



The mediating role of gratitude and forgiveness in the sense of coherence and values-based action¹

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Abstract: *Aim:* The aim of the study has been to determine the mediating value of gratitude and forgiveness in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. In order to answer the research question, a predictive model of mediating effects has been constructed based on the work of McCullough et al. *Material and method:* The research has been conducted among 330 individuals aged 18 to 65 years, including 284 women (86.1%) and 46 men (13.9%). The *Life Orientation Questionnaire SOC-29* has been used to measure the independent variable of sense of coherence. The mediating variables of gratitude and forgiveness have been examined using the *Gratitude Questionnaire GQ* by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang and the *Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation Inventory (TRIM18)* by McCullough et al. The dependent variable of values-based action has been measured using the *Valuing Questionnaire (VQ)* by Smout, Davies, Burns and Christie. The analysis has used SPSS v4.2. and mediation in R and lavaan packages.

Results: Gratitude has been shown to mediate the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action: the presence of gratitude in an individual's life strengthens the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Also, the mediating role of forgiveness has been identified in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions. The dimensions of revenge and benevolence have been shown to be mediators in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action but have not shown a mediating effect in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the dimension of progress in values-based actions. The third factor, i.e. avoidance, has not shown a mediating role in any of the relationships examined. Benevolence strengthens the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension, whereas revenge weakens this relationship. *Conclusions:* The results reflect the significant role of gratitude in the functioning of psychological mechanisms and reveal another aspect on which the presence of gratitude has a positive effect in the functioning of an individual.

Keywords: psychology of values, gratitude, forgiveness, sense of coherence, mediation analysis

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues,
but the parent of all the others.”

Cicero

1. Introduction

There is a scarcity of empirical work in literature on the relationship between the sense of coherence and values. To date, only a few studies have been conducted to analyse the relationship between values

and the sense of coherence (Ciecuch, 2010; Kot, Lenda, 2017). The results obtained suggest that there are not many direct relationships between the sense of coherence and preference for specific values. The correlations the researchers have identified are that the sense of coherence positively correlates with preference for the value of self-management (Ciecuch, 2010) and the sense of psychophysical harmony (Kot, Lenda, 2017). Both these factors are constructs indicative of internal coherence and autonomy in actions, as are the value-driven actions

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examined for the purposes of this study. Positive correlations can also be justified by considering the arguments formulated in Antonovsky's salutogenetic model (1995) and Hayes and Smith's psychological flexibility model (2014). According to the authors, engaging in worthwhile causes, even in the face of unpleasant experiences, can be the result of seeing meaning in a particular action. It is the sense of meaningfulness – as a motivational aspect of the sense of coherence – that allows one to make effort, face difficulties and make meaning (Antonovsky, 1995; Jarmużek, 2011; Hayes, Smith, 2014). Furthermore, according to researchers (Hari, 1998; Suominen et al., 1999), the higher the level of sense of coherence, the more situationally appropriate the choice of coping strategies and the higher the level of emotional competence, which could also explain support from the process of values-based action while experiencing emotional discomfort. Based on previous research and theoretical assumptions, gratitude and forgiveness have been adopted as factors that could play the role of these mediators.

In this article, gratitude is framed in terms of a personality disposition, i.e. a trait that allows one to experience the emotion of gratitude in response to an event (McCullough et al., 2002a, p. 112; Rusk et al., 2016, p. 2191-2). According to Maslow (1962), gratitude is a characteristic of self-actualised, authentic and integrated people, i.e., in terms of the present study, also people who live their values. It may also bind one's self-regulation with those of social others (Jia et al., 2014). Emmons (2012) assumes that gratitude makes one less susceptible to such negative emotional states such as greed, jealousy, grief or frustration, all of which can cause one to move away from valued living. The assumption of a mediating role for gratitude is also motivated by research that shows its positive relationship with autonomy understood as acting in accordance with individually established rules (Wood et al., 2008) and the sense of coherence itself (Lambert et al., 2009), as well as the conclusion that it helps individuals to find meaning and coherence in life so that they can improve themselves and elevate others (Bono, Sender, 2018). The understanding of gratitude adopted in the article assumes its functional character (dispo-

