



KATARZYNA UKLAŃSKA

University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in Warsaw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4477-7885> * k.uklanska@uksw.edu.pl

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WOMEN AND PLEASURE. THE ATTITUDE OF POLISH FEMALE STUDENTS TO PLEASURE, BASED ON EMPIRICAL STUDIES FROM 2020

Abstract

Pleasure is an important component of the contemporary culture of consumption. The pursuit of it is encouraged by, inter alia, media, shopping malls, but also other types of institutions. This incentive is conveyed through, inter alia, advertising. Symptoms of this culture can also be observed at universities. Today's students are only familiar with this reality and have no experience of the "culture of scarcity". Therefore, it is worth asking if young women desire pleasure, whether it is important to them, and what is its place among other aspirations. The aim of the article is to analyze the hierarchy of values of young women and the position of pleasure in it. This will be achieved through referring to their choices of important values in life – those which constitute the meaning of their lives, and the priority of moral values or pleasure as essential criteria for selection. Among the surveyed women, "the hedonists" will also be indicated – namely women who indicated pleasure as their supreme value – and their axiological choices will be analyzed. The analysis is based on the results of the study "Academic youth on family and religion 2020" conducted among academic youth in 2020 by the Research Laboratory of the Polish Measurement of Attitudes and Values (PPPiW), in which the author of the article also participated.

Keywords: pleasure, women, values, students, hedonism

KOBIETY I PRZYJEMNOŚĆ. STOSUNEK POLSKICH STUDENTEK DO PRZYJEMNOŚCI NA PODSTAWIE BADAŃ EMPIRYCZNYCH Z 2020 R.

Abstrakt

Przyjemność jest ważnym elementem współczesnej kultury konsumpcji. Do niej zachęcają m.in. media, galerie handlowe, ale także inne instytucje. Ta zachęta jest przekazywana m.in. poprzez reklamę. Symptomy tej kultury można zaobserwować także na uczelniach. Dzisiejsi studenci znają tylko tę rzeczywistość i nie mają doświadczenia z „kulturą niedoboru”. Dlatego warto zapytać, czy młode kobiety pragną przyjemności, czy jest dla nich ważna i jakie jest jej miejsce wśród innych aspiracji. Celem artykułu jest analiza hierarchii wartości młodych kobiet i miejsca w niej przyjemności. Odwołam się więc do dokonywanych przez nie wyborów wartości ważnych w życiu – tych, które stanowią sens ich życia oraz priorytetu wartości moralnych czy przyjemności jako podstawowych

kryteriów wyboru. Wśród badanych kobiet wskazane zostaną także „hedonistki” – czyli kobiety, które jako swoją wartość nadrzędną wskazały przyjemność – oraz przeanalizowane zostaną ich wybory aksjologiczne. Analiza opiera się na wynikach badania „Młodzież akademicka o rodzinie i religii 2020” przeprowadzonego wśród młodzieży akademickiej w roku 2020 przez Pracownię Badawczą Polskiego Pomiaru Postaw i Wartości (PPPiW), w którym uczestniczyła również autorka artykułu.

Słowa kluczowe: przyjemność, kobiety, wartości, studenci, hedonizm

INTRODUCTION

In one of the many understandings of pleasure in philosophy, including those referring to the thought of St. Thomas, it is “an excitement caused by the perception of the subject that he has united himself with the beloved and desired good” (Sancti Thomae de Aquino 1962, I-II, 30, 1c). According to this interpretation, the duration of pleasure depends on its object – in the case of sensual pleasures, its feeling passes with the cessation of activities that induce pleasure, while spiritual pleasures are eternal and the feeling of joy they cause, too. A decidedly different way from Thomas’ thinking about pleasure is presented by utilitarianism. It assumes that the main human goal is “the maximization of pleasure correlated with the minimization of unpleasantness” (Górecki 2011, 115). L. Hostyński links utilitarian values with consumerism (Hostyński 2006, 17, 19, 20, 180)¹. In this trend, what is useful and achievable is valuable, and what contributes to increasing the duration of comfort is considered useful. Thus, when defining utilitarian values, categories such as “need”, “pleasure” and “desire” are taken into account. These values are comprised of those which are the source of satisfaction of human needs and desires (including vital and pleasure values), economic values, and instrumental values. Utilitarian values constitute the axiological basis of the “world of consumption”, and the necessity to satisfy the need for pleasure plays an important role in the consumerist social attitude.

