

ANNA MARIA ZAWADZKA
JUSTYNA ZALEWSKA
Uniwersytet Gdański
Instytut Psychologii

CAN HUMILITY BRING HAPPINESS IN LIFE? THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIFE ASPIRATIONS, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, AND HUMILITY

“... humility opens the spiritual eye on to all the world’s values. Humility, while starting from the assumption that nothing is owed us and everything is a gift and a miracle, more than all else it causes everything to gain in value! ... Be humble, and straightaway you will be rich and powerful! For humility is the virtue of the rich, as pride is that of the poor.”

Max Scheler

A survey was carried out to explore the relationship between life aspirations, subjective well-being, and humility (i.e., accepting one’s own limitations, accepting oneself and reality, no desire for control, making use of one’s failures to improve oneself, and not putting on airs). The results indicated that humility may serve as a predictor of intrinsic aspirations and subjective well-being. Furthermore, it was established that intrinsic aspirations correlate positively with self-acceptance and acceptance of reality whereas extrinsic aspirations correlate negatively with a lack of desire for control. Two dimensions of humility: (a) recognizing one’s own limitations and (b) self-acceptance and acceptance of reality positively correlate with subjective well-being.

Keywords: humility, life aspirations, subjective well-being.

ANNA MARIA ZAWADZKA – Institute of Psychology, University of Gdańsk, ul. Bażyńskiego 4, 80-952 Gdańsk; e-mail: anna.maria.zawadzka@ug.edu.pl

JUSTYNA ZALEWSKA – Institute of Psychology, University of Gdańsk, ul. Bażyńskiego 4, 80-952 Gdańsk; e-mail: kiara555@o2.pl

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest modern philosophers, Immanuel Kant, considered humility the mother of virtues (cf. Greenberg, 2005). For centuries, the main religious currents: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism, have pointed to humility as a fundamental feature of mature spirituality guaranteeing a good life. The issue of humility is also important outside religion, where it concerns the attitude towards oneself and others. In psychology, humility is discussed in the context of gaining human maturity (cf. Allport, 1961; Rogers, 1961) or virtues whose development leads to achieving a good life (cf. Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002). Researchers point out that humility is linked to religious values, a validity in perceiving oneself and others as well as being a significant element of good interpersonal relations (cf. Dąbrowski, 1984; Emmons, 1999, Emmons & Kneezel, 2005; Tangley, 2000).

Western culture, the culture of consumption and materialism, popularizes the view that pride (i.e., possessing a high opinion of oneself, excessive ambition, self-love) leads to attaining happiness in life. Consumption and materialism promote values such as power and hedonism and promote materialistic aims in life, namely fame, wealth, and physical attractiveness. Research so far has revealed that striving to fulfil such values and aims has a negative impact on the well-being of individuals and societies (Górnik-Durose, 2002; Kasser, 2000; Kasser & Ryan 1993, 1996; also cf. Górnik-Durose, Mróz, & Zawadzka, 2012).

By contrast, development of humility is supported by values such as tradition and benevolence, and aspirations for spirituality (non-materialistic) (cf. Grouzet, Kasser, Ahuvia, Fernandes-Dols, Kim, Lau, Ryan, Saunders, Schmuck, & Sheldon, 2005; Schwartz, 1992).

These values and goals stand in contradiction to the values fostered by the culture of consumption and materialism. As a result, humility may be underestimated as a virtue which has a potential for making people happy, both individually and as a society.

Hence, the questions asked in this research paper are:

Is humility linked to intrinsic (non-materialistic) and extrinsic (materialistic) life aspirations and, if it is, in what way?

Is humility linked to subjective well-being and, if it is, in what way?

Papers on the subject in question are in short supply. As far as the authors know, only one study indicating the relationship between life aspirations and humility has been conducted so far – on an American sample (Visser & Pozzobon, 2013). Similar research into the relationship between humility and well-

being is also scarce and contradictory. This is to say, some results imply that the relationship is positive (Park et al., 2004; Rowatt, Powers, Targhette, Comer, Kennedy, & Labuff, 2006) while others imply it is negative (Trzebińska, 2004).

