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Bible, Psychology, and Social Studies: Interdisciplinary Project "The Relevance of the Bible for the Development of Religious and Spiritual Resources," KUL, Lublin

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Abstract: The article reflects on the possible areas of cooperation between the Bible, psychology, and social studies. Introduction presents a methodological basis and a fresh dialog carried on in recent decades between biblical and psychological studies. In addition to the analysis of psychological phenomena in biblical texts from the classical, historical-critical perspective, scholars increasingly turn to positive psychology, neuroscience, and social studies, examining emotions, communication strategies, relationships, values and development of individuals and communities. The authors go on to indicate the topics and biblical texts that open up to a fruitful dialog with diverse psychological approaches. The second part of the paper describes an original project developed at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) titled "The Relevance of the Bible for the Development of Religious and Spiritual Resources," which uses two tools for studying changes in religious and spiritual resources: Religious Resources Scale and Spiritual Resources Scale. They are employed to study the impact of biblical texts on people who differ in terms of developmental conditions (e.g., age) and/or situational factors (including experience of existential emptiness, loneliness, bereavement, migration, and war conditions). The paper describes the methodology and the psychometric indicators of the above-mentioned measurement tools. The Religious Resources Scale and the Spiritual Resources Scale are used to detect religious and spiritual changes under the influence of biblical texts. They constitute the methodological basis for a pioneering interdisciplinary research conducted at KUL, which promotes a cooperation between biblical studies and psychology.

Keywords: biblical studies, biblical texts, psychological approach, spiritual resources, religious resources, psychometric properties, validation

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1. Introduction: A Dialogue Between the Bible and Psychology

The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993) states:

> In order to communicate itself, the word of God has taken root in the life of human communities (cf. Sir. 24:12), and it has been through the psychological dispositions of the various persons who composed the biblical writings that it has pursued its path. It follows, then, that the human sciences in particular sociology, anthropology and psychology can contribute towards a better understanding of certain aspects of biblical texts. (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, I.D [Introduction])

From the nature of inspiration, rooted in human community and culture, comes the imperative to study biblical texts with reference to other discplines, including psychology. In doing so, the Pontifical Biblical Commission draws attention to the multiplicity of schools, sometimes in dispute, that make up psychological studies. At the same time, it affirms that many exegetes have successfully reaped the considerable benefits of practising this type of interdisciplinary research in recent years (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, I.D [Introduction]).

The 1993 document essentially refers to pschylogy and psychoanalysis, recommending them as a complement to historical-critical studies that "lead to a multidimensional understanding of Scripture and help decode the human language of revelation." (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, I.D.3) Psychology and psychoanalysis can contribute to a better understanding of biblical symbols, but not only. Among the various examples of their use in biblical studies, the Commission mentions: "the meaning of cultic ritual, of sacrifice, of bans, to explain the use of imagery in biblical language, the metaphorical significance of miracle stories, the wellsprings of apocalyptic visual and auditory experiences." (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, I.D.3) This should be done without absolutising any school of thought and with respect for the distinctiveness and methodological differences between biblical and psychological studies.

What the Pontifical Biblical Commission proposed more than 30 years ago has become a reality in the dynamicly changing world of biblical studies. Today, no one needs to be convinced of the necessity of interdisciplinary research and the positive effects of the dialogue between the Bible and psychology. The Pontifical Biblical Commission used to describe this dialogue essentially from the perspective of psychoanalysis, but over the past three decades, joint research has become much more diverse both in terms of methodology and content. They cover issues of communication strategies, trauma, emotions, personal development, the pursuit of happiness, relationship building and the strengtening of moral attitudes. In doing so, they draw on neuroscience, behavioural, positive and moral psychology. The dialogue has

become genuinely interdisciplinary, without dogmatising any of the psychological schools, and there is an ongoing call to expand this platform, to which the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) project "The Relevance of the Bible for the Development of Religious and Spiritual Resources" can contribute.

The project makes part of a burgeoning body of research that has been developing rapidly for more than two decades, in which biblical scholars have successfully drawn on the psychological resources for a better understanding of the nature and impact of biblical texts. An example of such cooperation is the monograph *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness*, edited by Brent A. Strawn (2012a). The project grew out of the seminar "The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness," held in Atlanta in 2009, which brought together biblical scholars and theologians, specialists in the Old and New Testament, systematic theology, pastoral theology, and psychology. The common denominator of the conference presentations and the resulting articles is the use of "positive psychology" in the analysis of biblical texts. It covers three issues: positive emotions (contentment, happiness and hope), positive individual traits (capacity for love, work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, wisdom), and positive institutions (strengths that foster better communities: justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, tolerance). The starting point for positive psychology is not human pathology but goodness, and the aim is to study the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive, lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, cultivate what is best within themselves, and enhance their experience of work, love, and play (Strawn 2012b, 19–20).[1]

In addition to analyses of the Old and New Testament texts (Parts I and II), Part III of the monograph is dedicated to a dialogue between theologians and psychologists, reflecting on the use of biblical texts. Of particular interest in this regard is the paper by Steven J. Sandage, arguing that the virtues, spiritual maturity, and the transformed and refocused vision of happiness in the Bible have much to contribute to positive psychology, pointing to places where future research can focus. They can lead the way to an appreciation of the spiritual dimension of life and virtues in psychological studies and to the development of more effective tools for empirical research (Sandage 2012, 263–86).

The texts collected in the monograph are a good example of interdisciplinary research in which, as suggested by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, biblical and psychological disciplines respect their distinctiveness and methodological specificity. The authors refer to ancient history, philosophy, and literature, placing the biblical vision of happiness in its historical context, treating it essentially as a socio-cultural construct, and confronting it with the contemporary understandings of the issue.

1 On the biblical psychology of happiness, see also Strawn 2012c, 287–322.

This approach will dominate in similar subsequent studies, gradually opening up to neuroscience. Importantly, the dialogue is bi-directional, as representatives of positive psychology show an interest in the understanding of happiness in ancient theories and religions, including the Bible (Haidt 2006; Peterson 2006, 80–88; Snyder and Lopez 2020, 19–35).

The Oxford study, which in many respects can be called an exemplary one, was followed by other scholarly projects, in which biblical studies made use of psychology. It will be impossible to list and describe them all here, so we shall focus only on the most important and representative ones. Let us start with the monograph edited by Renate Egger-Wenzel and Jeremy Corley, *Emotions from Ben Sira to Paul*. Its authors analyse emotions (joy, mourning, sadness, fear, love, anger, rejection, empathy, shame, jealousy) in ancient Near Eastern texts, in the Old and New Testament, in Philo, and in documentary papyri (Egger-Wenzel and Corley 2012b). The studies are marked by a historical-comparative approach, with reference to contemporary psychological theories essentially in the last two papers (Bauer 2012, 491–514; Aichhorn and Kronberger 2012, 515–26).