sitional gratitude). This means that gratitude can serve a person as a moral barometer, motive and reinforcer (Karns et al., 2017; Mendonça, Palhares, 2018). The function of the barometer is to provide information about the type of social interaction in which one person receives a benefit from another person, and the gratitude that emerges in response is directly proportional to the gift received. Another function of gratitude has been identified as prompting reciprocity and prosocial actions, as well as preventing harmful behaviour as self-reinforcing actions (Rusk et al., 2016). The third function of gratitude is to reinforce good behaviour in the benefactor. The benefit received makes the positive pattern more likely to be repeated (McCullough et al., 2001). In this way, its adaptive and psychosocial nature becomes apparent (Bono, Sender, 2018). According to Maslow (1962), gratitude is a characteristic of self-actualised, authentic and integrated people, i.e., in terms of the present study, also people who live their values. Emmons (2012) assumes that gratitude makes one less susceptible to such negative emotional states such as greed, jealousy, grief or frustration, all of which can cause one to move away from valued living.

Forgiveness has been identified as another factor that could explain the interdependence between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Forgiveness is defined as the process of rebuilding internal order after experiencing harm, involving the reordering of the world of values, feelings and ways of responding. As argued by Wood et al. (2007, p. 49-50), it is a primary factor in the construction of values and the experience of peace, compassion, love and benevolent thinking and motivation (Kaleta, Mróz, 2020). Although contemporary psychology treats forgiveness as a multidimensional construct (Ho, Fung, 2011; Kaleta, Frost, 2018), it has been assumed, following McCullough et al. (1998, 2006), that it is a suite of motivational changes occurring as a consequence of experiencing harm. Quite importantly, forgiveness is understood as a process of transformation of a motivation, rather than as motivation itself. In the original version of the model, McCullough et al. (1998) distinguished two basic motivations in response to being hurt: to seek revenge and to avoid contact. However, this proved insufficient and the

final version of the model (McCullough et al., 2006) includes a third motivation: a desire for goodness and benevolence towards the offender. According to this concept, the process of forgiveness involves weakening the negative motivations (revenge and avoidance) and strengthening the positive motivation (benevolence and desire for goodness). It aims to restore the harmony in the relationship with the perpetrator that has been disturbed by the harm. The model developed by McCullough et al. (1998, 2006) is based on the interpersonal component of forgiveness and concerns the willingness to act – to show empathy and compassion towards the offender.

It is assumed that forgiveness facilitates reconciliation with suffering and allows one to take action in inner freedom (Mellibruda, 1992). Both establishing an individual hierarchy of values and taking autonomous action are indispensable elements of valued living. In contrast, moving away from valued living may be caused by the desire to avoid difficult emotions, which is directly opposite to the process of forgiveness (Baran et al., 2019). Mellibruda (1992) claims that the main stages of this process are confronting fear, suffering, anger and sadness. In addition, research findings indicate that forgiveness is a factor positively related to the sense of meaning (Van Tongeren et al., 2015), with positive implications for mental health (Webb, Toussaint, 2020), the manifestations of which may include a high sense of coherence and taking values-based actions.

Given the identified gap in predictive research, this article answers the question of whether gratitude and forgiveness mediate the relationship between the .sense of coherence and values-based action. To answer the research question, a predictive model of mediating effects has been constructed (Figure 1).

2. Material and method

2.1. Research subjects

N=330 people aged between 18 and 65 took part in the research, including 258 individuals in the 18-35 age bracket (78.2%) and 72 individuals in the 35-65 age bracket (21%). The group comprised 284 women (86.1%) and 46 men (13.9%). The surveys took place online; the participants did not receive any reward for taking part.