HUMILITY AND GOOD LIFE

Definitions of humility

The main reason why there has been such scant research undertaken into humility is that there is enormous confusion as to what humility is. Hence, humility may be described using opposite expressions, for example lack of narcissism, arrogance, pride, egoism (cf. Exline & Geyer, 2004; Rowatt, et al. 2006). Another way to define humility is to use synonyms, such as modesty (cf. Tangney, 2002; Seligman, 2002). Additionally, an explanation can be offered as to what humility is. Even here, however, researchers differ in their understanding of the term. Some refer to the manner of self-perception, assuming that a humble person should be able to perceive themselves accurately (cf. Baumeister & Exline, 2002; Emmons, 1999); or should have a lesser tendency to have a higher self-esteem or to present themselves in a favourable light (cf. Sedekides, Gregg, Hart, 2007). Others believe that humility concerns the particular nature of social relations and indicates that a humble person should either base their relationships on empathy, partnership, benevolence, respect, and gratitude and have no desire for control (Emmons, 2007; Exline & Geyer, 2004; Means, Wilson, Sturn, Biron, & Back, 1990), or that they should be able to acknowledge their mistakes and be receptive to different points of view and advice from others (Harrell & Bond, 2006) or that they should be devoted and obedient to God (Emmons, 2000; Emmons & Kneezel, 2005, Exline & Geyer, 2004). Moreover, it is also worth noting that humility affects the mode chosen to express emotions in such a way so as to make them socially acceptable (Davis, Hook, Worthington, Van Tongeren, Gartner, Jennings, & Emmons, 2011). Therefore, due to the fact that humility has been assigned multiple meanings, some researchers describe it as a multidimensional construct (Emmons, 1999; Tanglely, 2000). The dimensions they unanimously identify include: ego-transcendence and self-detachment, accepting one's own limitations, accurate self-assessment, self-acceptance, little self-focus, and lack of arrogance.

In general, there are two main approaches to humility. The first one views humility as accurate self-assessment, while the other one sees it as the nature of

relations with others (or personal attitude towards others). As for evaluation of accurate self-assessment, the common practice is to use semantic differential scales and Adjective Checklists (ACL), on which subjects rate themselves. However, the disadvantage of these scales is that those who are not humble may assess themselves more positively in order to show themselves in a more favourable light, while humble individuals may evaluate themselves more negatively in order to present themselves in a moderate way (Davis, Worthington, & Hook, 2010). As for the evaluation of humility as the nature of relations with others, one of the methods considered is a rating based on self-descriptions. These embrace an analysis of humility seen as individual characteristics or traits (cf. Lee & Ashton, 2004). In the research undertaken so far, one of the two approaches to humility has most frequently been adopted.

The instrument used in the present study to measure humility comes from the second approach referred to above, and is based on self-descriptions. Humility is understood here as a trait that can be developed and that concerns personal attitudes towards oneself and others. This covers the following: recognizing one's own limitations, not looking down on others, avoiding boasting about one's accomplishments, appreciating every second of one's life, acknowledging one's failures and turning them to good advantage, accepting the course of events in one's life and changing them if things can be changed for the better, accepting the fact that one is not able to control one's life or surroundings and cannot steer the lives of others, being aware that one cannot live one's life avoiding failures or mistakes. In contrast, the opposite of humility is discouragement, resignation, anxiety, and an inability to forgive oneself for making mistakes.

Humility and happiness

Representatives of both humanistic psychology and positive psychology have especially been trying to answer the question of what traits are responsible for the full development of humanity and also for the well-being of people. Allport (1961), an advocate of the former perspective, indicated traits that are regarded by current researchers as dimensions of humility, i.e. self-acceptance, self-objectification and realistic perception (cf. Emmons, 1999; Tanglely, 2000). Similarly, Rogers, in his characterisation of a person functioning in complete humanity (1961), pointed to traits which accord with the description of humility, i.e. developing a solid self-image, rational perception of self and social context. In the latter perspective, Seligman's theory of authentic happiness (2002) implies that exercising virtues, including modesty and humility, leads to happiness

(cf. also Trzebińska, 2008). Seligman claims that adjusting one's traits to the environment is absolutely essential for a person to feel fulfilled. Humility allows recognition and appreciation of the traits (cf. Park et al., 2004). Furthermore, in self-determination theory and its concepts, it is emphasized that achieving intrinsic goals – i.e. self-acceptance, personal growth, affiliation, and community contributions – is fundamental to well-being. These goals match the notion of humility itself. In fact, intrinsic goals are juxtaposed with extrinsic goals, i.e. wealth, fame, physical attractiveness (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). The research shows that striving to achieve intrinsic goals, as opposed to extrinsic goals, results in a reduction in intensity of anxiety, depression, narcissism, and lower occurrence of psychosomatic symptoms (Kasser, Ryan, 1996). In Polish psychology, Dąbrowski (1984), in his theory of positive disintegration, demonstrated that achieving well-being is linked to attaining a higher and higher development in growth towards absolute humanity. This absolute humanity, being the highest level, is characterized by mental qualities, i.e. intellectual, moral, social, aesthetic, and religious, all of which are linked to humility.