Besides emotions, another intensely developing field of research is the analysis of trauma in the Bible, with reference to neuroscience and contemporary psychology. David McLain Carr in *Holy Resilience* argues for a "traumatic" environment and motives for the emergence of biblical literature, starting with the narratives on patriarchs, through the story of Moses and the Exodus, the Babylonian exile, the Hellenistic crisis, finishing with the cross of Christ and the parting of ways between Judaism and Christianity (Carr 2014).[2] In *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions*, edited by Eve-Marie Becker, Jan Dochhorn and Else Kragelund Holt, we find numerous papers on trauma written from the perspective of biomedical, psychological, social, literary and cultural studies, with an emphasis on what they contribute to biblical exegesis and the reading of the Old Testament texts (Becker, Dochhorn, and Holt 2014).[3] The Old Testament is also generally the focus of the edited volume *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma*, by Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette, analysing the literary construction of trauma in the Prophets, Wisdom Literature, and 2 Corinthians, with reference to their contemporary social correspondents (Boase and Frechette 2016).[4]

Returning to the topic of emotions, the volume edited by Stefan C. Reif and Egger-Wenzel, *Ancient Jewish Prayers and Emotions* examines them in the Old Testament, Jewish literature of the Second Temple period and in the New Testament, paying attention to their divine-human and communal character, somatization,

2 See also the earlier article by Birnbaum 2008, 533–46.

3 See especially Becker 2014, 15–29; O'Connor 2014, 210–222; Smith-Christopher 2014, 223–43.

4 On trauma in the Bible, see also Römer 2012, 159–78; Garber Jr. 2015, 24–44; Frechette 2015, 20–34; Frechette and Boase 2016, 1–23; Schreiter 2016, 193–208; Frechette 2017, 239–49.

communicative and pedagogical functions (Reif and Egger-Wenzel 2015). The volume is marked by historical-cultural and phenomenological approaches, with particular attention given to emotions and attitudes such as joy, happiness, consolation, sadness, abandonment, panic, and desire. In another volume edited by F. Scott Spencer, *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions*, affect theory is combined with a cultural-historical approach to emotions such as anger, fear, grief, disgust, joy, happiness, awe, pride, shame, insatiable desire, compassion, and faith/trust (Spencer 2017a). The authors examine the texts of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Gospels and 1 Peter, highlighting the cognitive, motivational and relational aspects of emotions. In a comprehensive introductory article to the volume, Spencer guides readers through the history, taxonomy, textual-generic, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary concerns of research linking biblical studies and psychology. The paper explains the nature of the "affective turn" in contemporary science and culture, and the extent to which contemporary biblical studies draw on the developments in philosophy, psychology, classical studies, anthropology, literature, linguistics, affect theory, neuroscience, and cognitive studies (Spencer 2017a, 1–41).[5]

Affect theory is also the focal point of *Reading with Feeling*, by Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, exploring love, desire, trauma, happiness, unhappiness, and depression in the Old Testament texts and in Pauline letters (Black and Koosed 2019). Let us also mention the edited volume on pain in the Old Testament and rabbinic literature, *Pain in Biblical Texts and Other Materials of the Ancient Mediterranean* by Michaela Bauck and Saul M. Olyan (2021), and two studies on trauma: *Trauma Theory, Trauma Story* by Sarah Emanuel (2021), and *Turmoil, Trauma and Tenacity in Early Jewish Literature*, edited by Nicholas Allen and Jacob Doedens (2022). Studies on trauma and tenacity in the Bible, while still in their infancy, have already attracted much attention of scholars and show great potential for generating further research (Becker 2014, 15–29; Allen 2022, 1–16). An overview of the publications from the interface of biblical and psychological studies can be concluded with *A Prototype Approach to Hate and Anger in the Hebrew Bible* by Deena E. Grant (2023) and with *When Psychology Meets the Bible*, an edited volume by Heather A. McKay and Pieter van der Zwan, whose authors apply the theories of trauma, terror management, coping, and acceptance-commitment therapy to read the Old and New Testament texts (H. A. McKay and van der Zwan 2023).

Pauline letters and communities also have an important place in the study of emotions, communication, relationship building and moral attitudes. One can point

5 On the affect in the Bible and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, read essentially from a historical-theological perspective, see von Gemünden 2009a. On the topic of affect in the Bible from a psychological, literary and social perspective, see also the special issues of *Biblical Interpretation* 22, nos. 4–5 (2014).

to Gerd Theissen's pioneering work, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, in which the author combines behaviourist, psychodynamic, and cognitive approaches to describe religious experience in Paul (Theissen 1987).[6] The letters of Paul have long been studied from a rhetorical perspective, pointing to their cognitive and emotive-persuasive character (Kraftchick 2001, 39–68; Thompson 2001, 127–46; Sumney 2001, 147–60). David E. Aune, in a general study of passions in Paul, draws attention to their use in the apostle's rhetoric, descriptions of sufferings, treatment of grief, anxiety, anger, and negative assessment of sexual passions (Aune 2008, 222–31). Coleen Shantz in *Paul in Ecstasy* explores Pauline texts describing ecstatic experiences (2 Cor 3–5; 12:1–4; Rom 8), with the use of cognitive neurology and social anthropology (Shantz 2009).

A new quality in the study of emotions in Paul was undoubtedly brought by John Barton. In an important article that gave impetus to the interdisciplinary approach in the study of emotions in the Bible, the author applied social science, historical, cognitive, and constructivist approaches to the analysis of sorrow in 1 Thess 4:13–18, read through the lens of the Christian "emotional regime." In a similar way, the author dealt with joy in Philippians and anger in Ephesians (Barton 2011, 571–91; 2013, 171–93; 2015, 21–34). The interdisciplinary approach advocated by Barton can also be appreciated in Shantz. The author, drawing on positive psychology, neuroscience, and the social sciences, explores the issue of "happiness among afflictions" in Paul, which builds up the faith and moral attitudes of his communities through a Christological reading of suffering and the use of positive emotions (Shantz 2012, 187–201). Also referring to positive psychology, Joshua W. Jipp examines the components of Pauline theology aimed at good life and human flourishing (Jipp 2023). More on Pauline letters will be said in the next section. Concluding, we can say that they set interdisciplinary trends in contemporary biblical studies, creating a platform where the Bible, social sciences, anthropology, psychology, and neuroscience meet. Having generally presented the interaction between the Bible and psychology, we now turn to an overview of biblical texts and issues that open up for potential interdisciplinary research.

