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Report from the conference entitled
“The threat of COVID-19 and the threat of climate change in the light of the results of psychological research”
(Warsaw, April 11, 2022)

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the initiation of research conducted worldwide by scientists in various fields. Psychological researchers have described the mental state of individuals and its fluctuations (e.g., Aymerich et al., 2022; Eisenbeck et al., 2021). They have also analyzed reactions to government recommendations and the degree of compliance with them, looking for answers to questions about the determinants of these reactions (Cypryańska & Nezlek, 2020; Wąsowicz et al., 2021). Some of these researchers have also investigated whether experiencing the threat of a pandemic triggers greater concern for health and the environment, which translates into a change in behavior towards sustainable consumption conducive to green transformation.

The universality of the threat of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has provoked researchers to create informal and formal consortiums seeking answers to various research questions. Members of the International Panel on Behavior Change considered the interdependencies that may occur in response to distinct types of threats. The first IPBC report reflects on the factors contributing to and hindering behavior change in the context of the COVID-19 threat and climate change (https://www.ipbc.science/about-us/thematic-report-1-covid/).

Furthermore, the Foundation for the Development of Polish Psychology, named after Tadeusz Tomaszewski, in cooperation with the Kozminsky University and the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Warsaw, organized a conference entitled “The threat of COVID-19 and the threat of climate change in the light of the results of psychological research.” The conference took place on April 11, 2022. It was attended by many researchers representing research centers from all over Poland: Center for Climate Action and Social Transformations (4CAST) of the SWPS University, the Empowering Children Foundation, 1 Correspondence address: gwasowicz@kozminski.edu.pl.
the Institute of Psychology of the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Pedagogy, Institute of Psychology of the University of Gdansk, Institute of Psychology of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Robert Zajonc Institute of Social Studies of the University of Warsaw, Department of Economic Psychology of the Kozminski University, Faculty of Social Sciences of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, and the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Warsaw. Two presentations were created in cooperation with researchers from the Department of Clinical Psychology at Columbia University and the University of Padua.

The conference began with words addressed to the participants by representatives of the Foundation’s Council. Professor Barbara Bokus welcomed the participants, reminding them that the conference is taking place in the 22nd year since the passing of Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski, patron of the conference. Professor Zofia Ratajczak recalled Tadeusz Tomaszewski’s activity theory (1963) and the situation model, pointing out that they are relevant in the context of individuals functioning in crises and through them, Polish psychology contributed significantly to global psychological thought (Bokus & Kosowska, 2018; Kurcz & Kądzielawa, 2002).

The first presentation concerned the relationship between personality and compliance with the restrictions introduced during the pandemic (Zajenkowski et al., 2020). The authors showed, among others, that in a so-called strong situation (such as a pandemic), personality traits are less important for human behavior than situational factors. The willingness to take protective behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic was also the subject of the second speech (Macko, 2022), which showed that this tendency is related to the importance of community contribution and individualistic moral values. The authors of the third presentation (Zawadzka et al., 2022) focused on the predictors of media use that give a sense of security, analyzing the role of life goals and anxiety. The results of this research are presented in this volume. The fourth presentation, based on published results, described the trajectories of changes in the severity of depression and generalized anxiety symptoms in adult Poles during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gambin et al., 2021).

The second part of the conference touched on the relationship between responses to two threats: COVID-19 and climate change. The authors of the first presentation (Cypryańska & Wójcik, 2022) observed a high readiness to change behavior towards a more pro-ecological one during the first months of the pandemic. They also discussed the conditions under which this change could be sustained. The conference ended with the presentation of research results on the perception of the threat of COVID-19 and environmental pollution and the response of individuals to these threats (Wąsowicz, 2022). They are presented in the last article of this volume.

The conference conclusions indicated the great importance of psychological research for understanding the factors determining individuals’ reactions to threats and for developing programs supporting behavioral changes. The conference organizers, speakers and all participants were thanked for their contribution to the preparation of the conference and speeches and for participating in interesting discussions.
References


Tomaszewski, T. (1963). *Wstęp do psychologii [Introduction to psychology]*. PWN.