So far, only one study of the relationship between life aspirations and humility has been carried out. Humility was analyzed as an HH (honesty-humility) factor of the HEXACO-PI-R model of personality structure. The factor includes such traits as: sincerity, honesty, faithfulness, loyalty, modesty/being unassuming *versus* slyness, deceit, greed, pretentiousness, hypocrisy, boastfulness, pomposity. The results indicated a positive correlation between intrinsic aspirations and humility whereas the correlation between extrinsic aspirations and humility was negative (Visser, Pozzebon, 2013). Research into the relationship between humility and subjective well-being is scarce, too. Park, Peterson, and Seligman revealed an insignificant positive correlation between humility, modesty and subjective well-being (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Another survey, by Trzebińska, inquired how the increase in virtues – i.e. gratitude, love, hope, spirituality, wisdom, and humility – is linked to selected aspects of health (i.e., frequency in the occurrence of psychopathological symptoms, affective well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being). It was found that virtues such as hope and love may have a significant impact on health. Spirituality and gratitude may also affect health; however, in this case, the influence is less significant. As for humility, the results indicated that a higher level of humility is linked to lower emotional well-being and lower social well-being (Trzebińska, 2004). Rowatt and his colleagues (Rowatt et al., 2006) compared the relationship between humility and well-being versus the relationship between arrogance and well-being. Humility, in contrast to arrogance, was connected with higher self-

-esteem, gratitude, a willingness to forgive others, spirituality, and better general health. It was also determined that humility was not associated with low self-esteem, pessimism, or depression. Furthermore, it was established that, when three traits – narcissism, self-awareness, and implicit self-esteem – were weighed up against each other, an implicit measure of humility related to better school grades.

Other research looked into the correlates of humility. One study showed that humble people are more willing to forgive others. Furthermore, people are more likely to forgive others when they score highly not only on humility scales but also on spirituality scales. In other words, when they are both humble and “spiritual” (Powers, Nam, Rowatt, & Hill, 2007). Another study displayed that persons who rank high in humility scores are more willing to cooperate and help others in need than those who rank low (Hilbig & Zettler, 2009). Another study also demonstrated that personal relationships formed by humble people are better than those formed by arrogant people (Peters, Rowatt, & Johanson, 2011). One more study revealed that humility suggests a predisposition towards generosity (Exline & Hill, 2012). The results indicate that humble people, as compared to arrogant people, are more willing to donate money to charity, to respond positively to requests for participation in scientific experiments, and to give more money to strangers. Moreover, they are as kind to people they are familiar with as to strangers, and are as kind to their benefactors as to people they have received nothing from or people they have nothing to do with.

Other researchers investigated questions concerning what humility is associated with and how humble people are perceived (Exline & Geyer, 2004). Most participants had positive associations with humility and wished they could be more humble. They associated humility with success more often than with failure and, consequently, lowered self-esteem. Additionally, the participants believed that those who are humble are distinguished by politeness and a concern for others; they are unselfish, intelligent, and successful. The results of another study indicate that humble people are more willing to accept offers of help from others than those who are arrogant (Exline, 2012). As a result, humble people were more grateful and felt more loved when they felt the kindness of others (i.e., when they were offered help) than arrogant people.

Certain indirect conclusions concerning the relationship between humility and subjective well-being may be drawn from research into traits which are in conformity with humility and contrary to it. After examining a trait referring to humility (i.e., readiness for self-improvement) and a trait opposing humility (i.e., misuse of power), it was established that readiness for self-improvement posi-

tively correlated with enhanced subjective well-being (Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011), while misuse of power correlated positively with lowered subjective well-being and negatively with a preference for values developing intrinsic goals – self-transcendence (Zawadzka, Sęk, & Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2013).

THE PRESENT STUDY

The aim of the study was to analyze the relationship between humility and life aspirations – both intrinsic and extrinsic – and, also, subjective well-being. Furthermore, the survey aimed to answer the question of whether humility may serve as a good predictor of life aspirations and subjective well-being. Humility, as examined here, is understood as an attitude towards oneself and others, which is in accordance with the notion of intrinsic aspirations which refer to personal growth, self-acceptance, affiliation, community contributions (cf. Kasser & Ryan, 1996). By contrast, extrinsic (materialistic) aspirations are in contradiction to the analyzed conception of humility since they include wealth, fame, and image, and these relate to desire for social acceptance and for rewards aimed at enhancing self-esteem (cf. Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Therefore, in view of the conclusions from research into aspirations presented above and the results of studies indicating a relationship between humility (as a personal trait of honesty) and life aspirations (cf. Visser & Pozzebon, 2013), two hypotheses were formulated:

H 1: Humility correlates positively with intrinsic life aspirations.

H 2: Humility correlates negatively with extrinsic life aspirations.

Furthermore, in order to examine the correlation more closely, the assumption that humility may serve as a good predictor of life aspirations was tested.

Humanistic and positive psychologists conclude that well-being is linked to possessing traits related to humility (cf. Allport, 1961; Seligman, 2002). Additionally, research into humility correlates reveals that humility is connected with the quality of interpersonal relationships (Peters, Rowatt, & Johanson, 2011), a willingness to forgive others (Worthington, 1998; Powers et al., 2007), cooperation, helping others in need (Hilbig & Zettler, 2009; LaBouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Tsang, & McCullough, 2010), and generosity (Exline & Hill, 2012). The correlates listed above relate to well-being, and, as a consequence, it can be assumed that a relationship exists between humility and subjective well-being. Moreover, research so far has pointed to positive correlations between virtues, humility and

modesty, and subjective well-being (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). In view of the above, the third hypothesis was formed:

H3: Humility correlates positively with subjective well-being.