2. Texts and Areas of Research for Biblical and Psychological Studies

In the previous paragraph, we presented the most representative publications from the last two decades that bear witness to interdisciplinary cooperation between biblical and psychological disciplines. We now turn to the texts and issues that have

6 English translation of the original German edition: Theißen 1983.

already been studied or still await deeper, interdisciplinary research. The biblical material is a repository of emotions, but not only. It also describes ways of communication, solving crises, strengthening values, tools for shaping attitudes and recovering from trauma, which can be attractive to contemporary scientific, pastoral, and therapeutic approaches.[7] In our review of biblical texts, we will follow the division present in the Catholic canon of the Old and New Testaments, necessarily limiting ourselves to the most important publications and topics.

2.1. The Pentateuch

The first five books of the Bible are a veritable mine of universal stories about discovering human identity and place in the universe, the meaning of life, dealing with trauma and relationship building. In the Pentateuch, scholars paid attention to the human quest for happiness embedded in the theology of creation and the role of the Law in this regard (Fretheim 2012, 33–56; MacDonald 2012, 57–76). They also focused on women's emotions and childbirth (von Gemünden 2009d, 149–59; Bauks 2021, 29–49), the trauma of the sterility (Steyn 2022, 227–48), the destructive power of jealousy and anger (Schlimm 2011; von Nordheim-Diehl 2012, 431–50), the trauma of Joseph (Grant 2017, 61–75; Focht 2020, 209–23), emotions in purity laws, especially disgust (Kazen 2011; 2014, 62–92; 2017, 97–115), and love for God in the Deuteronomy (J. W. McKay 1972, 426–35; Lapsley 2003, 350–369; Arnold 2011, 551–69). The proto-history (Gen 1–11) waits for more studies devoted to the human identity, the relationship between man and woman, the meaning of suffering and death, shame and crisis in Gen 3, as well as the trauma of the broken family bonds in Gen 4. The stories of the patriarchs open up to positive psychology in terms of the search for one's own path and meaning of life, the meaning of offspring and hope, the building and maturing of family bonds. The Book of Exodus provides valuable insights concerning recovery from trauma and violence, building community with God and the other, and resilience in the midst of crises that Israel faces in the desert. The Book of Numbers highlights the destructive habits of complaining and lack of gratitude, as well as the pedagogical tools of punishment and forgiveness, while the Deuteronomy points to the value of laws and moral obligations in building lasting relationships. These and other aspects await further examination in the Pentateuch, which can be red through the lens of positive psychology and trauma studies.

7 An example of a good collaboration between a psychologist and a biblical scholar are the publications by Kalman J. Kaplan and Matthew B. Schwartz: Kaplan and Schwartz 2008; Schwartz and Kaplan 2004.

2.2. Historical Books

In the Historical Books, the investigated topics comprised the mourning and grief of parents (Bosworth 2011a, 238–55; 2011b, 691–707; Kalmanofsky 2011, 55–74), love and desire in romantic relationships (David and Bathsheba) (Stone 2019, 13–36), the collective experience of trauma (the destruction of Jerusalem) (Janzen 2012, 2019), the communal aspect of joy (the restoration of the temple) (de Troyer 2015, 41–58), and the trauma of rape (Tamar) (Claassens 2016, 177–92). Considerable space has also been devoted to emotions, relationships, and trauma in literary, social, and psychological aspects, in the Book of Esther (Ego 2015, 83–94; Emanuel 2017, 23–42; Efthimiadis-Keith 2022, 79–98), Tobit (Portier-Young 2001, 35–54; Di Lella 2012, 177–88; Egger-Wenzel 2013, 41–76; Miller 2013, 87–106; Egger-Wenzel 2015, 193–220; Ego 2021, 187–98; Macatangay 2022, 117–28), Judith (Egger-Wenzel 2012a, 189–223; Schmitz 2015, 177–92; Hobyane 2022, 145–63), and 1–2 Maccabees (Schmitz 2012, 253–79; Duggan 2015, 95–116; Reiterer 2015, 117–44; Jordaan 2022, 167–86). In 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, further research is needed on positive and negative forms of attachment, drive for power, collective and individual resilience in critical situations, the role of the temple in building psychological resilience, depression, father-son and master-disciple relations. 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah picture an interesting phenomenon of communal joy and sorrow experienced and processed in liturgy and prayer. Ruth, Judith, Esther, and Tobit contain not only the stories of trauma, but also of love, closeness, empathy, sacrifice, selflessness, courage, and crossing ethnic barriers. Finally yet importantly, in 1–2 Maccabees, eschatology and the hope of resurrection can be examined as religious resources that give courage at the time of crisis.

2.3. Wisdom Literature and Psalms

In the realm of Wisdom Literature, the authors devoted a number of studies to Job, exploring its emotions, narrative about suffering, trauma, and relationships with God, relatives, and friends (Kruger 2002, 143–49; Nielsen 2014, 62–70; West 2016, 209–30; Weissenrieder 2021, 167–86; Balla 2022, 99–116). The Book of Wisdom was examined from the point of view of divine and human emotions (anger, mercy, liking, love, understanding, thanksgiving, admiration, shame) and their rhetorical function (Mazzinghi 1995; Bellia and Passaro 2005, 307–28; Reiterer 2012, 281–315; Witte 2015, 161–76; Gericke 2022, 51–75; Zieliński 2020). In Sirach, the scholars paid attention to empathy, the link between emotions and prayer, fear, joy, thanksgiving, the father-son relations, the somatic, communicative, and pedagogical nature of emotions, and the trauma of marginalised persons (Wahl 1998, 271–84; Beentjes 2003, 233–40; Witte 2008, 176–202; Bradley 2012, 103–19; Anderson 2012, 121–31; Urbanz 2012, 133–58; Elssner 2012, 159–76;

Calduch-Benages 2015, 145–60; Reiterer 2022, 19–50). The Book of Proverbs and Qoheleth were studied with reference to the hedonic and eudaimonic vision of happiness (Newsom 2012, 117–36; Browning Helsel 2016, 85–103). Finally, Psalms drew a lot of scholarly attention concerning divine and human emotions, the creative potential of trauma processed in collective prayer, and pain in its bodily, social, and psychological dimensions (Sylva 1993; Swenson 2005; Brown 2012, 95–116; van Grol 2012, 69–102; Frechette 2014, 71–84; Abart 2015, 19–40; Strawn 2016, 143–60; Cottrill 2019, 55–70; Black 2019, 71–94; Gärtner 2021, 85–104; Chwi-Woon 2021, 531–56). In Proverbs, the topics of maturing, discerning the way of living, constructing relationships and learning commend themselves for future studies. The same is true for the themes of love, intimacy, tenderness, attentiveness, emotions in the body, searching and building relationships, and experiencing loss and crises in the Song of Songs.