2.2. Measurement of variables

The *SOC-29 Orientation to Life Questionnaire (The Sense of Coherence Questionnaire)* was used to measure the sense of coherence. It was developed by Antonovsky (1987) and adapted to Polish conditions by Mroziak (1994). The scale consists of 29 statements within three subscales: sense of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. The subjects are asked to rate the relevance of each statement in relation to their own lives. Responses are given on a 7-point Likert scale, where “7” means that the attitude always occurs and “1” means that the attitude never occurs. The overall score indicates the intensity of the subject’s sense of coherence. The reliability for the SOC scale is as follows: for the overall sense of coherence score – 0.86 *Cronbach’s α*, for the sense of comprehensibility subscale – 0.70 *Cronbach’s α*, for the sense of manageability subscale – 0.47 *Cronbach’s α*, and for the sense of meaningfulness subscale – 0.86 *Cronbach’s α*.

Values-based actions were measured using the *Valuing Questionnaire* by Smout, Davies, Burns and Christie (2014). It was adapted to the Polish conditions by a Polish team composed of Baran, Hyla and Kleszcz (2019). The VQ consists of ten

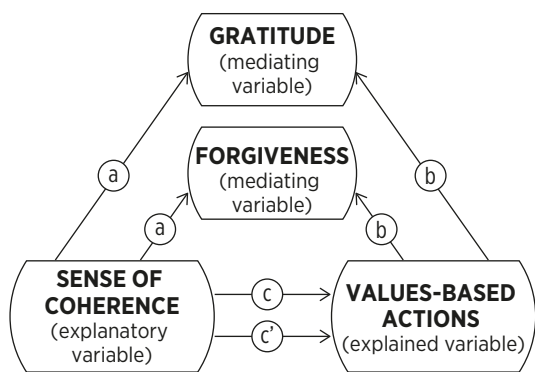


Figure 1. Diagram of the mediating effects under analysis.

items to which the subjects respond on a 7-point scale, where “0” means “completely true” and “6” means “completely untrue”. The questionnaire was divided into two subscales: progress, indicating the awareness of one’s values and values-based actions, and obstructions, understood as avoidance of unpleasant experiences that moves one away from valued living. A high score on the progress scale indicates valued living over the past week. By contrast, a high score on the obstructions scale indicates a move away from valued living due to the avoidance of unpleasant experiences. The internal consistency of the tool is 0.82 Cronbach’s α for the progress subscale and 0.79 Cronbach’s α for the obstruction scale.

The *Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ)* was used to measure gratitude as a psychological disposition. It was created by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002a) and adapted to the Polish conditions by Kossakowska and Kwiatek (2015). The Questionnaire consists of six test items and has a univariate structure. The subjects mark their answers on a seven-point Likert scale, where “1” means “strongly disagree”, while “7” means “strongly agree”. The higher the score, the higher the level of dispositional gratitude. The reliability for the gratitude scale is 0.74 Cronbach’s α .

The *Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-18)* by McCullough et al. (1998), as translated by Meisner (2017), was used to measure forgiveness in motivational terms. The questionnaire consists of 3 subscales: revenge, avoidance and benevolence. The subjects respond to statements on a five-point Likert-type scale, where “1” means “strongly disagree” and “5” means “strongly agree”. The higher the score on the revenge subscale, the stronger the motivation to seek revenge for one’s harm. The higher the score on the avoidance subscale, the higher the level of motivation to avoid the perpetrator of one’s harm. The higher the score on the benevolence subscale, the higher the level of motivation to relate to the perpetrator in a benevolent manner and the desire to re-establish a positive relationship. The reliability for the revenge subscale is 0.87 Cronbach’s α ; for the avoidance subscale, it is 0.89 Cronbach’s α ; and for the benevolence subscale, it is 0.87 Cronbach’s α .