As in the case of life aspirations, the assumption that humility may be a good predictor of subjective well-being was tested in order to examine the correlation more closely.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 139 participants were surveyed, including 80 women and 59 men, with a mean age of $M = 29.53$ ($SD = 10.43$). 61.9% of the participants had completed secondary education, 33.1% had completed a university degree, and 5% had completed vocational education. All participants came from the Pomeranian Voivodeship (Gdańsk area).

Materials and Procedure

Humility Scale. Humility was measured with a Humility Scale devised by Zalewska and Zawadzka (cf. Zalewska, 2011). The scale evaluates personal attitude to oneself and others. It had been designed based on a review of humility definitions that explain humility as an attitude to oneself and others. The definitions were used to generate statements that were then rated by competent judges. Next, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were carried out. Kendall's W indicated agreement among competent judges (raters), i.e., $W = .897$. Factor analysis (principal components analysis, Varimax rotation) distinguished five factors explaining the respective percentages of variability in the examined sample, namely: Factor 1 – self-acceptance and acceptance of reality – 24.1%; Factor 2 – accepting one's own limitations – 9.6%; Factor 3 – no desire for control – 6.74%; Factor 4 – not putting on airs – 4.71%; and Factor 5 – making use of one's failures to improve oneself – 4.18%. Cronbach's α was applied to estimate the reliability of the scale in the surveyed sample and its value was $\alpha = .88$ while the mean score was $M = 4.38$ (and the standard deviation was $SD = 0.59$). Correlations between individual factors, means, and standard deviations for each dimension of humility and their respective reliabilities are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Correlations Between the Five Dimensions of Humility and Their Means and Standard Deviation Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
P1	–	.53***	.40***	.27**	.30***	4.49	1.02	.92
P2	.53***	–	.04 <i>ns</i>	.43***	.48***	5.08	0.80	.85
P3	.40***	.04 <i>ns</i>	–	-.02 <i>ns</i>	.09 <i>ns</i>	3.67	0.97	.77
P4	.27**	.43***	-.02 <i>ns</i>	–	.36***	4.62	0.71	.71
P5	.30***	.48***	.09	.36***	–	4.42	0.76	.42

Note. Significance levels: *.05, **.01, ***.001, P1 – acceptance of one’s own limitations, P2 – acceptance of oneself and reality, P3 – having no desire for control, P4 – making use of one’s failures to improve oneself, P5 – not putting on airs

As presented in Table 1, the reliability of all the factors except “not putting on airs” was satisfactory. Hence, this dimension was omitted from further analyses. In conclusion, the results listed above demonstrate that the Humility Scale meets the basic requirements concerning validity and reliability.

The Humility Scale consists of 49 statements, which make up five dimensions of humility. They are as follows: (1) acceptance of one’s own limitations (e.g., *I would like to change a lot of things in my life, It’s hard for me to accept the mistakes I make*); (2) acceptance of oneself and reality (e.g., *Things are going well in my life, I accept the way things happen in my life*); (3) having no desire for control (e.g., *I like when others do what I want, I like situations when I am in control*); (4) making use of one’s failures to improve oneself (e.g., *Failures do not upset me, Even if I am not successful, this does not worry me*); (5) not putting on airs (e.g., *I DON’T like putting on airs, I am a modest person*). Respondents rate their answers on a scale from 1 to 7; 1 means *THIS definitely does not describe me* and 7 means *THIS definitely describes me*.

Life Aspirations Index. Life aspirations were assessed with Aspirations Index (*Aspiration Index* by Kasser & Ryan, 1996, translated by Duda 2009, and its Polish adaptation by Zawadzka, Duda, Rymkiewicz, & Kondratowicz-Nowak, 2013). The questionnaire consists of 35 items referring to seven categories of aspirations; three extrinsic aspirations, three intrinsic aspirations and one aspiration which is neither extrinsic nor intrinsic. These include the following: wealth/financial aspirations (e.g., life goal: *to be wealthy*), fame/recognition (e.g., life goal: *to make a name for oneself*), image/physical attractiveness (life goal: *to hide the signs of ageing effectively*), meaningful relationships (life goal: *to have good friends who can be relied on*), personal growth (e.g., life goal: *to*

grow up and learn new things), community contributions (e.g., life goal: *working in order to be more useful to society*), or aspiration of good health (e.g., life goal: *to be physically healthy*). Participants respond to each of the goals and answer three questions using a scale from 1 to 7. In the first question they are asked to rate the importance of specific goals (1 means *not important at all* and 7 means *very important*). In the second question they rate the likelihood of attaining these goals in the future (1 means *not likely at all* and 7 mean *very likely*). In the third question they rate how much they have attained so far (1 means *nothing at all* and 7 means *a lot*). The reliability of all life aspirations examined were high and ranged from $\alpha = .84$ to $\alpha = .93$ (cf. Table 2). The means of respective aspirations were as follows: aspirations concerning meaningful relationships and health were rated highest and those concerning fame were rated lowest (cf. Table 2).