2.4. Prophets

In the vast corpus of prophetic writings, Isaiah drew researchers' attention with his concepts of happiness, *misterium tremendum* (Isa 6; 28), self-conscious emotions, and the punishment of Babylon (Isa 47), red as a remedy for Israel's trauma, as well as the ritual of fasting interpreted as a social transaction (Lapsley 2012, 75–94; Ben-Dov 2015, 239–45; Prakasam 2017, 177–96; Lambert 2017, 139–60; Frechette 2016, 67–84). In Jeremiah, Baruch, and Lamentations, scholars have generally been interested in shame, God's grief, punishment as a remedy for the trauma of sin, comfort for exiles, communal ruminations and the somatisation of sorrow and trauma (Kruger 1996, 79–88; Bosworth 2013, 24–46; Boase 2014, 193–209; Holt 2014, 162–76; Elßner 2015, 71–82; Stulman 2016, 125–39; Boase 2016a, 49–66; Bosworth 2017, 117–38; Frevel 2021, 61–84; Ngqeza 2024, 1–7). Topics of sorrow, trauma, and depression also dominate in the publications devoted to Ezekiel (Garber Jr. 2004, 215–35; Kelle 2009, 469–90; Daschke 1999, 105–32; Poser 2016, 27–48),[8] Jonah (Boase 2016b, 4–22; Graybill 2019, 95–112), Nahum (Wessels and Esterhuizen 2020, 1–6), and Micah (Groenewald 2017, 55–65). Let us also mention the study of the moral-relational character of conversion in Hosea (6,1–3; 14,1–7), with reference to affective neuroscience and the cognitive-motivational working of emotions (Olson 2017, 161–76). Missing from the area of prophetic literature are references to positive psychology, analyses of prophetic call (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos), the mechanisms of taking decisions, vision of happiness, the maturation of the prophetic personalities (Jeremiah, Jonah), motivations for sacrifice and experiencing crises and rebuilding relationships after betrayal (Hosea).

8 See also Poser 2012; Odell 2016, 107–24; Groenewald 2018, 88–102.

2.5. The Gospels and Acts

In the Gospels and Acts, researchers studied Jesus' vision of happiness in the Beatitudes of Matthew (Holladay 2012, 141–68),[9] as well as joy in the Acts and Luke (Green 2012, 169–86; Wenkel 2015; Dinkler 2017, 265–86).[10] Mark inspired studies concerning faith as a cognitive-motivational act (trust), awe, trauma, and basic emotions (with reference to ancient authors and neuroscience) (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998, 15–56; Geyer 2002; Kotrosits and Taussig 2013; Spencer 2014b, 107–28; Waller 2014, 450–472; Wischmeyer 2015, 335–50; Whitenton 2016, 272–89; Lawrence 2016, 83–107; Spencer 2017b, 217–41; Vegge 2017, 243–64; Hicks 2021). John provided material for research on Jesus' emotions, fear, aggression, joy, and stability of the disciples (Voorwinde 2005; von Gemünden 2009c, 279–306; Moore 2017, 287–309). Still missing are the studies on the way in which Jesus instils his own habits and mindset in the disciples, prepares them for mission and crises, communicates with them and builds their relationships with and attitudes towards the world.

2.6. Pauline Letters

Regarding the area of Pauline letters, much interest was devoted to Philippians. The letter was studied as an ancient *consolatio*, with a particular focus on the communal, socially generated, and performed joy that occurs here, which allows Paul to survive prison, and which he instills in the community (Holloway 2001; von Gemünden 2015, 223–53; Wright 2015, 39–61; Schellenberg 2021, especially ch. 5). Anke Inselmann presented Paul as a model for believers, a teacher of "Affektlehre," mature feelings rooted in Christ (Inselmann 2015, 255–88). Philippians also appears in the company of other letters, like Galatians and 1 Corinthians, in the monograph *Defending Shame* by Te-Li Lau, where the author examines shame as a moral emotion, used for the formation of conscience and identity of believers (Lau 2020). Ian Jew in *Paul's Emotional Regime*, explores the different shades of joy in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians, applying the sociological model of "emotional regime" to Paul (Jew 2021).[11] Similarly, Ryan S. Schellenberg analyses joy and longing in epistolary prayers in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians (Schellenberg 2022, 79–98). Finally, Julia Fogg, also focusing on Philippians, examines joy through the lens of neuroscience and, referring to "shared emotions," describes Paul's construction of "emotional habits" in the community (Fogg 2024, 1–18).

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9 See also von Gemünden 2009e, 163–89.

10 On the positive qualification of fear in Luke, see also Spencer 2014a, 229–49.

11 Three decades earlier, Abram Malherbe, in his pioneering work, had very generally indicated the use of elements of emotion (longing) to reinforce the hortatory message in the paraenetic letter that is 1 Thessalonians. See Malherbe 1989, 49–66.

An important resource for the study of Paul's emotions, relationship building and crisis management is the Corinthian correspondence. Maia Kotrosits highlights longing and shame, as well as the whole range of affections in Paul's relationship with the community in 1–2 Corinthians (Kotrosits 2010, 134–51). Oda Wischmeyer examines the rhetorical and ethical nature of emotions in 1 Cor 13, relating them to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Book II) (Wischmeyer 2012, 343–59). Becker analyses the topos of tears in Paul's "letter of tears" (2 Cor 2:4) and compares it with Greco-Roman literature (Plutarch and Cicero) to note its rhetorical and relational functions (empathy, authentication and proximity-building) (Becker 2012, 361–78). The true mine of Pauline emotions is 2 Cor 7:5–16, where the terms *splanchna* and *anapauo*, emotions such as pity, anger, and zeal, and the therapeutic nature of grief were studied from multiple angels (Clarke 1996, 277–300; Welborn 2001, 31–60; Gavin 2010, 427–42; Welborn 2011, 547–70; Lau 2020, 156–57). Concluding, Peter Y. Clark examines the *persitaseis* catalogues in 2 Corinthians, looking for a Pauline way of dealing with trauma and persecution (Clark 2016, 231–48), while in Petra von Gemünden we find passages devoted to affect and its regulation in Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians (lust, anger, love, the body, the ritual aspect of emotional control) (von Gemünden 2009a, 43–46, 132–37, 207–76). Pauline letters, which have received much attention so far, are still open to psychological research on interpersonal dialogue, building, strengthening, and ending relationships, reinforcing values and developing moral habits, in which emotions, Paul's authority, the Spirit, baptism and the Eucharist play an important role.