Due to the results of the skewness and kurtosis analysis (ranging from -2 to 2), it was assumed that the results of the study group met the conditions for a correlation and linear regression analysis as well as a mediation analysis (Tab. 1). The analysis used SPSS v4.2. and Mediation in R and Lavaan packages.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables under study (N=330)

Variable	M	SD	Skew	Kurt	Min.	Max	S-W	p
Sense of coherence	119.22	21.23	-0.27	0.15	58	174	0.99**	0.010
Sense of comprehensibility	42.58	8.76	0.08	-0.01	18	68	0.10	0.643
Sense of manageability	38.85	6.79	-0.11	-0.08	21	57	0.99	0.103
Sense of meaningfulness	37.78	9.58	-0.47	-0.19	9	56	0.98***	0.001
Progress	19.33	5.93	-0.59	0.17	0	30	0.97***	0.001
Obstructions	16.26	6.35	-0.09	-0.65	0	30	0.99**	0.008
Gratitude	30.73	6.56	-0.71	-0.42	6	42	0.96***	0.001
Benevolence	16.45	5.97	-0.12	-0.73	6	30	0.98***	0.001
Revenge	10.19	5.24	1.03	0.16	5	25	0.87***	0.001
Avoidance	25.57	7.21	-0.66	-0.42	7	35	0.94***	0.001

** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

3. Results

3.1. Correlation analysis

The analysis of the results (Tab. 2) shows that there are statistically significant positive correlations between the dimension of progress and the overall score for the sense of coherence and its individual dimensions. A high positive correlation is found between the dimension of progress of values-based actions and the sense of meaningfulness ($r = 0.68$; $p < 0.01$) and the overall score for the sense of coherence ($r = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$). There is an average positive correlation between the dimension of progress of values-based actions and the dimensions of sense of comprehensibility ($r = 0.44$; $p < 0.01$) and the sense of manageability ($r = 0.41$; $p < 0.01$).

The analysis of the results also indicates the existence of statistically significant negative correlations between the obstruction dimension and the overall score for the sense of coherence and its individual dimensions. A high negative correlation is found between the obstruction dimension of values-based actions and the dimension of sense of meaningfulness ($r = -0.54$; $p < 0.01$) and the overall score for the sense of coherence ($r = -0.53$; $p < 0.01$). There is an average negative correlation between the obstruction dimension of values-based actions and the dimensions of sense of manageability ($r = -0.44$; $p < 0.01$) and the sense of comprehensibility ($r = -0.35$; $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Results of linear correlation between SOC and VQ

Variable	Progress	Obstructions
Sense of coherence	0.62***	-0.53**
Sense of comprehensibility	0.44**	-0.35**
Sense of manageability	0.41**	-0.44**
Sense of meaningfulness	0.68**	-0.54**

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

3.2. The mediating role of gratitude in shaping the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions

A mediation analysis was conducted to elicit responses regarding the mediating role of gratitude between the sense of coherence and values-based action (progress and obstructions). The results (Fig. 2) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2,327) = 109.40$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and gratitude variables explained 40% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.40$). The standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, positive and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence and progress ($\beta = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$). The value also changes when the mediating variable, i.e. gratitude, is introduced into the model ($\beta = 0.54$; $p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value ($Indirect = 0.02$; $95\%CI[0.01;0.04]$) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the first mediation model analysed.

The results obtained (Fig. 3) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2,327) = 70.40$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and gratitude variables explained 30% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.30$). The resulting standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong

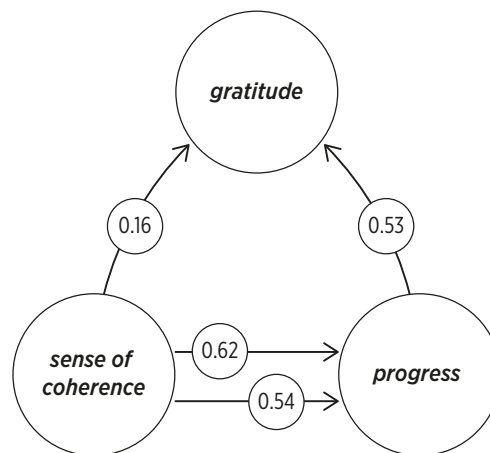


Figure 2. The mediating role of gratitude in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the progress dimension of values-based action.