Cantril's Ladder. Subjective well-being was measured with Cantril's Ladder (*Cantril's Self-Anchoring Scale*, 1965, adapted by Czapiński, 1992). The tool consists of one question – and answers presented in the graphic form of a ladder with rungs numbered from 0 to 10. Respondents rated their subjective well-being on a scale of 0 (*the worst life I could expect*) to 10 (*the best life I could expect*). The respondents are also asked to rate their past and anticipated subjective well-being by responding to four more questions. In the surveyed sample, the mean calculated for the question concerning present subjective well-being was $M = 6.44$ ($SD = 1.41$). The reliability coefficient for all five questions of Cantril's Ladder was $\alpha = .55$. Therefore, since the overall reliability of all ladders was unsatisfactory, only the basic ladder was used in the study: the one concerning present subjective well-being.

Procedure. The participants were surveyed individually or in small groups (up to five participants). They completed the measures in the following order: 1. Life Aspirations Index, 2. Cantril's Ladder, and 3. The Humility Scale.

RESULTS

The Relationship Between Humility and Life Aspirations

In order to verify the first two hypotheses, the relationships between each of the aspirations and each of the dimensions of humility were examined. Pearson's r indicated significant correlations between the dimensions of humility and aspirations. Firstly, two dimensions of humility, i.e. accepting one's own

limitations and self-acceptance and acceptance of reality, positively correlated with aspirations concerning personal growth, meaningful relationships, and health (cf. Table 2). Secondly, another dimension of humility, i.e. making use of one's failures to improve oneself, positively correlated with aspirations concerning health. Thirdly, another humility dimension, i.e. no desire for control, negatively correlated with aspirations concerning wealth and image (cf. Table 2). Thus, the results demonstrate that the more the respondents described themselves as accepting their limitations, themselves, and reality, the more they valued intrinsic aspirations, i.e. personal growth and meaningful relationships. Furthermore, the more they described themselves as having no desire for control over others, the less they valued extrinsic aspirations, i.e. wealth and image. Interestingly, the more the participants described themselves as accepting their limitations, themselves, and reality as well as making use of their failures to improve themselves, the more their aspirations concerned good health. In conclusion, the results confirmed hypothesis H 1 since two dimensions of humility – accepting one's own limitations and self-acceptance and acceptance of reality – were positively linked with intrinsic aspirations. Hypothesis H 2 was also confirmed. The humility dimension of no desire for control was negatively linked with extrinsic aspirations.

Table 2.

Correlations Between the Dimensions of Humility and Life Aspirations and Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability Measures for Life Aspirations

	P1	P2	P3	P4	M	SD	α
A1			-.31***		3.83	1.00	.91
A2					2.51	1.12	.93
A3			-.22**		3.91	1.08	.91
A4	.25**	.33***			5.19	0.75	.84
A5	.26**	.36***			5.44	0.87	.89
A6					4.15	1.00	.91
A7	.21*	.29***		.23**	5.36	0.82	.91

Note. Significance levels: *.05, **.01, ***.001, P1 – acceptance of one's own limitations, P2 – acceptance of oneself and reality, P3 – having no desire for control, P4 – making use of one's failures to improve oneself, A1– wealth, A2 – fame, A3 – image, A4 – personal growth, A5 – meaningful relationships, A6 – community contributions, A7 – aspiration of good health

In accordance with the adopted assumption, it was investigated how well humility may predict the examined life aspirations – intrinsic and extrinsic. The

results for three aspirations, i.e. personal growth, meaningful relationships, and community contributions, were added up and a variable of intrinsic aspirations was created and. Then, linear regression analysis was applied. Independent variables included gender, age, and humility (i.e., a total of five dimensions of humility). The examined model proved to be significant: $R = .38$, $R^2 = .14$, $F(3, 135) = 7.38$, $p < .001$. Significant values of *partial coefficients* were obtained in multiple *regression analysis* for humility ($\beta = .29$, $t = 3.60$, $p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = -.26$, $t = -3.22$, $p < .01$). The results indicate that intrinsic aspirations positively correlated with humility and were more typical of men than of women in the sample. In order to analyze the issue more fully, the question of how intrinsic aspirations are linked with four dimensions of humility (accepting one's own limitations, self-acceptance and acceptance of reality, no desire for control, and making use of one's mistakes to improve oneself) was examined. The dimension of not putting on airs was excluded from the analysis because of poor reliability. The tested model of regression analysis proved significant: $R = .30$, $R^2 = .09$, $F(4, 134) = 3.27$, $p < .01$. Regression analysis pointed to a significant beta coefficient for humility dimension of self-acceptance and acceptance of reality ($\beta = .25$, $t = 2.33$, $p < .05$). Next, the results for aspirations – wealth, fame, and image – were added up and a dependent variable, extrinsic aspirations, was formed. Regression analysis was applied; independent variables included gender, age, and humility. The obtained model turned out to be non-significant ($F < 1$, *ns*). Then, a dependent variable – extrinsic aspirations – was introduced into the linear regression analysis model whose independent variables were four dimensions of humility. The tested model proved significant: $R = .26$, $R^2 = .07$, $F(4, 134) = 2.47$, $p < .01$. A significant beta coefficient was obtained for 'no desire for control' ($\beta = -.27$, $t = -2.88$, $p < .01$). In the light of the above results of regression analysis, the assumption that humility may predict life aspirations was confirmed.

