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Positive Psychology in Poland – Introduction

Positive psychology (PP) seems to be a good attempt to integrate the concepts of personality and the findings of social, clinical and health psychology with respect to human strengths, virtues and personal resources. Although it is not a new branch of psychology, it is still a new initiative promoting a different interpretation of the recent scientific findings that encourage to look for positive factors, which determine human flourishing and well-being. In 2000 Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defined positive psychology. Since then the interest in positive psychology has grown tremendously across the world. For instance, Polish psychologists are very interested in the research outcomes of positive psychology concerning personal life, business, education and health. Taking into account the history of Poland, it is fairly easy to understand their strong interest in the sense of well-being and optimal growth.

In 2003 Ewa Trzebińska established the first department of Positive Psychology at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) in Warsaw. Since 2000 Janusz Czapiński has been conducting long term studies on the subjective and objective quality of life in Poland. In 2010 during European Symposium organized by Dariusz Doliński from the USSH in Wrocław and Agnieszka Czerw from Wrocław University of Technology, we hosted Martin Seligman, the pioneer of positive psychology and the director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2011 the post graduate course in Positive Psychology was founded in Sopot at USSH by Marlena Kossakowska. Subsequently, The Polish Positive Psychology Association was established in 2012. The growing number of researchers and practitioners in Poland are inspired by

the ideas of positive psychology. I would like to mention: Łukasz Kaczmarek from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Jan Ciecuch from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Mariusz Zięba from Poznań USSH, Elżbieta Kasprzak from Kazimierz Wielki University from Bydgoszcz, Aneta Dowgiert from USSH in Warsaw and Aneta Dowgiert from USSH in Warsaw, Bożena Gulla, Kinga Tucholska from Jagiellonian University and many more. Some books concerning Positive Psychology have been written in Poland (eg. Czapiński, 2004; Trzebińska, 2008; Heszen, Życińska, 2008; Czerw, 2010) and a high volumes of books on PP were translated into Polish (eg. Fredrickson, 2011; Seligman, 2005, 2012; Lyubomirsky, 2007; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2010). There is a high presence of articles written by Polish positive psychologists in Polish and English journals (eg. *Psychologia Jakości Życia*, *Polish Psychological Bulletin*). The recognition of the strong interest in Positive Psychology influenced the decision to organize the international conference on Positive Psychology in Poland in 2013.

The First International Conference on Positive Psychology in Poland was held in Sopot at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities between the 17th and 19th of May, 2013. Over 200 participants from Poland, France, Germany, Holland and U.S. presented the results of their studies with a particular focus on their application over 10 seminars, 2 poster sessions and 10 workshops. The 90 presentations were divided into 4 domains encompassing positive psychology in health, sport, education and business.

Our international special guests included: **James O. Pawelski**, Ph.D., the Director of Education and Senior Scholar in the Positive Psychology Center and Adjunct

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Associate Professor of Religious Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania (USA), **Charles Martin-Krumm**, Ph.D., the Member of the executive committee of the European Network of Positive Psychology and Associate Professor at the University of Bretagne Occidentale in Rennes (France), and Professor **Ralf Schwarzer** Ph.D., from the Freie University of Berlin, Germany and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Wrocław.

Well known Polish psychologists took part at the Conference, such as Prof. **Ewa Trzebińska**, the co-founder of the Polish Positive Psychology Association and highly regarded Professor of the USSH, Prof. **Irena Heszen**, Prof. **Anna Zalewska**, and Prof. **Maria Jarymowicz** from the University of Warsaw. Further information on the Conference you will find at www.psychologia-pozytywna.pl.

Our current issue of the Polish Psychological Bulletin contains four outstanding articles that opened many discussions amongst attendees of the First International Conference on Positive Psychology in Poland. The first one, titled: *The birth of the first child as a positive event in the lives of young parents* by Małgorzata Wójtowicz Dacka, reveals that parents' gender and level of education correlate with their satisfaction with childbirth and perception of childbirth as a positive event. Thus, parents, particularly men, with a low level of education can view childbirth in positive terms if their knowledge and understanding of needs of small children increase. This demonstrates the importance of educating young parents, especially young fathers about early childhood development and children's needs. The results of this article should influence Polish positive parenthood in the challenging modern world.

The second article (*Do Individual Wisdom Concepts Depend on Value?*) explores the issue of individual popular wisdom concepts and socially desirable values. Here, Alina Kałużna-Wielobób helps the reader to understand the common sense models on wisdom and explains the relationships between them and the values. This article provides important reflections on implicit theories about wisdom and its determinants (see: Sternberg, 1990).

The following paper on *Temperamental determinants of social competencies* by Katarzyna Martowska, presents evidence that temperament determines the quality of interpersonal relationships and social competencies in particular. Furthermore, the study refers to the theories of Polish scientists: Anna Matczak and Jan Strelau whose contributions to psychology are widely recognized and recommended to other psychologists from all over the world. It is also a clear example of implementation of well-established theories in the new field of positive psychology.

And finally, the fourth article, *Does self-improvement explain well-being in life and at workplace?* Analysis based on selected measures of well-being by Anna Zawadzka and Anna Szabowska Walaszczyk, focuses on determinants of well-being in work and life within the context of readiness for self-improvement. This study reveals that readiness for self-improvement is partially

associated with life-satisfaction and work engagement. This paper presents a new and important construct of readiness for change in line with the concept of intrinsic motivation by Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory but further research is needed.

Those articles are the legacy of the First International Conference on Positive Psychology in Poland. We do believe that this event will remain in our memory and will influence future development of scientists whose interests lie in research and practice of positive psychology.

We are now preparing for the next challenge: the Second International Conference on Positive Psychology in Poland, which will be organized by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Polish Positive Psychology Association on 15-17 May, 2015.

Thank you for being a part of The First International Conference on Positive Psychology 2013. You are cordially invited to attend the upcoming second conference in 2015.

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