

Being or having? – young adults life orientations and their satisfaction with life

Mieć czy być? – orientacje życiowe młodych dorosłych a ich satysfakcja z życia

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Abstract

Purpose: The main purpose of the study was to examine if life orientations of young adults (“being” or “having”) differentiate respondents with respect to the degree of life satisfaction. **Material and methods:** A total of 187 persons (143 woman and 44 man) aged 18 to 29 years were included in the study. The following methods were used in the study: sociodemographic questionnaire, Satisfaction with Life Scale by E. Diener, R.A. Emmons, R.J. Larson, S. Griffin and the Being and Having Orientations Scale of B. Grulkowski. **Results:** A life orientation is a kind of behaviour regulator, that set the direction of human activity. There is a distinction between a “being” orientation (which refers to spiritual values) and a “having” orientation (which refers to possessing material things) that are manifested in a variety of experiences, and is related to human thinking, feeling, and acting. Therefore, a life orientation may play a really important role in the satisfaction with life. Most of the respondents were characterised by a mixed orientation (“being–having”) and an average level of satisfaction with life. There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction with life according to gender and the subject of studies. It was shown that people with the “being” orientation have greater satisfaction with life than people with the “having” orientation. The obtained results, which show no differences in satisfaction with life according to gender, are consistent with the earlier studies. And so is the result that people with the dominant of the “being” orientation have greater satisfaction with life, than those with the “having” orientation. **Conclusions:** Only few papers about “being” and “having” orientations have been published so far since the method used in the study occurs only in the Polish language and there is no data about its adaptations in different countries. Results of conducted research set the direction of educational impact and give the scientific basis for a well-known saying: money can't buy happiness.

Keywords: life orientations, being, having, satisfaction with life, young adults

Streszczenie

Cel: Zasadniczym celem prezentowanych badań było sprawdzenie, czy orientacje życiowe młodych dorosłych („być” czy „mieć”) różnicują badanych pod względem nasilenia satysfakcji z życia. **Materiał i metoda:** Łącznie zbadano 187 osób (143 kobiety i 44 mężczyzn) w wieku od 18 do 29 lat. W badaniach zostały wykorzystane następujące metody: Skala Satysfakcji z Życia (Satisfaction with Life Scale, SWLS) autorstwa E. Dienera, R.A. Emmons, R.J. Larson i S. Griffin oraz Skala Postaw Być i Mieć autorstwa B. Grulkowskiego. **Wyniki:** Orientacja życiowa stanowi pewien rodzaj regulatora zachowania, który nadaje kierunek ludzkiej aktywności. Można mówić o rozróżnieniu pomiędzy orientacją „być” (odnosi się do wartości duchowych) oraz „mieć” (odnosi się do posiadania rzeczy materialnych), które przejawiają się w różnych doświadczeniach i są związane z ludzkim myśleniem, odczuwaniem i działaniem. Dlatego orientacja życiowa może odgrywać bardzo ważną rolę w satysfakcji z życia jednostki. W świetle uzyskanych wyników badań większość respondentów charakteryzowała się orientacją mieszaną („być–mieć”) i średnim nasileniem satysfakcji z życia. Nie występowały istotne różnice w nasileniu satysfakcji z życia ze względu na płeć i kierunek studiów badanych. Natomiast wykazano, że osoby o orientacji „być” miały większą satysfakcję z życia niż osoby o orientacji „mieć”. Brak różnic w satysfakcji z życia ze względu na płeć jest zgodny z wynikami wcześniej przeprowadzonych badań, podobnie jak wynik dotyczący związku orientacji „być” z większą satysfakcją z życia. **Wnioski:** Dotychczas opublikowano nieliczne artykuły na temat orientacji „być” i „mieć”, z uwagi na fakt, że metoda zastosowana w badaniu występuje tylko w języku polskim i nie ma danych o jej adaptacji w innych krajach. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań pozwalają na ustalenie kierunku oddziaływań edukacyjnych i dają podstawy naukowe dla znanego powiedzenia: pieniądze szczęścia nie dają.