The Relationship Between Humility and Subjective Well-Being

First, the interrelationships between each of the dimensions of humility and subjective well-being were examined. Pearson's r demonstrated a significant positive correlation between two dimensions of humility – i.e., accepting one's own limitations ($r = .38$, $p < .001$) and self-acceptance and acceptance of reality ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) – and subjective well-being. In other words, the higher the recipients rated themselves against those humility dimensions, the more satisfied

they were with their life. This result confirms hypothesis H3 and proves the assumption concerning the relationship between humility and subjective well-being. Next, linear regression analysis was applied to find out whether humility may predict subjective well-being. Independent variables were: gender, age, and humility (i.e., the added-up scores on all dimensions of humility), and the dependent variable was overall subjective well-being. The tested model was statistically significant: $R = .41$, $R^2 = .16$, $F(4, 138) = 8.63$, $p < .001$. A significant beta coefficient was noted for humility ($\beta = .40$, $t = 4.94$, $p < .001$). The results show that humility positively correlates with subjective well-being and may be its preferred predictor. In order to investigate the interrelationship links in more detail, regression analysis was used to examine the correlations between subjective well-being and the four examined dimensions of humility. The tested model was statistically significant: $R = .40$, $R^2 = .22$, $F(4, 131) = 9.33$, $p < .001$. Significant beta coefficients were found for two dimensions of humility, i.e. accepting one's own limitations ($\beta = .29$, $t = 2.81$, $p < .01$) and self-acceptance and acceptance of reality ($\beta = .31$, $t = 3.11$, $p = .01$). Therefore, it was established that the two dimensions of humility are the best predictors of subjective well-being. Beta coefficients for the other dimensions of humility turned out to be non-significant.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The obtained results indicate that both humility and its distinguished dimensions are related to intrinsic life goals. It was ascertained that the higher the level of humility in its two dimensions (accepting one's own limitations and self-acceptance and acceptance of reality), the higher the level of intrinsic aspirations (i.e., meaningful relationships and personal growth). Similarly, it was found that humility, as examined here, together with gender may predict intrinsic aspirations, too. Moreover, although humility is not a good predictor of extrinsic aspirations, the study showed that there is a negative correlation between extrinsic aspirations and one of the dimensions of humility, namely no desire for control – a dimension referring to personal attitude towards exerting power over others and having control over events. Thus, the results confirm the conclusions of prior studies revealing links between extrinsic aspirations and the value of power (cf. Zawadzka, 2008; Zawadzka, 2013). Furthermore, the results imply that no desire for control may reduce people's orientation towards extrinsic (materialistic) aspirations. The results also parallel previous research showing that humility (understood as honesty, frankness, modesty, and the avoidance of

greed) correlates positively with intrinsic aspirations and negatively with extrinsic aspirations (Visser & Pozzebon, 2013). Nevertheless, the results concerning humility and life aspirations obtained in this study should be interpreted with some caution since they seem a little lower than those reported earlier.

As for the findings of this study suggesting that humility may predict subjective well-being, prior studies had already demonstrated positive links between modesty – a trait related to humility – and subjective well-being (cf. Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Therefore, the consensus of the results supports the opinion that humility may make people happy. Moreover, the analyses proved that two of the four examined dimensions of humility – i.e. accepting one's own limitations as well as self-acceptance and acceptance of reality – provide significant statistical explanation for the level of subjective well-being. In fact, the two dimensions of humility refer to those traits that account for human maturity (cf. Allport, 1961) and gaining it leads to well-being. Baumeister and Exline (2002) point out that humility (self-detachment) leads to reducing behaviors that are connected with the desire to emphasize one's own importance and to be right. Consequently, acceptance of oneself and reality as well as accepting one's own limitations may enhance well-being as these protect one from having excessive ambition, comparing oneself to others, and striving to maximize one's own achievements (cf. Tangle, 2000). Schwartz and Ward (2007) demonstrated that people who strive to maximize the results of their actions are extremely prone to depression. Finally, the present study showed that there is a relationship between humility and aspirations concerning health and this, in turn, may indicate that humility promotes good health, which constitutes an important element of human well-being.