When attempting to define pleasure, it must be assumed that it is related to voluntary desires, expectations, and needs (Golka 2005, 42). M. Golka understands pleasure as “a state that a person experiencing it wants to continue, and in which one wants to exist as long as possible” (Golka 2005, 46). Pleasure can be considered from the perspective of the sociology of emotions, where it is seen as one of the basic emotions (having a biological foundation), that is, feelings universal for all people (Turner and Stets 2009, 16, 27-29). Emotions are important for modern consumption – this perspective is explained by C. Campbell (Campbell 1987), addressing, *inter alia*, the human tendency to magical attitudes and needs that are difficult to fulfill in the real world. Modern consumption involves experiencing fantasy, feelings, and entertainment (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 132). Its foundation is one of the types of hedonism – the modern one, distinguished by A. Stihler from the traditional hedonism (Byłok 2016, 40). Traditional hedonism has a sensual character, while

¹ Utilitarian and hedonistic values are not the same. However, L. Hostyński links utilitarian values with consumerism. For the considerations in this article, this position is important.

modern hedonism “leans towards emotions caused by the image of the ideal state of pleasure and bliss associated with the imaginary use of the dream good” (Bylok 2016, 41). As noted by F. Bylok, the latter type of hedonism contributed to the emergence of new forms of consumption: sensual and pleasure. The consumption of pleasure concerns the purchase of certain products, desired by the consumer, but it is also associated with experiencing something exciting and unavailable daily. It is the consumption of impressions, places, spaces, people, cuisine, food, and intangibles that contain “a load of pleasure and the potential for providing happiness” (Bylok 2016, 43). That is why in stores the atmosphere, smell, colors, and sounds are so important. It is being emphasized that pleasure as the basis of consumerism is realized in three areas of social activity: in the sphere of “shopping” (direct consumption, shopping, acquiring goods), in show business (popular culture, fun, and sport), and in the sphere of feelings and love (Hostyński 2006, 180-181). Hedonistic consumption is associated with the assumption that happiness and pleasure are the ultimate goals of man, which ought to be pursued, and the means that lead to achieving them are the various consumer goods (Bylok 2016, 43). Such a view of pleasure gives it the role of value as a goal, and a contemporary human being becomes *Homo Consumerus* (Wątroba 2014, 210).

The encouragement to take pleasure comes from various areas of social life (Golka 2005, 41) and is the everyday experience of individuals. Pleasure is associated with fun and entertainment, although pleasure does not always result from entertainment (Golka 2005, 41). We see this motivation on television, in commercials, in fashion, in color magazines, in travels, and in shopping malls (Hostyński 2006, 184). The advertisement itself, which each of us sees – even if briefly – every day, is indirectly a carrier of culture and shapes the attitudes of its recipients (Madera 2004, 188). It is a story built on the values and models of a given society. At the same time the advertisement, meeting the expectations of recipients, creates new patterns of behavior (Renzetti and Curran 2005, 203). Attention is drawn to the fact that the differences between women and men are important in regard to market behavior and in making consumer choices – such as different ways of perceiving information and processing it, or recognized values and roles (Małysa-Kaleta 2012, 16). The ad creators must take this data into account when building a message. Women are an important target group for advertisers also because, according to the research, among people who admit to watching advertisements, 64.4% are women (Wszolek 2016, 41). Thus, the women’s press, also through advertising, shapes consumer attitudes and specific patterns in women (Królikowska 2004, 150).

It should be remembered that advertising shows an undifferentiated reality and thus contributes to developing stereotypes (Madera 2004). According to research, women presented in advertisements are shown in a biased manner – either in a traditional way, where they appear as mothers, wives, and housewives or in a modern way, where they radiate sex appeal or are active professionals (Małysa-Kaleta 2012, 31). The image of a woman as a person for whom appearance is of particular importance

is popularized, which is an element of the new lifestyle associated with the use of care products, and which in turn creates the image of a woman as an attractive, pleasant, and relationship-building person (Królikowska 2004, 158).