Słowa kluczowe: orientacje życiowe, być, mieć, satysfakcja z życia, młodzi dorośli

INTRODUCTION

The role of psychological orientations

Changes taking place in the postmodern society in all areas of life imply, along with the positive consequences, dangerous tendencies of growing consumerist and egoistic attitudes (Wagner, 2005) with the pre-eminence of fast and immediate possession (Zawadzka and Lewandowska-Walter, 2016). Within this context, one should ask themselves about psychosocial functioning of a human. It is worth reflecting on what constitutes the basic drive of human behaviour, why he or she behaves in this manner and not differently. Also, is he or she satisfied with actions undertaken by them?

In the search for answers to these questions, one may refer to the world of human values. A human has a remarkably valuable property of orienting one's life by making choices on the plane of values (Zawadzka, 2006). When applying this property to the dimensions of an individual being, one may assume as – Anna M. Zawadzka (2006) – that an expression of what is valuable is a life orientation as a certain adjustment of human behaviour in socially determined conditions. A life orientation, being relatively stable, provides direction to a human's activity and constitutes also an "obligation" to comply with specific principles and patterns of acting.

Taking into consideration a criterium of variation in value content, one may distinguish between two possible planes of human existence in the world, namely orientations of "being" and "having." An individual's orientation expressing his or her attitude towards another person, the world of material objects and ideas as well as themselves may, therefore, be placed at a specific point along a continuum: from attitudes delineated by the rules of possession, to relations resulting from the idea of being (Grulkowski, 1995). The orientations of "being" and "having" are manifested in all areas of human activity (Grulkowski, 1996) and they can be perceived in the way of learning about the world.

Empirical research on life orientations grew in importance in the mid-1990s when Bronisław Grulkowski (1995) developed the Being and Having Orientations Scale (Skala Postaw Być i Mieć, SPBiM) and published articles focused on the subject matter. The significance of research on "being" and "having" orientations began to be appreciated at that time. This scale hasn't been translated into another language. It was the works of Grulkowski (1995) which systematised both notions in the pedagogical and psychological literature. The author (Grulkowski, 1995) presents a distinction between "being" and "having," also emphasizing their other dimensions such as subjectivity and objectivity, authenticity or its lack as well as stability and change. The above-mentioned distinction of "being" and "having" was discussed not only from the perspective of two different hierarchies of values (e.g. Koziński, 1987) but also as life goals (Łopatkowa, 1992) and contradictory life orientations (e.g. Fromm, 1989; Marcel, 1986).

A particular kind of relationship occurs between the notions of value and orientation. Studying orientations enables, regardless of additional empirical data, to conclude on the person's values. The present paper approaches "being" and "having" from the categories of multidimensional attitudes which are manifested in various existentially significant human experiences (Grulkowski, 1996). An orientation refers to a more or less consistent complex of cognitive, motivational, and moral attitudes to a given situation that serves to guide one's behaviour and responses in that situation (Deutsch, 2015).

Psychological concept of "being" and "having" orientations

Considering classic approach in the field of "being" and "having" life orientations, Erich Fromm (1989) presented the broadest psychological concept and defined "being" and "having" life orientations as two basic ways of existence, two different manners of orientation to oneself and to the world, two different types of characterological orientation. The prevalence of one of them determines the whole of what a person thinks, feels and how he or she acts.

In a detailed description of life orientations Fromm, (1989) defines the "being" orientation as: "a way of living in which one has nothing and wants to have nothing; but one is full of joy, uses one's skills creatively and is in communion with the world" (Fromm, 1989). The "being" orientation is conditioned by the human's skills of critical thinking, freedom and his or her independence. It is an internal human activity which does not assume creating useful objects. It places emphasis on experiencing, being and the sense of existence. The "being" orientation thus constitutes a foundation for spiritual values (e.g. Marcel, 1962). The discussed orientation consists of two complementary aspects: a live, trusting and authentic contact with the world in full internal dedication and being authentic, free from various appearances (Grulkowski, 2007). A sense of responsibility for another human as well as respect and the aspiration to recognise this person are predominant here. The "being" orientation is an attitude of love and solidarity with other people in which an individual does not want to be happier than others (Marcel, 1986).