As stated before in this paper, defining humility is a real challenge for researchers (cf. Definitions of humility) and, for this reason, it is advisable to make allowances for the limitations when interpreting the results presented here. An instance of this may be the fact that the Humility Scale, applied here, does not sufficiently explain the dimension of self-assessment accuracy. Hence, it would be interesting and desirable to carry out further studies in order to complete the analyses with a scale of accurate self-assessment. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the Humility Scale is a new attempt to suggest a measure of humility viewed as attitude towards others (cf. Emmons, 1999; Tangle, 2000). Another limitation may be an excessively simplistic measure of subjective well-being. The reliability of the added-up results of Cantril's Ladder scales was low, so only the first scale, overall subjective well-being, was taken into account. Therefore, it would be desirable to check whether, and how, humility may explain other aspects

of well-being – e.g., life satisfaction, self-fulfilment, the level of fear or anxiety. Other features associated with humility are accomplishments and skills (cf. Exline & Geyer, 2004). Thus, it would be interesting to find out whether achievements and success in life affect the relationship between humility, as analyzed here, and subjective well-being.

To conclude, the study presented in this paper fits into the area of psychology relating to good life, i.e., a happy life in accordance with standards. The self-oriented culture of consumption and efficiency in which we live today underlines the importance of values and goals which disagree with those of humility. What is more, extrinsic aspirations obscure intrinsic goals, which lead to well-being (cf. Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). The results obtained in this study indicate that extrinsic aspirations negatively correlate with humility while humility positively correlates with intrinsic goals and, for that reason, it may be a way to enhance subjective well-being. Consequently, since humility may be a good way to achieve well-being, it may be useful to develop this virtue.

REFERENCES

- Allport, G. W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Exline, J. (2002). Mystical self loss: A challenge for psychological theory. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 12(1), 15-20.
- Czapiński, J. (1992). *Psychologia szczęścia. Przegląd badań i zarys teorii cebulowej*. Poznań: Academos.
- Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Van Tongeren, D. R., Gartner, A. L., Jennings, D. J., & Emmons, R. A. (2011). Relational humility: Conceptualizing and measuring humility as a personal judgment. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 93, 225-234.
- Davis, D. E., Worthington E. L., & Hook J. N. (2010). Humility: Review of measurement strategies and conceptualization as personality judgment. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5(4), 243-252.
- Dąbrowski, K. (1984). *Osobowość i jej kształtowanie przez dezintegrację pozytywną*. Lublin: PTHP.
- Duda, J. (2009). *Wpływ kupowania produktów kulturalnych na satysfakcję z życia w zależności od aspiracji*. Master's thesis written at the Institute of Psychology of the University of Gdańsk under the supervision of Anna Maria Zawadzka, Ph.D. Hab., Professor of UG.
- Emmons, R. A. (1999). Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 10, 3-26.
- Emmons, R. A. (2003). Personal goals, life meaning, and virtue: Wellsprings of a positive life, In C. L. M. Keyes, J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well lived*. Washington DC: APA.
- Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks. How the new science of gratitude can make you happier*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Emmons, R. A., & Kneezel, T. (2005). Giving thanks: Spiritual and religious correlates of gratitude. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 24(2), 140-148.