2.7. Hebrews, James, 1–2 Peter, 1–2–3 John, Jude, and Revelation

In other New Testament writings, Katharine M. Hockey analyses emotions in 1 Peter (a cognitive approach, combining Greco-Roman philosophy with social science and contemporary psychological theories) (Hockey 2017, 331–53; 2019), and von Gemünden examines frustration, jealousy, self-control and the cultivation of affect in James (von Gemünden 2009b, 190–204). Greg Carey points to Jesus' model that enables his disciples to live happily amidst adversity (apocalyptic literature) (Carey 2012, 203–24), while Stephen D. Moore highlights the role of disgust and loathing in the descriptions of Rome in the Revelation (Moore 2014, 503–28). The New Testament epistles and Revelation are still an open field for research on ecstatic experiences, symbols, rituals and their shaping of believers' moral life, as well as trauma, attitudes toward the world, and the identity of early Christian communities.

The presented outline, given the vastness of the research material, out of necessity remains selective. In addition to the texts indicated, there are many others, opening up to interdisciplinary research. Table 1 captures succinctly the above-presented topics, combining conservation of resources theory by Stevan E. Hobfoll, sets of religious and spiritual resources, and the biblical texts that can be analysed as their repository.

Table 1. Hobfoll's theory, religious and spiritual resources, and the Bible

Research issues	Hofboll's theory	Religious resources	Spiritual resources	Biblical material
Happiness, sense of meaning and purpose in life, decision-making process	Self-esteem, achievement of goals, personal development	Hope for eternal life, sense of being an instrument of divine love, sense of God-given purpose, gift of the Holy Spirit	Responsibility for one's own life, purpose of life, hope, openness to experience, courage, humility	Protohistory (Gen 1–11), stories of the patriarchs (Gen 12–50), David (1–2 Samuel), stories of prophetic vocations (Isaiah; Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Amos), eternal life (1 Thess 4:14–17), heaven (Phil 3), resurrection (1–2 Maccabees; 1 Cor 15); children of God, the Spirit and the glory of heaven (Wis 2–6; John 14; Rom 8:1–39)
Resilience to crisis, trauma	Adaptability, coping with adversity, psychological resilience	Suffering in the context of salvation, the ability to transform the heart through grace, the ability to see the good in difficult situations	Ability to accept change, acceptance of reality, inner stability, peace of mind, perseverance in difficulties, patience	Protohistory (Gen 1–11), stories of the patriarchs (Gen 12–50), Exodus and Israel's journey through the desert (Exodus; Numbers; Deuteronomy), Saul and David (1–2 Samuel), the fall of Israel and the destruction of the temple (1–2 Kings; Lamentations), Tobbit and Sarah, Judith, Esther, Job, the Psalms, Jesus, the hostility of his countrymen and the way of the cross, Paul in prison, catalogues of sufferings (2 Cor 1–2; 4; 6; 11; Phil 1–2; 4), 1–2 Peter, Revelation
Emotions (love, longing, joy, grief, fear, rage, pride, courage, shame, hatred, disgust)	A sense of humor, optimism, self-esteem, a sense of control over one's own life	A sense of peace, even in the midst of chaos, strength to face fears, peace of heart as the fruit of trust in God	Emotional balance, empathy, gratitude, inner peace	The stories of the patriarchs (Gen 12–50), Tobbit, Ruth, Psalms, Jesus' emotions, Paul's emotions (1–2 Corinthians; Philippians; 1 Thessalonians)

Research issues	Hofboll's theory	Religious resources	Spiritual resources	Biblical material
Interpersonal communication	Communication skills, support from coworkers, being well-liked, close relationship with at least one friend	–	–	Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4), Jesus, the sick, and the sinners, Paul's dialog with communities (1 Cor 8–11; Philippians; Philemon)
Forgiveness, crisis	Self-identity, the sense of purpose	Forgiveness of sins, the ability to forgive inspired by God's forgiveness	–	Isaac (Gen 26); David and Saul (1 Sam 24; 26), Jesus' parables, Jesus's cross, Paul and his communities (2 Cor 2; 7)
Fatherhood and the crisis of masculinity	Good relationships with children	–	–	Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22); David and his sons (2 Sam 13–19); Paul, the father of the communities
Gender roles, marriage and the family	A happy marriage, a stable family, a close relationship with at least one family member, a close relationship between the spouses, good health of family members	–	–	Adam and Eve (Gen 2–3), the patriarchs and their families, Proverbs 31, women in the Gospels, women in Paul (1 Cor 7; 11:2–16; 14:26; 1 Tim 2:11–14)
Relationships and community	Relationships, community building, belonging to a religious community, loyalty, friendship	Building a close relationship with God, motivation to do good, gift of the Holy Spirit	Sense of responsibility for the world, commitment to the common good, love for others, willingness to help others, ability to share the good, commitment to the common good, social responsibility and empathy	Protohistory (Gen 1–11), the stories of the patriarchs (Gen 12–50), the story of David (1–2 Samuel), Ruth, Jesus and the disciples, Paul and his communities (Romans 8; 1–2 Corinthians; Philippians; Philemon; Gal 5–6), the letters of Peter, James, Jude, John

Source: own research.

In the subsequent parts of the article, we will discuss the Hobfoll's theory, the selection of religious and spiritual resources, as well as the research instruments offered by psychological studies. They will be applied to the pioneering KUL project "The Relevance of the Bible for the Development of Religious and Spiritual Resources." Equipped with the tools of psychology, the project will examine how biblical texts can contribute to human development, relationship building, conflict management, and resilience at the times of crises.

3. The Researching Religious and Spiritual Resources: The Religious Resources Scale and the Spiritual Resources Scale

The second part of the article presents the results concerning the concept and validation of two tools for studying the regulatory functions of personality in the spiritual domain: The Religious Resources Scale and The Spiritual Resources Scale. The development of two independent methods for examining the regulatory functions of the religious-spiritual sphere stems from discussions in the academic literature, which suggest that spirituality should not be equated with religiosity. The spiritual domain encompasses human experiences related, among other things, to harmony with the world, openness, ethical sensitivity, altruism, inner freedom, gratitude, ethical norms, opposition to evil, and forgiveness. Religiosity, on the other hand, pertains to internal psychological processes associated with experiencing a specific relationship with God (Transcendence)—including aspects such as religious awareness and feelings, religious decision-making, bonds with a religious community, religious practices, morality, religious experiences, and forms of religious life. The distinction between these constructs suggests that spirituality, which reflects a person's pursuit of what is most important in life (the meaning, purpose, and values of human existence), is often connected with the concept of religiosity. On the one hand, religiosity manifests itself in the realm of spiritual activity, but on the other, it extends beyond it (e.g., in institutional or doctrinal aspects). Summarizing the discussion in the academic literature, it can be noted that both constructs—spirituality and religiosity—are complex and multidimensional. For this reason, they may overlap or be interrelated. Therefore, these terms should not be treated as synonymous when analysing the functioning of the religious-spiritual dimension of human life (Hill and Pargament 2003, 64–74; Emmons 2005, 731–45; Krok 2015, 196–203; Niewiadomska et al. 2022, 479–99).