A "having" orientation is depicted by Fromm (1989, p. 61) as: "an attitude to the world, the acquisition and possession, the attitude in which I want everyone and everything, including myself to be my possession" [...]. "In this way of living the only thing which counts is acquiring goods and an unlimited right to keep what one has gained." A "having" orientation excludes others and requires no other efforts from me, except for the one which is to maintain the material status or to make a productive use of it." One may even state that a person shows no consideration towards the surrounding world, does not respect it and does not want to learn about it, he or she wants only to possess it. Relationships with other people thus become a tool

to rule others and to establish one's superiority over others. Another person seems to be a rival in competition for "ruling over the world" (Marcel, 1986).

"Being" and "having" orientations in cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions

When comparing both orientations from a cognitive dimension, the "being" orientation is characterized by a phrase "I know", emphasising a certain dynamic and creative cognitive process which entails an awareness of one's fallibility, in which one comes to grasp the truth more and more fully. According to this reasoning, the purpose of way of living orientated to "being" is not learning "the absolute truth" but a consistent aspiration for the truth, as well as deeper and deeper knowledge (Fromm, 1989). In cognitive terms, the "having" orientation may be characterised as a certain state of possessing something (e.g. knowledge) which may be used in any way, and which can be manipulated for one's own benefit. In this case, knowledge serves to increase a person's self-worth and to provide him or her with comfort (Fromm, 1989).

In emotional terms, the "being" orientation mainly refers to experiences: a basic feeling of the goodness of the universe and openness towards it. In accordance with this orientation, a person is free from egocentricity and experiences a feeling of communion with everything that exists. As a result, their experiences are dominated by joy and elation making him or her share with the world all which is best in him or her. In such kinds of experiences, despite the fact that a person forgets about himself or herself and his or her "I," he or she experiences happiness (Fromm, 1989). Just as the feeling of joy is basic to the "being" orientation, in the "having" orientation, anxiety is the predominant feeling. The orientation is, in its essence, directed to striving for dominance through possession, which is frequently understood by a person as a guarantee of stability, and it is precisely this illusion which becomes a source of the above-mentioned anxiety. Even a high standing of a person, if it has been achieved by possession, is not stable when a person is in danger of dying, whereas objects may be destroyed. Consequently, a person with the "having" orientation is afraid of everything new, and seeks a sense of security in objects which are defined, stable, ordered and controllable (Fromm, 1989). A person becomes passive with respect to various aspects of reality, concentrating on making everyone and everything his or her possession (Grulkowski, 2007). He or she will never be satisfied with what he or she has already possessed, since their sense of identity is related to the continuous collecting of goods. The desire for material objects evokes a desire to exercise control over other people. Within the context of suffering and death, a person orientated to "being" assumes a courageous and an unworried attitude towards one's own suffering and death (Fromm, 1989), while for persons orientated to "having,"

suffering brings tragedy, unpredictability, uncertainty to life and it makes them aware of their loneliness and powerlessness.

In a behavioural dimension of "being" and "having" orientations, a significant role is played by both behaviours themselves as well as a readiness for specific behaviours which belong to the essence of the orientation. An external behaviour indicates an orientation which is conditioned by a number of additional circumstances (Mika, 1987). "Being" and "having" are, therefore, considered relatively stable life goals and means of their achievement noticeable in preferences, aspirations and situations involving choice (Łyżwińska-Kustra, 2003).