- Exline, J. (2012). Humility and the ability to receive from others. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 31(1), 40-50.
- Exline, J., & Geyer, A. L. (2004). Perception of humility: A preliminary study. *Self and Identity*, 3, 95-114.
- Exline, J., & Hill, P. (2012). Humility: A consistent and robust predictor of generosity. *The Journal of Positive Psychology dedicated furthering research and promoting good practice*, 7(3), 208-218.
- Górnik-Durose, M. (2002). *Psychologiczne aspekty posiadania – między instrumentalnością a społeczną użytecznością dóbr materialnych*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ.
- Górnik-Durose, M., & Janiec, K. (2010). Merkantylizm psychiczny, struktura celów życiowych a poczucie dobrostanu psychicznego. In A. M. Zawadzka, M. Górnik-Durose (Ed.), *Życie w konsumpcji, konsumpcja w życiu* (pp. 142-160). Sopot: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Górnik-Durose, M., Mróz, B., & Zawadzka, A. M. (2012). Współczesna oferta supermarketu szczęścia – nowe zjawiska w zachowaniach konsumenckich. Trójgłos interdyscyplinarny. In M. Górnik-Durose, A. M. Zawadzka (Ed.), *W supermarkecie szczęścia, O różnorodności zachowań konsumenckich w kontekście jakości życia* (pp. 320-345). Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Difin.
- Grenberg, J. M. (2005). *Kant and the ethics of humility: A story of dependence, corruption and virtue*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Grouzet, F. M., Kasser, T., Ahuvia, A., Ferdandes-Dols, J. M., Kim, Y., Lau, S., Ryan, R., Saunders, S., Schmuck, P., & Shedon, K. (2005). The structure of goals contents across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(5), 800-816.
- Harrel, S. P., & Bond, M. A. (2006). Listening to diversity stories: Principles for practice in community research and action. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(3-4), 365-376.
- Hilbig, B. E., & Zettler, I. (2009). Pillars of cooperation: Honesty-humility, social value orientations, and economic behavior. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 516-519.
- Kasser, T. (2002). *The High Price of Materialism*. London: MIT Press.
- Kasser, T., & Ryan R. M. (1993). A dark side of an American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 410-422.
- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1996). Further examining the American dream: Differential correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 80-87.
- LaBouff, J. P., Rowatt, W. C., Johnson, M. K., Tsang, J.-A., & McCullough, W. G. (2012). Humble persons are more helpful than less humble persons: Evidence from three studies. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 7(1), 16-29.
- Lee, K., & Ashton, M.C. (2004). Psychometric properties of HEXACO personality inventory. *Multivariate Behavioural Research*, 39, 329-358.
- Means, J. R., Wilson, G. L., Strum, C., Biron, J. E., & Bach, P. J. (1990). Humility as a psychotherapeutic formulation. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 3, 211-215.
- Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23, 628-634.
- Peters, A., Rowatt, W. C., & Johnson, M. K. (2011). Association between dispositional humility and social relationship quality. *Psychology*, 2(3), 155-161.
- Powers, C., Nam, R. K., Rowatt, W. C., & Hill, P. C. (2007). Associations between humility, spiritual transcendence and forgiveness. In R. Piedmont (Ed.), *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 18, 75-94.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *Becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Rowatt, W. C., Powers, C., Targhette, V., Comer, J., Kennedy, S., & Labuff, J. (2006). Development and initial validation of an implicit measure of humility relative to arrogance. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 1*(4), 198-211.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, 25* (pp. 1-65). New York: Academic Press.
- Schwartz, B., & Ward, A. (2007). Mieć się lepiej, ale czuć się gorzej: paradoks wyboru. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Psychologia pozytywna w praktyce* (pp. 59-86). Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Sedikides, C., Gregg, A. P., & Hart, C. M. (2007). The importance of being modest. In C. Sedekides & S. J. Spencer (Eds.), *The Self* (pp. 163-209). New York: Psychology Press Taylor and Francis Group.
- Seligman, M. E. (2002). *Authentic happiness: using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Tangney, J. P. (2000). Humility: Theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and directions for future research. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*, 70-82.
- Tangney, J. P. (2002). Humility. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 411-419). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Trzebińska, E. (2004). Siła psychiczna – ujęcie doświadczeniowo-analityczne. *Psychologia Jakości Życia, 3*(1), 5-34.
- Trzebińska, E. (2008). *Psychologia pozytywna*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne.
- Viser, B. A., & Pozzebon, J. (2013). Life aspirations, personality and well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences, 54*(2), 266-271.
- Worthington, E. L. (1998). An empathy-humility-commitment model of forgiveness applied within family dyads. *Journal of Family Therapy, 20*(1), 59-76.
- Zalewska, J. (2011). *Aspiracje materialistyczne, zadowolenie z życia i pokora*. Master's thesis written under the supervision of Anna Maria Zawadzka, Ph.D. Hab., UG Professor. Institute of Psychology, the Uniwersytety of Gdańsk.
- Zawadzka, A. M. (2008). Orientacja materialistyczna, teoria opanowywania trwogi i preferencje nabywcze konsumentów. In M. Plopa, M. Błażek, *Współczesny człowiek w świetle dylematów i wyzwań: perspektywa psychologiczna* (pp. 235-241). Cracow: Wydawnictwo Impuls.
- Zawadzka, A. M. (2013). Aspiracje materialistyczne dzieci i młodzieży w kontekście preferowanych wartości i dobrostanu. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne, 19*(1), 7-16.
- Zawadzka, A. M., Duda, J., Rymkiewicz, R., & Kondratowicz-Nowak, B. (2013). Polska adaptacja siedmiowymiarowego modelu aspiracji życiowych Kasser'a i Ryana. Unpublished manuscript. Institute of Psychology, the University of Gdańsk.
- Zawadzka, A. M., Sęk, T., & Szabowska-Walaszczyk, A. (2013). Jak nadużywanie władzy wiąże się z dobrostanem jednostki? In M. Górnik-Durose (Ed.), *W poszukiwaniu wyznaczników jakości życia*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ. *Chowanna, 1*(40), 65-84.
- Zawadzka A. M., & Szabowska-Walaszczyk A. (2012). Z czym wiąże się motyw samonaprawy? Analiza wybranych wyznaczników gotowości do samonaprawy. *Psychologia Jakości Życia, 10*(1), 8-24.