

## The Factor Structure of Polish Personality-Descriptive Adjectives: An Alternative Psycho-lexical Study

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*Abstract:* The results of the Polish psycho-lexical study have been included in nearly all comparisons aimed at finding dimensions common to various cultures and languages. Because of the ambiguity concerning the interpretation of some factors and because of a number of methodological shortcomings, it was decided that another lexical study of the Polish language should be carried out. The alternative study was based on more extensive lexical material and involved a sample covering the full age range. The analyses used 547 personality-descriptive adjectives and self-ratings from 624 respondents aged from 16 to 80 years (mean age = 38.0 years). In a six-factor solution, the obtained structure was typical for many languages: Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Honesty and Intellect. The result of factor analysis depended on neither the type of factoring nor the type of rotation applied. The results of the study were discussed in relation to cross-language studies and to previous studies of the structure of Polish personality-descriptive lexicon. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Key words: psycho-lexical approach; trait taxonomy; Big Five; HEXACO

### INTRODUCTION

The lexical hypothesis, reformulated by Goldberg (1981), initiated a series of lexical studies on the structure of personality lexicons in various countries and cultures. The central assumption of the psycho-lexical approach is that the important personality characteristics become encoded in language. The more important they are, the larger representation of synonyms and antonyms they have. Therefore, when studying the structure of complete personality lexicons, it is possible to identify the fundamental vectors of human personality in different cultures.

Extensive examinations of the English personality lexicon confirmed the replicability of a set of five factors that came to be known as the Big Five (Digman & Takemoto-Chock, 1981; Goldberg, 1990, 1992). The five-factor model was well established by the 1980s and 1990s as the optimal structure of the personality domain, as represented by the personality lexicon of the English language. Early studies carried out on adjectival material in various languages usually also identified at least a five-factor structure of personality descriptors, despite some differences in factor axis locations (e.g. Caprara & Perugini, 1994; De Raad, Hendriks, & Hofstee, 1992; Hřebíčková, 1999; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). The Big Five framework consists of the following dimensions: Extraversion (confidence/boldness and forcefulness, impulse expression, talkativeness and sociableness), Agreeableness (helpfulness, peacefulness, unassertiveness vs. conceitedness), Conscientiousness (impulse control, responsibility, orderliness and work), Emotional Stability (stability vs. fearfulness,

irritableness) and Intellect/Imagination (cleverness, imaginativeness, reflectiveness, culture and talent; Peabody & De Raad, 2002).

However, many of the lexical studies that had been known to support the Big Five also produced a largely similar set of six factors, for example, in Dutch (De Raad, 1992), in Korean (Hahn, Lee, & Ashton, 1999), in French (Boies, Lee, Ashton, Pascal, & Nicol, 2001) or in English (Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2004). What these structures have in common is the emergence of an additional, sixth factor, connected with morality and honesty, which was most commonly defined by terms such as *honest*, *fair* and *sincere* versus *greedy*, *conceited* and *sly*. Despite discrepancies existing between the results, bringing studies in seven languages (Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean and Polish) together in one article produced approximately similar content of the six-factor solution: (i) Extraversion, defined by sociability and liveliness; (ii) Agreeableness (gentleness, patience and agreeableness); (iii) Conscientiousness (organization and discipline); (iv) Emotionality (anxiety, vulnerability, sentimentality, lack of bravery and lack of toughness); (v) Honesty–Humility; and (vi) Intellect/Imagination/Unconventionality (Ashton, Lee, Perugini et al., 2004). In these six-factor solutions, five factors broadly resembled the Big Five, except for changes in axis locations involving Big Five Emotional Stability and Agreeableness. The classic Big Five Agreeableness factor provides a single axis of prosocial versus antisocial tendency that is neutral with regard to emotional reactivity. In turn, the classic Emotional Stability factor has, at its negative pole, ‘neurotic’ content that is linked with the Negative Affectivity (Ashton et al., 2004).

In most countries, Agreeableness in the cross-language six-factor structure is composed of terms such as gentleness,

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