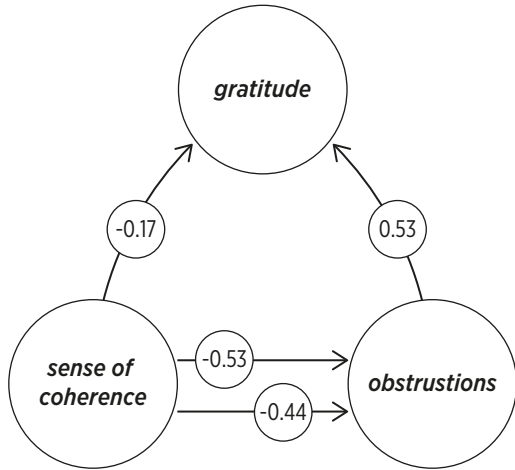


Figure 3. The mediating role of gratitude in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

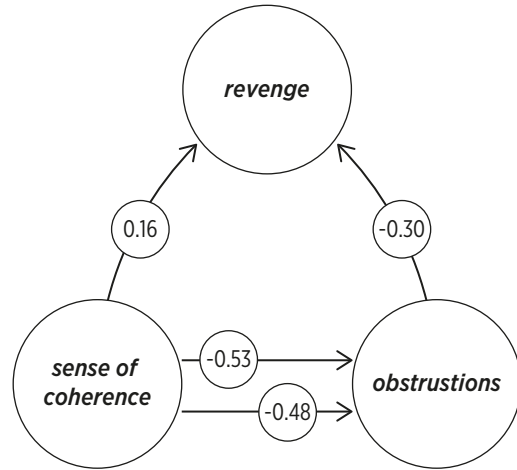


Figure 4. The mediating role of revenge in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions ($\beta = -0.53$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. gratitude, is introduced into the model ($\beta = -0.44$; $p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = -0.03; 95% CI[-0.05;-0.01]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the first mediation model analysed.

3.3. The mediating role of forgiveness in shaping the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions

The aspect explained next was the mediating role of the different dimensions of forgiveness (revenge, benevolence, avoidance) between the sense of coherence and values-based action. The results of the mediation analysis (Fig. 4) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.328) = 71.59$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and revenge variables explained 30% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.30$). The standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions ($\beta = -0.53$; $p < 0.001$). Also, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. revenge, is introduced into the model ($\beta = -0.48$;

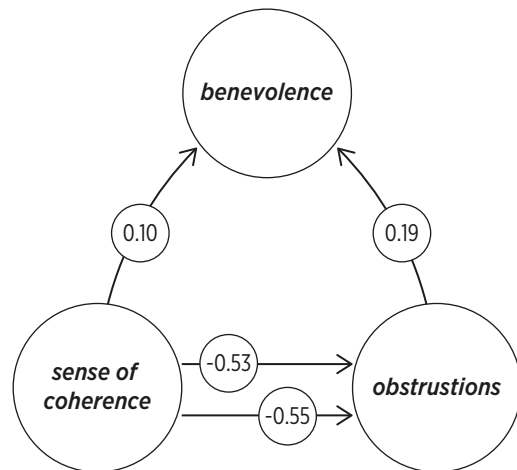


Figure 5. The mediating role of benevolence in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action.

$p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = -0.01; 95% CI[-0.03; -0.00]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the model analysed.

The results obtained (Fig. 5) indicate a good fit of the model to the data ($F(2.327) = 67.30$; $p < 0.001$). The sense of coherence and benevolence variables explained 29% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.29$). The resulting standardised values of the regression coefficients between the explanatory variable and the explained variable indicate a statistically significant, negative and relatively strong relationship between the sense of coherence

and obstructions ($\beta = -0.53; p < 0.001$). Furthermore, this value changes when the mediating variable, i.e. benevolence, is introduced into the model ($\beta = -0.55; p < 0.001$). The resulting effect strength value (*Indirect* = 0.02; 95%CI[0.00;0.01]) confirms the partial mediation phenomenon for the model analysed.

The results of the analyses of the other mediation models showed no statistically significant mediating effects: in the revenge mediation mode, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and progress (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.01]); in the avoidance mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and progress (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.00]); in the avoidance mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence and obstructions (*Indirect* = 0.01; 95%CI[-0.01;0.01]); and in the benevolence mediation model, in the relationship between the sense of coherence on progress (*Indirect* = -0.01; 95%CI[0.00;0.01]).