Therefore, we are experiencing the development of the need for pleasure that originates from consumption, which is also being served by the means of advertising. After all, this incentive concerns young people, including women, whose view of such everyday reality is being reinforced through it – the reality of the culture of consumption attracting and accustoming them to pleasure, or even forcing them to it. This encouragement provides the context for axiology, especially for the generation of people who have not experienced any other reality.

1. VALUES, THE MEANING OF LIFE AND ACADEMIC YOUTH IN THE WORLD OF CONSUMPTION

There are many definitions and classifications of values in the sociological sciences. Some treat them as objects and beliefs of a non-normative nature that determine the mental experiences and actions of individuals, others see them as beliefs common in a given social group, which define desirable judgments and behaviors of members of this group, while others perceive them as beliefs of individuals or groups which specify desirable features of social groups or the whole society (Miształ 1980, 51). For the purpose of this study, the concept of value as an end (Ziółkowski 2000, 292) will be adopted and thus the definition of C. Kluckhohn will apply, which presents it as “an *implicit* or *explicit* concept of what is desirable for an individual or a group, and influences the choice between available methods, means, and objectives of action” (Kluckhohn 2001). Everyday values will be investigated, understood as human aspirations within private life, which may be intrapersonal and interpersonal, as well as values building the meaning of life, which can be perceived in terms of ultimate values (Piwowarski 1993, 73). Values determine human behavior and aspirations, they also influence individual choices, and “when it comes to market behavior, the consumer’s choice becomes a function of values” (Patrzalek 2004, 19). The meaning of life is to derive general satisfaction from it, from the possibility of realizing personal and professional goals. It is the acceptance of one’s life (Mariański 2013, 27-28) and the concept resulting from the reflection on what life, the world and the man are, and what is important to the latter (Obuchowski 2000, 249).

At Polish public universities (373 in total) in the academic year 2019-2020, the Central Statistical Office (GUS) recorded 1,204,000 students (by 2.1% less than in the previous year), of which women constituted 57.6% of all students (GUS 2021, 11). Although the number of students has been decreasing every year since the 2006-2007 academic year, the completion of studies (or education) remains important for young people (Krause 2011, 149; Palak 2004, 124; Długosz 2019, 107). Academic youth is a special group, constituted by young people who are still learning, and therefore maintain contact with the formal education system, and on the other hand,

also often undertake a professional activity. They often perform parental roles, too. The uniqueness of this group is also related to social expectations towards it – after all, it will constitute the intellectual and managerial elite, at least its part (Zielińska 2016, 9). However, modern students, as well as today's higher education system, differ from those known to their parents, especially the elderly ones or grandparents. Today, young people are more pragmatic and they know that graduation and a diploma are not “a guarantee of a secure future and an appropriate social status” (Szafraniec 2015, 10), but a certain minimum that will allow them to go further. Also, student culture, which is understood as a phenomenon that distinguishes a social group of students, builds their identity, expresses a social rebellion against reality and pride in belonging to this group (where studying is a privilege and is associated with prestige), as well as encompassing various cultural and entertainment activities (Ciechanowska 2009, 31), ceased to exist. As D. Ciechanowska notes, today we are dealing with a student who does not “study”, but “invests” in his future, which is reflected in obtaining certificates, completing internships during studies, and taking up a job. It is accompanied by the low quality of studying and the lack of participation in, or creation of student culture. Studying, understood as a higher form of learning, requiring intellectual independence and inspiration by an academic teacher (Bereziński 2014, 15), concerns a small part of students.