Empirical research on "being" and "having" orientations

Empirical research to date connected "being" and "having" orientations with valuing process (Grulkowski, 1995), needs (Grulkowski, 1996), purpose in life (Grulkowski, 1996), independence (Deutsch, 2015), temporality, religiosity (Maltby et al., 2010) and the image of the world presented in the media and computer games as well as with emotional skills and social competences. Research indicates that significant personality differences occur between people with a "being" orientation and with a "having" orientation (Oleś, 2000).

In the light of research, people representing the "having" orientation were involved only in matters which concerned them directly and could bring them tangible benefits. They treated material resources possessed as the highest good. They also perceived themselves from the angle of possessed objects. They treated other people as a background for their actions and used them to achieve their aims (Wawrzyniak, 1992).

People high in the "being" orientation compared to people with the "having" orientation are characterised by a lower level of neuroticism and a higher level of extraversion, openness to experience and agreeability (Zbonikowski, 2014). In addition, a growth of agreeability, extraversion and openness entails an increase in the "being" orientation, while a growth of neuroticism is accompanied by a tendency to the "having" orientation.

Results of research conducted on a group of Pedagogy students showed that conscientiousness is unrelated to the "being" orientation. In the cited research, the indicators of this orientation proved to be: agreeability (moderate predictive power), neuroticism (a weak predictor) and openness to experience (a weak predictor) (Zbonikowski, 2014).

"Being" and "having" orientations in relation to life satisfaction

Based on the above-presented theoretical approaches to life orientations of "being" and "having," one may conclude that an orientation internalised by a person can have a decisive influence on his or her life satisfaction which constitutes

METHODS

a relatively stable cognitive component of a person's subjective well-being. It refers to a manner of judging in which an individual assesses the quality of his or her life based on his or her own unique set of criteria. It is a conscious and cognitive process of judging one's life with respect to personal criteria (Pavot and Diener, 1993). People are characterised by various success standards, and for this reason a global assessment of their lives is more significant to them than an assessment of their respective areas which results from a long-term reflection (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Life satisfaction understood in this terms should be treated as an overall assessment which is relatively stable (Basińska and Łuczak, 2014) and depends on long-term elements such as personality traits, mid-term ones, for example, life events and cognitive schemas as well as short-term ones, for instance, a current mood (Pavot and Diener, 1993).

Life satisfaction is determined to a considerable extent by personality traits and the level of self-acceptance (Diener et al., 2003), but it is also influenced by numerous variables and complex cultural, personality and environmental relationships (Diener et al., 1999). It correlates positively with faith in eternal life (Wnuk et al., 2013) and one can connect it with secular values and purpose in life (Diener, 1984). Additionally, it facilitates fulfilling values which correspondent with personal development and involve internal standards of assessment (Mudyń and Pietras, 2007).

In the majority of industrialised societies, being in constant development, people more often reveal traits of the "having" orientation. Owning and making a profit are rights and even obligations of an individual. Life is treated as a capital which ought to bring a profit. It concerns, in particular, decisions taken by young adults beginning their professional careers, which can be related to the values of possession naturally, since material goods possessed may determine their basic life decisions (Zbonikowski, 2014). That is not to say, however, that becoming an adult entails complete dissociating oneself completely from spirituality and experiencing (Zbonikowski, 2014). What is more, in adulthood the orientation towards the world seems to play a role in the assessment of one's life according to one's own criteria that is in the assessment of one's life satisfaction.

Individuals may differ in their readiness and ability to use the different orientations as a result of their cultural backgrounds, their personal histories, and their genetic endowments, people participate in diverse social relations in complex societies and these varied social relations require, and hence induce, different psychological orientations (Deutsch, 2015). The theoretical premises presented above lay foundations for the following research questions:

1. Which of the orientations, "being" or "having," is predominant in a group of modern young adults?
2. What is the life satisfaction level among young adults?
3. Do orientations of people towards reality ("having" or "being") differentiate respondents with respect to the degree of their life satisfaction?

The research employed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) created by E. Diener, R.A. Emmons, R.J. Larson, S. Griffin and adapted by Z. Juczyński (2001), the Being and Having Orientations Scale of B. Grulkowski as well as an own questionnaire. The applied scales are standardised scales used in psychological research.