4. Conclusions

The presence of significant correlations between variables has been identified, indicating a correlation between the sense of coherence and values-based action. Both the overall level of sense of coherence and each of its components: the sense of comprehensibility, the sense of manageability and the sense of meaningfulness have a positive relationship with the progress dimension of values-based action and a negative relationship with the obstruction dimension of values-based action. This means that as the sense of coherence and its individual components increase, the dimension of progress increases and the dimension of obstructions to values-based action decreases.

Based on the results of the mediation analysis, it has been shown that gratitude mediates the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action (the joint significance condition is met). This means that the presence of gratitude in an individual's life strengthens the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action.

Also, the mediating role of forgiveness has been identified in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based actions. The dimensions

of revenge and benevolence have been shown to be mediators in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension of values-based action but have not shown a mediating effect in the relationship between the sense of coherence and the dimension of progress in values-based actions. By contrast, the third factor, i.e. avoidance, did not show a mediating role in any of the relationships examined. This means that the presence of benevolence strengthens the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and the obstruction dimension, whereas the presence of revenge weakens this relationship (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary results of the statistical analysis of the study results

Variable		Resulting coefficient values
Sense of coherence	Values-based actions	-
Sense of coherence	Progress	$r = 0.62^{***}$
Sense of coherence	Obstructions	$r = -0.53^{**}$
Sense of comprehensibility	Progress	$r = 0.44^{**}$
Sense of comprehensibility	Obstructions	$r = -0.35^{**}$
Sense of manageability	Progress	$r = 0.41^{**}$
Sense of manageability	Obstructions	$r = 0.44^{**}$
Sense of meaningfulness	Progress	$r = 0.68^{**}$
Sense of meaningfulness	Obstructions	$r = 0.54^{**}$
Gratitude	Values-based actions	-
Gratitude	Progress	$\beta = 0.54^{***}$
Gratitude	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.44^{***}$
Forgiveness	Values-based actions	-
Revenge	Progress	-
Revenge	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.48^{***}$
Avoidance	Progress	-
Avoidance	Obstructions	-
Benevolence	Progress	-
Benevolence	Obstructions	$\beta = -0.55^{***}$

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

The research and analysis conducted for the present study have provided empirical information on the relationships between the sense of coherence and values-based action and the mediating role of gratitude and forgiveness. As no empirical analyses have been undertaken so far for relationships identical to the aforementioned ones, it is not possible to compare the results obtained with those to date. Instead, the discussion of the results takes as its point of reference the premises of the theoretical assumptions and research into the analysed variables.

The analysis of the results makes it possible to formulate a conclusion that gratitude mediates the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action. The results obtained correspond with the theoretical background that frames gratitude as a characteristic of authentic, self-actualised, integrated and autonomous people (Maslow, 1962; Wood et al., 2008), which could also be reflected in the strengthening of the studied relationship. Research on gratitude to date has largely focused on its associations with mental health, the sense of well-being and other desirable psychological phenomena (Bono et al., 2019; Bono, Sender, 2018; Caputo et al., 2015; DeWall et al., 2012; Duckworth et al., 2005; Emmons, Crumpler, 2000; Emmons, McCullough, 2003; Jans-Beken et al., 2019; Kleiman et al., 2013; Linley et al., 2009; Ma et al., 2017; Nezlek et al., 2017; Seligman, et al., 2006; Sheldon, Lyubomirsky, 2006; Szcześniak, Soares, 2011; Trom, Burke, 2022; Wood et al., 2010), exerting immunogenic effects on the individual (Emmons, Crumpler, 2000; Kleiman et al, 2013; McCraty, Childre, 2004) and affecting health (Linley et al., 2009; Wood et al., 2007, 2008; Cousin et al., 2021). However, the most extensive meta-analysis to date on the relationships between gratitude and health, by Jans-Beken et al. (2019), highlights the need for further research into this field to “shed more light on the modest but beneficial value of gratitude for human health” (p. 37).

