences were not statistically significant. In the Spanish sample, all personality traits, except for Openness to experience, correlated with satisfaction with life. This finding is consistent with the data reported by Ruiz (2005), who obtained the same result for the relationships between personality traits and life satisfaction in a group of Spanish students. In the Polish sample, life satisfaction correlated with all personality traits, and the strongest correlation was observed between life satisfaction and Neuroticism. This finding is partially consistent with the results obtained by Tychmanowicz, Filipiak and Sprynska in a sample of Polish students (2018). In their study, only Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience correlated with the respondent's satisfaction with life. Jansi and Anbazhagan (2017) showed that life satisfaction was associated with Extraversion,

¹ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2019_overview_-_english.pdf

Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Neuroticism in female students from India. The results of studies conducted by various authors in samples of students of different nationalities clearly show that personality traits are related to students' satisfaction with life, and that these relationships may be affected by cultural factors.

Additional analyses conducted in this present study showed that in the Spanish sample, Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism were significant predictors of life satisfaction and altogether accounted for 27.3% of the variance in life satisfaction. The same pattern of results was obtained in the Polish sample, but the percentage of explained variance in life satisfaction was lower (19.3%). Essentially, our results confirm previous reports that life satisfaction is most strongly predicted by three personality traits: Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Lachman et al., 2018; Taufik, Prihartanti, & Hamid, 2019). Research on personality-related determinants of life satisfaction in students of various nationalities also confirms the present findings. Fagley (2012) obtained an identical result in a study of American students, in which Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism were shown to play an important role in explaining life satisfaction (the percentage of variance was similar to that obtained in the present study in the group of Spanish students and amounted to 31%). Extraversion and Neuroticism were also found to be significant predictors of life satisfaction in a sample of Iranian students (they explained 25.4% of variance in life satisfaction) (Joshani & Afsahri, 2011).

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It is also important that personality-related determinants of life satisfaction be well understood by academic teachers and other university employees (e.g. those supervising various student associations) who set up expectations and requirements towards students, and plan other non-educational forms of work with them.

Limitations

The results obtained in this study shed new light on the problem of the determinants of life satisfaction in Spanish and Polish students, at the same time showing that there is a need for further research in this area. The participants were students of two universities located in two large cities in Spain and Poland, and so the results are not representative of all Spanish and Polish students. Despite the fact that the groups were relatively numerous, future research should be representing various academic centres in Spain and in Poland. It should also be noted that the students surveyed pursued mainly "helping profession" programmes: psychology, education and social work. Another limitation of this study is the fact that we did not analyse other variables that are important determinants of life satisfaction, such as dispositional optimism, personal resilience or preferred values. In future studies, comparisons should be made among more than just two nationality groups of students. Moreover, the present study had been conducted before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In subsequent studies, it would be worth taking into account the variables that may significantly modify life satisfaction in the times of a pandemic, such as anxiety or the sense of coherence.

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