Mass education (which negative effects were previously defined in terms of lowering the quality of education and commercialization of higher education (Bywalec 2007, 210), the atmosphere accompanying the higher education system, and the tasks assigned to it, contribute to this “shallowing” of studying. Supermarketization, which is observed in culture and means applying market principles and the consumption mechanism to culture (Mathews 2005, 257-258), also concerns other institutions, such as Church and religion (one can observe attempts to encourage people to the *sacred* sphere through consumption, e.g. film screenings (Mamzer 2005, 33) or universities. The latter care about students, which results from demographic conditions, so most of the elements related to studying and study programs are adapted to their expectations. The master-disciple relationship is replaced by a seller-customer relationship (Zakowicz 2013, 139), where the first is an academic teacher or the university as a whole, and the second is a student who can freely choose, and who, although having high digital skills, is incompetent in deepening knowledge in a traditional way. By their open attitude towards candidates and students, universities put themselves in the role of service providers who make studies “nice and easy”. Hence, some students consider studying in terms of pleasure, and they perceive it as a “carefree period in life” (Krause 2011, 149)

Thus, in addition to the consumerist reality, in which young people exist every day, the system of universities and the culture it builds indirectly encourage participation in the pleasure of consuming, also education. It is also an important perspective that cannot be ignored when looking at and analyzing the values of today's student youth.

So what are young people's current value choices? In the research carried out by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) in 2018, high school students put love and

friendship first (52%), followed by successful family life (42%), interesting work in line with their interests (40%), achieving a high professional position (33%), accumulating wealth; getting high material position (33%), peaceful life (29%), colorful life, full of entertainment; rich social life (6%), being useful to others (10%), successful sex life (10%), achieving success in science or art (10%), independence at work (7%), living in accordance with religious principles (5%), gaining political power (2%), the ability to make decisions in the economic sphere (1%), and other (1%) (Boguszewski 2019). Girls more often than boys valued love and friendship (62% to 41%), interesting work (46% to 34%), successful family life (46% to 37%), and peace (31% to 28%). However, they were less often interested in acquiring wealth (22% to 44%), a satisfying sexual life (7% to 15%), and the possibility of influencing social and political life (0% to 4%).

The values constituting the meaning of life, which becomes particularly important in difficult situations, when the individual is "taken out of the routine of everyday life" (Kasperek 2018, 52), were also studied by CBOS in 2017. Then, 44% of women admitted that they often wonder about the meaning of life, and 31% said they do it sometimes (CBOS 2017, 3). The people who most often reflect on the meaning of life are those aged 18-24. Poles considered family to be the most important value (54%), followed by health (38%) (CBOS 2017, 5). Next, there were children and grandchildren (14%) and work (9%). For 8% of the respondents, money, good financial conditions, wealth, and own home, as well as social values were important. Then the following were mentioned: existential values (7%), religion (5%), love (4%), happiness, prosperity, success (4%), moral values (3%), the good of Poland and the world (2%), education (1%). Here, women more often than men indicated health (44%) and children (20%), as well as family (57%) as values that build the meaning of life. In other studies carried out in 2017, among academic youth, 64.5% stated that they had a sense of the meaning of life and it gave them satisfaction, and 10% of the respondents saw the meaning of life but were not satisfied with it (Kasperek 2018, 57). Students perceived the meaning of life in the following values: love (56.3%), finding one's own place in society and the feeling of being useful (55.4%), family happiness (54%), gaining human trust and friends (50.8%), a job one likes (45.3%), education, the pursuit of knowledge (38.4%), money, prosperity, quality of life, decent material position (28.2%), putting faith in a great idea (25.8%), action and pursuit of a chosen goal (25.3%), deep religious faith (21.9%), gaining individuality, own style (17.3%), leaving a permanent trace of one's life (16.4%), a quiet life (8.1%), something else (2.5%) (Kasperek 2018, 60). This is the current hierarchy of values of young people found in representative studies.

2. PLEASURE AND OTHER VALUES IN THE OPINIONS OF THE SURVEYED FEMALE STUDENTS

The subject matter of the research carried out by the team of the Research Laboratory of the Polish Measurement of Attitudes and Values of the University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński concerned the importance that academic youth assign

to issues in the areas of intimacy, interpersonal bonds, religion, and the meaning of life. It was also interesting to “get acquainted with the motivation behind their decisions and ways of interpreting the social world” (Kawińska, Wróblewska-Skrzek and Linek 2020, 10). It was carried out from April to June 2020 among students from various research facilities in Poland, aged 18-29. The survey method was used and the CAWI technique was employed due to the pandemic situation and other conditions. A total of 621 respondents participated in the study, and women accounted for 78.6% of it (n=488). The results of the study, due to the lack of representativeness, determine the state of beliefs of the surveyed academic youth and are not generalized to the population of Polish students.