The results obtained in our study also reflect the significant role of gratitude in the functioning of psychological mechanisms and reveal another aspect on which the presence of gratitude has a positive effect.

The mediating role of forgiveness in the relationship between the sense of coherence and values-based action has been also partially confirmed. Motivations to take revenge and to be benevolent towards the offender have been found to be mediators in the negative relationship (suppressors) between the sense of coherence and moving away from valued living due to unpleasant emotions. In contrast, motivation to avoid the offender has not shown a mediating role in any of the relationships examined.

Due to the lack of data in literature, the results have been explained based on studies showing only similar correlations. The aforementioned dimension of benevolence is described by the authors as a motivation to show goodness, benevolence and empathy to the offender and a desire to restore harmony in the relationship (McCullough et al., 2002a, b; 2006). This attitude may be an expression of altruism, understood as any action to benefit another without anticipation of external rewards (Macaulay, Berkowitz, 1970). Śliwak and Król's research shows that people with high levels of altruism, and therefore probably also benevolence, find their lives purposeful and meaningful, which is an expression of the sense of coherence. These people are convinced that they give direction to their life and are responsible for its course. They do not see suffering only as a negative phenomenon, but also as an opportunity to develop and become better people (Śliwak, Król, 1990). These are aspects that can be considered as manifestations of values-based action and thus justify the mediating role of benevolence in the relationship under study. By contrast, revenge is recognised in literature as one of the most destructive coping mechanisms (Meisner, 2018). According to this assumption, the reinforcement of the negative relationship between the sense of coherence and moving away from valued living can be explained by the negative effect of revenge on the individual's internal coherence. Surprisingly, avoidance has not been found to play a mediating role in the relationship under study. At the start of the present study, it was hypothesised that avoidance of the perpetrator of harm was strongly associated with avoidance of discomfort and difficult emotions, as was moving away from valued living. The results

obtained find some justification in the way individual statements were formulated in the questionnaire used in the study (Baran et al., 2019). For example, a statement relating to moving away from valued living such as “*I acted reflexively instead of focusing on what is important to me*”, indicates taking action. By contrast, an avoidance statement, such as “*I live as if this person did not exist*”, is an expression of adopting a passive attitude, which could have been understood by the subjects as a completely different activity. However, the results obtained may also be due to methodological shortcomings of the research.

Limitations. The research also has some limitations. In terms of methodology, the main limitation was the deviations of the distributions of some variables from the normal distribution. However, these deviations proved not to be significant, and, due to the values of skewness and kurtosis being within the relevant range, it can be assumed that the distributions of the studied variables are not significantly asymmetric with respect to the mean (George, Mallery, 2016). The obtained Cronbach’s alpha reliability score of 0.47 for the sense of manageability scale (however, the reliability of the whole sense of coherence scale is 0.86 Cronbach’s α) may also give rise to some doubt in terms of methodology. Another limitation of the research is the problem of having full control over the research sample, caused by making the questionnaire battery available on social networks. This made it possible to collect responses from a relatively large

number of people but resulted in a poorly diverse research group: almost 80% of the subject were aged 18-35, and less than 14% of the research group were male. As can be seen, women were the majority. This is, however, quite typical of today’s volunteer psychological research (McCray et al., 2005; Tuszyńska-Bogucka, 2019) and not necessarily a disadvantage that would disqualify the study (Dickinson et al., 2012). It also seems worthwhile for future research to take into account the education and broader SES characteristics of the subjects. Finally, it is worth noting that future research should consider finding an alternative mechanism to explain the relationship(s) between the positive/negative dimensions of sense of coherence, forgiveness and gratitude, and values-based action.

The listed limitations may provide a rationale for revisiting the assumptions made, this time with a research sample characterised by greater variation in terms of age and gender of the subjects. Considering that values-based action is not a highly popular research construct, particularly in Poland, it would be worth conducting further research into this construct in the future, taking into account variables other than those used so far. It appears important to search factors conducive to values-based action, as well as those that help to strengthen the sense of coherence, as both taking values-based action and a strong sense of coherence make it possible to build a dignified and meaningful life, even in the face of suffering.

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