The SWLS serves to assess life satisfaction resulting from the comparison of one's situation with standards established by oneself. The measure consists of five items assessed on a seven-point scale. Psychometric values of the scale in Polish version are similar to the original. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the SWLS in the group of 317 people was 0.81. The studies of scale validity proved to be satisfactory as well. The Polish version of the scale has temporary norms. The result of evaluation is a general indicator of satisfaction with one's life.

In the conducted research, the reliability of the SWLS measured with Cronbach's alpha was 0.77.

The Being and Having Orientations Scale of B. Grulkowski (2007) is used to measure "having" and "being" orientations with the provision that they are two ends of one continuum. The theoretical premises of the measure have been drawn from personalistic philosophy and existential psychology. The measure is composed of 25 items: one of which is a non-diagnostic, buffer item and the remaining ones indicate one of the above-mentioned orientations, in equal halves.

A respondent is supposed to take position on the items by choosing a selected answer on a seven-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Calculations are based on the attached key and a high score is indicative of a "being" orientation, while a low score of a "having" orientation. The questionnaire is aimed at the study of adults both on an individual and a group basis. The reliability and validity coefficients of the measure are satisfactory. Temporary sten norms have been developed for women and men aged 20 to 45, and on account of the need to improve the method as well as to conduct normalisation research, it is used as a valuable research instrument. A high level of a "having" orientation entails a low "being" orientation and vice versa, a low level of a "having" orientation involves the prevalence of a "being" orientation, whereas a continuum of orientations with varying degrees of "being" and "having" is situated between extreme values.

In the conducted research the reliability of the Being and Having Orientations Scale measured with Cronbach's alpha was 0.67.

In order to collect sociometric data an own questionnaire has been applied.

A total number of 187 people aged 18 to 29 participated in the study. A mean age of the respondents was $M = 20.47$ (standard deviation, $SD = 1.64$). Women constituted 76.47% of the respondents ($n = 143$) and men 23.53% ($n = 44$). Most respondents had secondary school

education (95.72%; $n = 179$). Students of Medicine courses such as Emergency Medical Services as well as Optics and Optometry constituted 45.46% ($n = 85$) and Psychology students 54.54% ($n = 102$). The places of respondents' residence varied: respondents who lived in the cities with over 250,000 residents amounted to 30.48% ($n = 57$), 21.39% ($n = 40$) constituted villagers and 20.86% ($n = 39$) people from places with a population of up to 25,000 residents.

RESULTS

Existential orientations of respondents

With reference to a procedure applied by Barbara Właszczuk (by Juczynski, 2001), people were divided into three groups characterised by orientation of "having," "being" and "having-being." It was performed based on the calculation of mean (M) and SD obtained from the Being and Having Orientations Scale for the whole examined group. People with a score lower than mean minus a half of standard deviation were classified as a "having" group, while people with scores higher than mean plus a half of standard deviation – as a "being" group. An analysis of variance for a score result of the "having-being" scale was performed due to the attitude in the study group ($F = 188.19$; $p < 0.0001$; $df = 2$; $SS = 30,042$; $MS = 1502$). The third group of "having-being" constituted people who obtained scores in between (Tab. 1). In this way one classified:

1. people with a "having" orientation – $M - 0.5 SD$ ($n = 51$);
 2. people with a "having-being" orientation – people who obtained scores in between ($n = 82$);
 3. people with a "being" orientation – $M + 0.5 SD$ ($n = 54$).
- In the light of analyses, the "being" orientation has been represented by a slightly larger proportion of male subjects. On the other hand, the "having" orientation by a slightly larger per cent of women (Tab. 2).