The outcomes of the conducted research will be presented below only in relation to the surveyed women. The thematic scope presented here includes values important in their lives, values that give their life meaning, and women’s perspectives on experiential and instrumental attitudes. Such a selection of the thematic scope will allow for presenting the role of pleasure and the attitude of the surveyed female students towards it.

In tab. 1. the frequencies of indicating particular values by the surveyed students are presented.

Tab. 1. Values important in life according to women (n = 488) (%).

Values	Response categories					Total
	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Hard to indicate	Probably no	Definitely no	
self-realization, striving to implement one’s plans	63.5%	30.7%	4.3%	1.2%	0.2%	100.0%
relationship with another person	62.1%	26.2%	5.3%	5.1%	1.2%	100.0%
further education	58.6%	32.6%	6.4%	2.5%	0.0%	100.0%
peaceful and stable life with the family	50.0%	31.6%	12.9%	3.7%	1.8%	100.0%
building a professional career and achieving a high standard of living	40.8%	39.1%	12.7%	6.1%	1.2%	100.0%
having children	37.5%	29.1%	11.5%	11.7%	10.2%	100.0%
realizing values concerning social life: helping others, solidarity with others, cooperation, etc.	34.8%	42.4%	15.0%	6.4%	1.4%	100.0%
entertainment, consumption, enjoyment, exciting experiences	14.3%	31.8%	23.2%	22.7%	8.0%	100.0%
economic emigration	3.7%	10.2%	33.4%	33.6%	19.1%	100.0%

Source: own calculations based on the PPPiW study “Academic Youth on Family and Religion 2020”.

Taking into account the summed-up affirmative answers among the surveyed women, the most frequently chosen value important in life was self-realization and the implementation of own plans (94.3% in total). Further education was ranked second (91.2% in total), although more respondents chose a relationship with another person (88.3%). The next values of big importance for the respondents were a peaceful and stable life with the family (81.6% in total) and building a professional career and achieving a high standard of living (79.9% in total). The surveyed women also indicated the realization of the values of social life as important for them in life (77.3% in total). Having children is ranked lower in this hierarchy (66.6% in total). Less than half of the respondents chose entertainment, consumption, pleasure, and exciting experiences as values important to them in life (46.1% in total). The surveyed women showed the least interest in economic emigration as important for them in their lives (13.9% in total).

The surveyed students were also asked to indicate the values that give their lives meaning. Their detailed distribution of answers is presented in Table 2.

Tab. 2. Values that give life meaning in the opinions of women (N = 422) (%).

Sense-creating values	Response categories					Total
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Hard to indicate	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	
successful relationship with another person	71.7%	15.4%	9.4%	1.8%	1.6%	100.0%
friendship with another person	70.3%	25.2%	3.5%	0.6%	0.4%	100.0%
self-realization	67%	27.7%	4.5%	0.4%	0.4%	100.0%
successful family life	59.2%	27.5%	8.2%	3.7%	1.4%	100.0%
hobbies and interests	57.2%	35.5%	4.7%	1.4%	1.2%	100.0%
religion	15.8%	23%	15.6%	13.5%	32.2%	100.0%
satisfying sex	14.1%	30.5%	24.8%	15.8%	14.8%	100.0%
high material status	12.3%	33.8%	28.3%	19.9%	5.7%	100.0%
deep spiritual experiences	11.3%	20.7%	22.5%	18.2%	27.3%	100.0%
pleasure from life	48.2%	40.4%	8.0%	2.9%	0.6%	100.0%

Source: own calculations based on the PPPiW study "Academic Youth on Family and Religion 2020".