An important justification for developing measurement tools such as the Religious Resources Scale and the Spiritual Resources Scale lies in the regulatory

functions of the religious-spiritual dimension in shaping human behaviour. This area of personality is closely linked to an individual's perception of the meaning of their existence and the selection of life goals. This connection is based on the principle that the religious-spiritual dimension of personality mobilizes individuals to engage in intentional behaviours—those that distinguish proactive human actions from merely reactive animal activity. As a result, a mature development of the religious-spiritual sphere leads individuals to maintain hope for solving their problems and/or achieving their intended goals. It also fosters motivation to seek constructive solutions to difficulties and/or increases the readiness to engage in prosocial behaviours, even in highly unfavourable circumstances. Another crucial aspect of the religious-spiritual sphere is its role in shaping internal standards by exerting a strong pressure to embody values and norms of behaviour derived from this dimension of personality. The regulatory mechanisms function in such a way that adhering to religious-spiritual values and norms leads to satisfaction and enhanced self-respect, whereas violating them results in guilt and lowered self-esteem (Milner et al. 2020, 1–10; Coppola et al. 2021, 626944; Jurek, Niewiadomska, and Szot 2023, e0291196).

The theoretical foundation of the developed tools is Stevan Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, Lilly, and Jackson 1992, 125–41). Within the framework of this theory, resources refer to factors present in the surrounding environment as well as bio-psycho-spiritual personal elements that play a crucial role in the following processes: (1) adaptation to diverse environmental demands; (2) maintaining a high quality of life, including aspects such as self-esteem, close relationships, and psychophysical health; (3) coping with difficulties and/or their consequences; (4) constructive development in various life conditions; and (5) achieving important life goals (Hobfoll 2002, 307–24; Freund 2008, 94–106).

Cross-cultural research findings indicate that resources have a diverse nature. Based on the cross-culturally validated Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Questionnaire (developed within COR theory), different resource structures have been identified. Conducted analyses have shown that resources can cluster into the following categories: material resources, personal resources, energetic resources, state resources, which include health-related resources and resources supporting social environment interactions (Hobfoll 2011a, 116–22). Another classification of adaptive and developmental assets, derived using the Conservation of Resources Questionnaire, allowed for the identification of resource structures related to: (a) self-management; (b) social status; (c) psychological resilience; (d) family support; (e) material status; (f) personal growth; and (g) community building (Chwaszcz, Bartczuk, and Niewiadomska 2019, 167–202). Thus, the resource structure identified in Hobfoll's original tool provides a strong rationale for developing methods to study religious and spiritual resources.

3.1. Instrument Development

The Questionnaire for Measuring Spiritual Resources and the Questionnaire for Measuring Religious Resources were developed to assess the significance of an individual's internal resources related to spirituality and religiosity. The development of the questionnaire began with the creation of a preliminary list of resources, which included 48 spiritual resources and 54 religious resources. This list was reviewed and validated by experts in the field. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, input was gathered from psychologists, sociologists, educators, theologians, and researchers specializing in this subject. In total, 20 competent judges participated in the assessment process. To evaluate the content validity of the measurement tool, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was used. This index is applied to determine the extent to which the test items fully represent the domain or construct being measured. The acceptable CVI threshold should be at least 0.75. Experts were asked to assess the relevance and clarity of each item using a Likert scale: For relevance, a 4-point Likert scale was used: (4) Highly relevant, (3) Moderately relevant, (2) Needs major revision, (1) Not relevant. For clarity, a 3-point Likert scale was used: (3) Very clear, (2) Needs some revision, (1) Unclear. The CVI index for each item was calculated by multiplying the number of expert ratings that assigned a score of 3 or 4 to the item and then dividing the total score by the number of items on the scale. Based on this analysis, 30 spiritual resources and 29 religious resources were selected for further evaluation. The overall CVI scores obtained were: 0.79 for the Spiritual Resources Scale and 0.82 for the Religious Resources Scale.

3.2. Study Design and Participants

A convenience sample of 354 respondents was recruited for the survey. All participants were enrolled in courses organized by KUL Studies for the Polish community and Poles abroad, run by KUL Polonia Center. The courses covered a variety of subjects, including artificial intelligence, speech therapy, mediation and negotiation, effective management, Polish language and culture, history of literature, reportage and interview studies, and Christianity and Judaism. Most of the study participants resided in Europe, specifically in Austria, Spain, England, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Ireland, France, Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Switzerland, Scotland, Ukraine, Belarus, the Netherlands, and Russia. Additionally, some participants were from the United States, Argentina, and India.

Table 2. Characteristics of the study group (N = 354)

Variable	Category	N/M	%/SD
Gender	Female	295	83.3
	Male	59	16.7
Age	–	45.24	8.91
Education	Vocational	30	8.5
	Secondary	218	61.6
	Higher	106	29.9
Martial Status	Single	58	16.4
	Married	238	67.2
	Divorced	42	11.9
	Widowed	14	4.0
	Religious Order	2	0.6
Place of Residence	City	302	85.3
	Vilage	52	14.7
Religion	Catholicism	326	92.1
	Orthodox Christianity	6	1.7
	Other Religion	2	0.6
	Non-Religious (Atheism, Agnosticism)	4	1.1
	Christianity (General)	14	4.0
	Unsure	2	0.6
Religious Belief	Deeply Religious	124	35.0
	Religious	211	59.6
	Rather Non-Religious	15	4.2
	Completely Non-Religious	4	1.1

Source: own research.