Considering the size of place of residence, with the number of residents taken into account, the largest per cent of respondents representing the "being" orientation were people living in the cities with over 250,000 residents. By contrast,

Existential orientations "having-being"	"Having" ($n = 51$)		"Having-being" ($n = 82$)		"Being" ($n = 54$)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
	84.18	14.39	101.33	4.62	118.02	7.01

Tab. 1. Descriptive statistics for people with attitudes to "having," "having-being," "being" ($n = 187$)

Gender	"Having"		"Having-being"		"Being"	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Men	16	36.36	16	36.36	12	27.27
Women	35	24.48	66	46.15	42	29.37

Tab. 2. The number of people with the existential orientations „having,” "having-being" or "being" according to the gender of the respondents

Size of place living	"Having" ($n = 51$)		"Having-being" ($n = 82$)		"Being" ($n = 54$)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Village	9	17.65	21	25.61	10	18.52
Town of 25,000 inhabitants	12	23.53	18	21.95	9	16.67
City of 100,000 inhabitants	5	9.80	16	19.51	10	18.52
City of 250,000 inhabitants	5	9.80	8	9.76	7	12.96
City over 250,000 inhabitants	20	39.22	19	23.17	18	33.33

Tab. 3. The number of people with the existential orientations "having," "having-being" or "being" given to the size of place living of the respondents

the largest per cent of people representing the "having" orientation were people coming from the cities of up to 100,000 residents (Tab. 3).

Among students of both Medicine courses and Psychology, most people were characterised by a mixed "having-being" orientation. Subsequently, the largest per cent of respondents representing the "being" orientation constituted Psychology students. And the largest per cent of people representing the "having" orientation of Medicine courses (Tab. 4).

Life satisfaction of young adults

The results obtained in the group of 187 students in the life satisfaction scale ranged from 9 to 33. The mean score of life satisfaction of young adults was 21.44 points ($SD = 4.88$) which corresponds to 6 sten and is an average score. An analysis of variance for a score result of the life satisfaction scale was performed due to the attitude in the study group ($F = 10.025$; $p < 0.001$; $df = 2$; $SS = 435.25$; $MS = 217.63$)

Existential orientations in relation to life satisfaction of the respondents

In the light of the conducted analyses, statistically significant differences occur with respect to life satisfaction between people with the "having" orientation and with the "being" orientation. People with the "being" orientation

Study direction	"Having" ($n = 51$)		"Having-being" ($n = 82$)		"Being" ($n = 54$)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Medical studies	25	29.41	38	44.71	22	25.88
Psychology	26	25.49	44	43.14	32	31.37

Tab. 4. The number of people with the existential orientations "having," "having-being" or "being" with respect to the study direction of the respondents

	"Having" M = 19.39	"Having-being" M = 21.370	"Being" M = 23.463
"Having"		0.081	<0.001
"Having-being"	0.081		0.051
"Being"	<0.001	0.051	

Tab. 5. Tukey's test results for different n for life satisfaction due to existential orientations

have a greater life satisfaction than people with the "having" existential orientation (Tab. 5, Fig. 1).

DISCUSSION

In times of numerous social, economic and cultural changes as well as of ecological and moral crises plenty of authors address the subject matter of existential orientations (Grulkowski, 1996). An individual's orientation expressing his or her attitude towards another person, material objects and ideas as well as oneself may place him or her at a specific point along a continuum: from attitudes delineated by the ideas of "being" to relations resulting from the principles of possession (Wawrzyniak, 1992). In the light of conducted research, the largest number of people in the early adulthood represented a "being-having" orientation in the centre of the continuum. It makes one reflect that reaching adulthood may proceed in two ways: by acquiring economic independence which provides material foundations for independent shaping of "being." Concurrently, it does not exclude spiritual development (Gurba, 2011).

A modest number of studies conducted to date on relationships between the presented existential orientation and life satisfaction is partly connected with the fact that the method of researching "being-having" orientations was developed in Poland and data on adaptation of this instrument in other countries have been insufficient so far.

The conducted research has shown neither statistically significant differences between women and men in "having" and "being" orientations, nor the differences with respect to life satisfaction. The obtained results are consistent with the research results obtained by the author of the scale (Grulkowski, 2007). No gender differences in life satisfaction are confirmed by inter alia the research of Willem Arrindell and Hans Ettema (by: Pavot and Diener, 1993) and Martyna Janicka and Agnieszka Kruczek (2016). Moreover, in the light of research conducted by Janicka and Kruczek, students were characterised by an average level of life satisfaction. Other research reveals that 1 in 3 students assesses their life in a positive manner as satisfying (Turosz, 2011).

Richins and Dawson (1992) suggest that the more an individual relates his or her happiness and satisfaction to the achieving of material aims, the more unhappy he or she is. In addition, a materialistic orientation correlates positively with such values as "affluent life," and negatively with the values of: "wisdom," "internal balance" and "loving" (Zawadzka, 2006). Results of the research conducted in the years 2009–2011 on a representative group

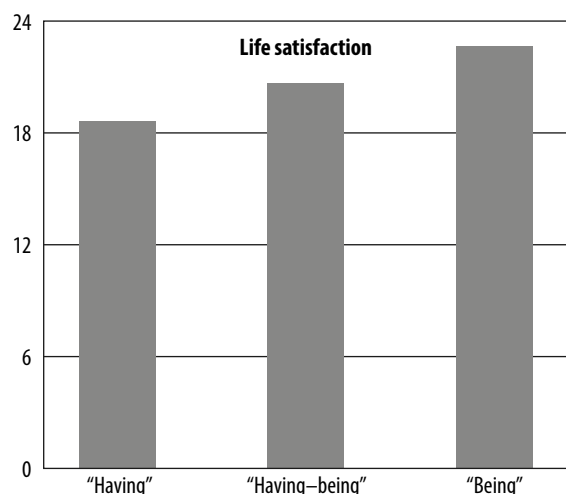


Fig. 1. Differences between meanings in terms of life satisfaction due to existential orientations

of Poles demonstrated also that life satisfaction, which was measured in three ways, depends to the greatest extent on a subjective factor of one's material situation assessment, and subsequently – on goods possessed in reality as well as on the income of a given person (to the smallest extent) (Sekścińska and Maison, 2014).

The research confirms that people with the predominant "being" orientation have a greater life satisfaction than people with the "having" orientation. In the light of the studies, the level of purpose in life is significantly higher in people with the "being" orientation (Grulkowski, 1996). Furthermore, according to the noteworthy American research which indicated significant negative correlations between envy, possessiveness and non-generosity i.e. all components of materialism listed by the author in relation to life satisfaction and the feeling of happiness. Such correlations were also confirmed by the research on Australian (Saunders and Munro, 2000) and Asian (Swinyard et al., 2001) samples. Research of Skarżyńska (2004) proved that a preference for external life goals such as property, success, career or power fails to be a significant predictor of a general level of life satisfaction, while the importance of internal aims (friendship, love, family, children, being useful to others, living in accordance with the principles of faith) differentiates significantly the general level of life satisfaction in such a way that the more important internal life goals are to an individual, the greater his or her life satisfaction is (Skarżyńska, 2004). When planning further research, expanding the group of participants in the study is recommended. Inclusion of not only students but also people with a lower level of education would make it possible to check whether the obtained results are characteristic only to people studying in selected specific fields of study or indicate a wider tendency characteristic for young people.

Additionally, considering the declared material status or perceived economic situation in the study would make

it possible to check whether the higher level of material possessions would be associated with greater satisfaction with life. It would also be possible to check whether the material status would be related to the existential attitude presented and whether it would be possible to achieve a certain financial ceiling to focus on “be” instead of “having.” On the basis of the results obtained, conducting workshops or psychoeducational classes for young adults in order to develop the “be” attitude in them is worth considering, which promotes greater satisfaction with life.

Conflict of interest

The authors do not report any financial or personal affiliations to persons or organisations that could negatively affect the content of or claim to have rights to this publication.

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