3.3. Data Collection

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was anonymous and voluntary. The research was supervised by scientists from the Institute of Sociological Sciences and the Institute of Psychology at KUL. The study was conducted electronically using LimeSurvey, an open-source software platform designed for creating and administering online surveys and questionnaires. This tool allowed researchers to customize the study to meet the needs of both researchers

and participants. Before data entry, all collected responses were reviewed for completeness, and incomplete questionnaires were discarded. During the data collection process, a researcher was available to assist participants in case of any questions or concerns. All data were stored in a secure, encrypted database, accessible only to the research team. No personal data were collected. The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used for the investigation of construct validity. EFA made it possible to check whether there were grounds for extracting latent structures on the basis of observed correlations between observable variables. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of the correlation matrix, the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin statistic (values between 0.7–0.8 acceptable, and values above 0.9 are excellent) were used to assess the validity of extracting hidden factors. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the scale. Values above 0.7 are considered acceptable. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between the results of the scales measuring spiritual and religious resources and the results of the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) questionnaire. A significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ was considered statistically significant. Analyses were performed using IBM SPSS 29 and IBM SPSS Amos (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

3.5. Construct Validity

In the first stage, the assumptions for factor analysis were verified as part of the structural validity assessment. For the Spiritual Resources Scale, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.957, indicating an excellent fit for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; $\chi^2 = 13{,}015.693$), confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis. During the analysis, only factors with an eigenvalue of 1 or higher were retained. This method, commonly used in exploratory factor analysis, is based on the principle that each principal component should explain at least as much variance as one original variable. Using this criterion, two factors were extracted, which together explained 70.05% of the variance. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 20.31 and explained 67.69% of the variance. It consisted of 17 items. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.310 and explained 4.37% of the variance. It consisted of 6 items. The factor loadings for Factor 1 ranged between 0.896 and 0.615, while for Factor 2, they ranged between 0.809 and 0.672. Items with factor loadings below 0.6 or those that had strong cross-loadings on both factors were removed from the scale.

Table 3. Factor analysis results for the Religious Resources Scale

Religious resources	Factor	
	1	2
Eucharist as the source and summit of spiritual life	0.837	–
Living in the state of sanctifying grace	0.835	–
Regular sacramental practice	0.821	–
Hope of eternal life	0.783	–
Forgiveness of sins	0.752	–
Gift of the Holy Spirit	0.717	–
Viewing suffering in the context of salvation	0.715	–
Ability to transform the heart through grace	0.709	–
Remembrance of God's miracles	0.703	–
Fidelity to the teaching of the Church	0.702	–
Faith in God	0.698	–
God's mercy	0.688	–
Trust in God's providence	0.687	–
Confidence that God hears prayers	0.650	–
Ability to perceive the signs of God's providence	0.646	–
Openness to the action of the Holy Spirit in daily life	0.636	0.616
Sense of being instruments of God's love	0.635	0.621
Confidence that God hears prayers	0.634	–
A sense of God-given purpose	0.616	0.601
Ability to grow spiritually in difficult times	0.615	–
The certainty that every situation makes sense in God's eyes	–	–
A sense of peace, even in chaos	–	0.809
Strength to fight temptations	–	0.779
Strength to face fears	–	0.777
Ability to see the good in difficult situations	–	0.765
Awareness of being loved unconditionally by God	–	0.753
Motivation to do good	–	0.672
Peace of heart as the fruit of trust in God	0.626	0.644
The ability to forgive inspired by God's forgiveness	–	–
A sense of God's guidance	–	–

Source: own research.

Based on the results of the factor analysis, two main factors can be distinguished:

- Factor 1—"Rooted in Faith and Sacraments." This factor encompasses aspects related to the Eucharist, sacraments, faith, hope, God's mercy, inner transformation, and trust in Divine Providence. It represents a theological dimension, grounded in Church doctrine.
- Factor 2—"Personal Experience of Relationship with God." This factor includes elements such as a sense of peace, strength to resist temptations, awareness of being loved, the ability to see goodness, motivation to do good, and a sense of divine guidance. This dimension pertains to spiritual resilience and personal experience of a relationship with God.

For the Religious Resources Scale, the KMO value was 0.874, indicating a good fit for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; $\chi^2 = 6{,}832.766$), confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Three factors were extracted, explaining a total of 54.82% of the variance. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 11.56 and explained 39.86% of the variance. It consisted of 7 items. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 2.778 and explained 9.58% of the variance. It consisted of 4 items. Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.563 and explained 5.389% of the variance. The factor loadings were as follows: Factor 1 ranged from 0.759 to 0.609, Factor 2 from 0.786 to 0.635, and Factor 3 from 0.764 to 0.607.

Table 4. Factor analysis results for the Spiritual Resources Scale

Spiritual resources	Factor		
	1	2	3
Self-acceptance	0.703	–	–
Self-confidence	0.689	–	–
Emotional balance	0.686	–	–
Ability to accept change	0.658	–	–
Acceptance of reality	0.638	–	–
Serenity of mind	0.635	–	–
Openness to experience	0.606	–	–
Perseverance in difficulties	–	–	–
Patience	–	–	–
Courage	–	–	–
Seeking inner peace	–	–	–
Humility	–	0.786	–
Responsibility for one's own life	–	0.736	–

Spiritual resources	Factor		
	1	2	3
A purpose of living	–	0.642	–
A sense of responsibility for the world	–	0.635	–
Finding beauty in the everyday	–	–	–
Hope	–	–	–
Empathy	–	–	–
Gratitude	–	–	–
Ability to pray or meditate	–	–	–
Commitment to the common good	–	–	0.764
Love for others	–	–	0.688
Willingness to help others	–	–	0.658
Ability to feel gratitude for life	–	–	0.658
Ability to share the good	–	–	0.625
Commitment to the common good	–	–	0.607
A sense of belonging to the community of the Church	–	–	–
Openness to transcendence	–	–	–
Capacity to forgive	–	–	–

Source: own research.

Based on the results of the factor analysis, three main factors can be distinguished:

- Factor 1—"Inner Stability." This factor includes self-acceptance, emotional balance, peace of mind, self-confidence, adaptability to change, acceptance of reality, patience, and perseverance. These are qualities associated with inner stability, psychological resilience, and the ability to cope with difficulties.
- Factor 2—"Spiritual Responsibility." This factor includes elements such as gratitude, hope, love for others, spiritual wisdom, humility, a sense of belonging to a community, empathy, and prayer. It reflects attitudes and values related to spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and faith as a force that strengthens bonds.
- Factor 3—"Social Responsibility and Empathy." This factor reflects commitment to the common good, willingness to help others, and a sense of belonging to a community. The resources associated with this factor indicate prosocial attitudes, care for others, and gratitude for life and interpersonal relationships.

3.6. Internal Consistency

For the Spiritual Resources Scale, the overall Cronbach's Alpha was 0.975. At the factor level, Factor 1 demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.975, while Factor 2 had a reliability coefficient of 0.920. For the Religious Resources Scale, the overall Cronbach's Alpha was 0.903. The internal consistency for Factor 1 was 0.831, for Factor 2 it was 0.823, and for Factor 3 it was 0.856.

Table 5. Reliability analysis for the Religious Resources Scale

No.	Religious resources	Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1	Eucharist as the source and summit of spiritual life	0.794	0.976
2	Living in the state of sanctifying grace	0.842	0.976
3	Regular sacramental practice	0.831	0.976
4	Hope of eternal life	0.823	0.976
5	Forgiveness of sins	0.828	0.976
6	Gift of the Holy Spirit	0.860	0.976
7	Viewing suffering in the context of salvation	0.734	0.977
8	Ability to transform the heart through grace	0.861	0.976
9	Remembrance of God's miracles	0.813	0.976
10	Fidelity to the teaching of the Church	0.783	0.976
11	Faith in God	0.789	0.976
12	God's mercy	0.823	0.976
13	Trust in God's providence	0.856	0.976
14	Confidence that God hears prayers	0.815	0.976
15	Ability to perceive the signs of God's providence	0.862	0.976
16	Confidence that God hears prayers	0.830	0.976
17	Ability to grow spiritually in difficult times	0.805	0.976
18	A sense of peace, even in chaos	0.710	0.977
19	Strength to fight temptations	0.738	0.976
20	Strength to face fears	0.739	0.977
21	Ability to see the good in difficult situations	0.735	0.977
22	Awareness of being loved unconditionally by God	0.762	0.976
23	Motivation to do good	0.709	0.977

Source: own research.

Table 6. Reliability analysis for the Spiritual Resources Scale

No.	Spiritual resources	Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1	Self-acceptance	0.577	0.897
2	Self-confidence	0.428	0.902
3	Emotional balance	0.541	0.898
4	Ability to accept change	0.467	0.900
5	Acceptance of reality	0.507	0.899
6	Serenity of mind	0.644	0.895
7	Openness to experience	0.425	0.902
8	Spiritual wisdom	0.582	0.897
9	Humility	0.612	0.896
10	Responsibility for one's own life	0.584	0.897
11	A purpose of living	0.654	0.895
12	A sense of responsibility for the world	0.529	0.899
13	Commitment to the common good	0.651	0.895
14	Love for others	0.626	0.896
15	Willingness to help others	0.574	0.897
16	Ability to feel gratitude for life	0.654	0.894
17	Ability to share the good	0.585	0.897

Source: own research.

3.7. Criterion Validity

As part of the criterion validation, the scores of the Spiritual Resources Scale and the Religious Resources Scale were correlated with the results of the DUREL questionnaire.

The DUREL questionnaire consists of five questions and is designed to assess three main aspects of religiosity: Organized Religious Activity (ORA; 1 question), Non-Organized Religious Activity (NORA; 1 question), and Intrinsic Religiosity (IR; 3 questions). ORA refers to public religious activities, such as attending religious services or participating in other group-based religious activities (e.g., prayer groups). NORA includes private religious activities performed at home, such as praying, studying the Holy Scriptures, or listening to religious radio broadcasts. IR evaluates an individual's personal religious commitment or religious motivation.

Table 7. Correlations between the Spiritual Resources Scale, Religious Resources Scale, and DUREL Scale Scores

Variables	ORA	NORA	IR
Rootedness in faith and sacraments	0.418	0.345	0.435
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Personal experience of relationship with God	0.366	0.313	0.362
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Spiritual Resources—overall score	0.420	0.349	0.432
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Inner stability	0.120	0.055	0.171
	0.027	0.306	0.002
Spiritual responsibility	0.276	0.210	0.313
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Social responsibility and empathy	0.302	0.181	0.275
	<0.001	0.001	<0.001
Religious Resources—overall score	0.270	0.169	0.293
	<0.001	0.002	<0.001

Source: own research.

The correlation analysis results indicate significant relationships between the ORA, NORA, and IR variables from the DUREL questionnaire and the various aspects of spiritual and religious resources. The highest correlations were observed for "Rooted in Faith and Sacraments" and the overall Spiritual Resources score. This suggests that individuals with higher levels of religiosity tend to have more developed spiritual resources. Personal Experience of Relationship with God also showed significant but slightly lower correlations across all three DUREL subscales (ORA, NORA, and IR). Inner Stability was significantly related only to ORA and IR, with the strongest correlation found for IR. Spiritual Responsibility and Social Responsibility & Empathy were clearly correlated with all three religiosity indicators, with higher Pearson's correlation values noted for ORA and IR. These findings indicate that religiosity and spiritual resources are interconnected, with organized religious activity and intrinsic religiosity playing a particularly strong role in the development of spiritual and religious resources.

4. Conclusions

For several decades, biblical studies have been opening up to cooperation with social sciences, particularly psychology. Topics such as emotions, interpersonal communication, ways of coping with stress and trauma, personal development, the pursuit of happiness, and relationship building are featured in studies that examine texts using positive psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, and social sciences. However, it is rare to find joint research by biblical scholars and psychologists that empirically tests the impact of biblical content. An opportunity for such research is provided by the KUL project, "The Relevance of the Bible for the Development of Religious and Spiritual Resources." It offers a real opportunity for biblical studies to enter into an interdisciplinary dialogue with the social sciences, mainly psychology and sociology, by examining the impact of the Bible on the well-being of individuals and communities and the effectiveness of biblical models of relationship building and crisis management (Hobfoll 2011b, 127–47; Hall et al. 2015, 561–68; Fel, Niewiadomska, and Lenart-Kłoś 2022).

By using the Religious Resources Scale and/or the Spiritual Resources Scale to deepen reflection on biblical texts, it can be shown that the Bible has much to offer to contemporary society. It can enrich the network of resources necessary for adaptation to various life situations, increase psychological resilience in coping with problems, reduce civilizational stress, and/or help building relationships with other people (Chen, Westman, and Hobfoll 2015, 95–105; Niewiadomska and Jurek 2022).

It should also be emphasized that the research approach proposed in the article allows for the methodological distinctiveness of biblical and social studies to be preserved in the scientific process. The results obtained on the basis of separate methodologies and studies should be confronted, compared and/or supplemented so that, thanks to the interdisciplinary approach, innovative conclusions can be drawn in comparison with research conducted in a single discipline. Dialogue between biblical studies and psychology can help identify personality factors that contribute to multidimensional human development and help people constructively solve the problems they encounter (Hobfoll 2011a, 116–22; 2014, 21–32; Niewiadomska 2022).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Marcin Kowalski: Methodology, Writing original draft, review & editing, Supervision, Bibliography search, Corresponding author | **Iwona Niewiadomska:** Data collection, Methodology, Writing original draft, Supervision, Bibliography search | **Mirosław Kalinowski:** Methodology, Writing original draft, review & editing, Supervision | **Mirosław Wróbel:** Writing original draft, Review of the terminology concerning religious and spiritual resources | **Krzysztof Jurek:** Data collection, Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing original draft, review & editing, Corresponding author | **Wojciech Wciseł:** Data collection, Writing original draft.

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