Taking into account the aggregated answers, friendship with another human being (95.5%) is the most important value that builds the meaning of life for the respondents. In the second place, the meaning of life for young women is self-realization (94.7% in total). Subsequently, women chose hobbies and interests (92.7% in total), then pleasure from life (88.6% in total), friendship with another person (87.1% in total), and successful family life (in total 86.7%). The next two

places in the hierarchy of sense-creating values for women are high material status (46.1% in total) and satisfactory sex (44.6% in total). Then the women chose religion (38.8% in total) and deep spiritual experiences (32% in total).

The respondents were also asked to indicate the position of pleasure in relation to moral principles by referring to three statements. The structure of this question is related to the questions formulated by A. Podgórecki, who investigated the instrumental and experiential attitudes among Poles (Podgórecki et al. 1967, 57). The chart below presents a detailed distribution of the respondents' answers.

Chart 1. Moral principles and pleasure in the opinions of women (N = 488) (%).



Source: own calculations based on the PPPiW study "Academic Youth on Family and Religion 2020".

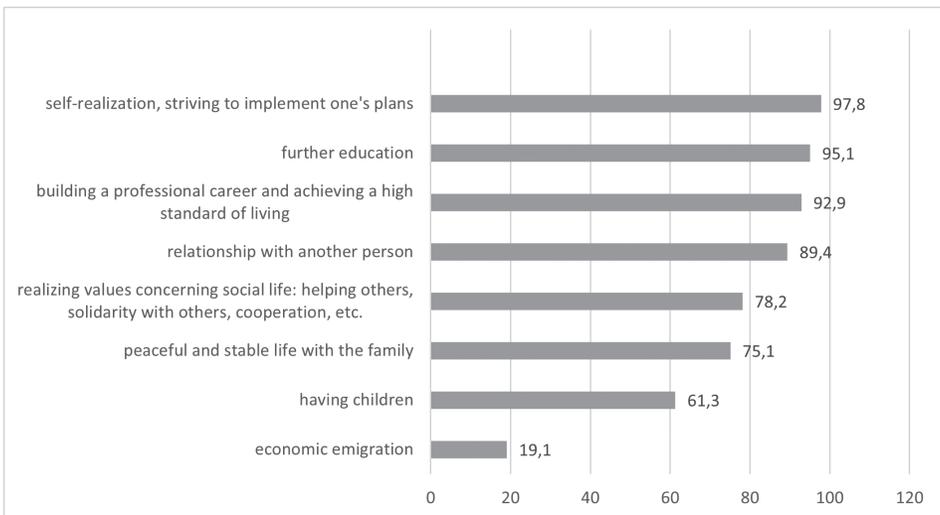
The most popular position among women was that of a position that can be described as experiential, i.e. showing the superiority of moral values in every situation over one's own pleasure. Therefore, taking into account the answers "definitely yes" and "rather yes", 82.8% of the respondents believed that life should be guided by moral principles, the following of which is not always pleasant. The second most frequently declared attitude was the relative attitude. Thus, the women believed that one should have moral principles, but in exceptional cases they can be abandoned (40.6% in total). The least frequently chosen position among the surveyed female students was the one that can be described as hedonistic – following such principles in life that give pleasure before anything else. Such an attitude was observed among 14.1% of the surveyed women.

This is the distribution of values that give life meaning among the surveyed women and their attitude to pleasure and moral principles as to those that are supposed to be a basis for their choices. To sum up, 46% of the surveyed women

indicated entertainment, consumption, pleasure, and exciting experiences as values that they primarily care about in life, 88.6% of women declared that it is pleasure from life that gives them a sense of meaning, and 14% indicated the following of such principles in life that give pleasure in the first place. Below, a set of the most important values for the respondents, who indicated pleasure as the value they primarily care about in life, will be presented. It is worth taking a closer look at their choices, as they constitute a considerable part of the surveyed women. They will be described as “hedonists”, mainly because it is the easiest way to describe the choices of this category of respondents.

Chart 2 presents the answers of “hedonists” regarding the most important values in their life. It should be noted that women who chose pleasure, consumption, exciting impressions, and entertainment as the most important values in life accounted for 46.1% of the surveyed women.

Chart 2. Values important in life in the opinions of “hedonists” (answers definitely yes and rather yes) (N = 225) (%).



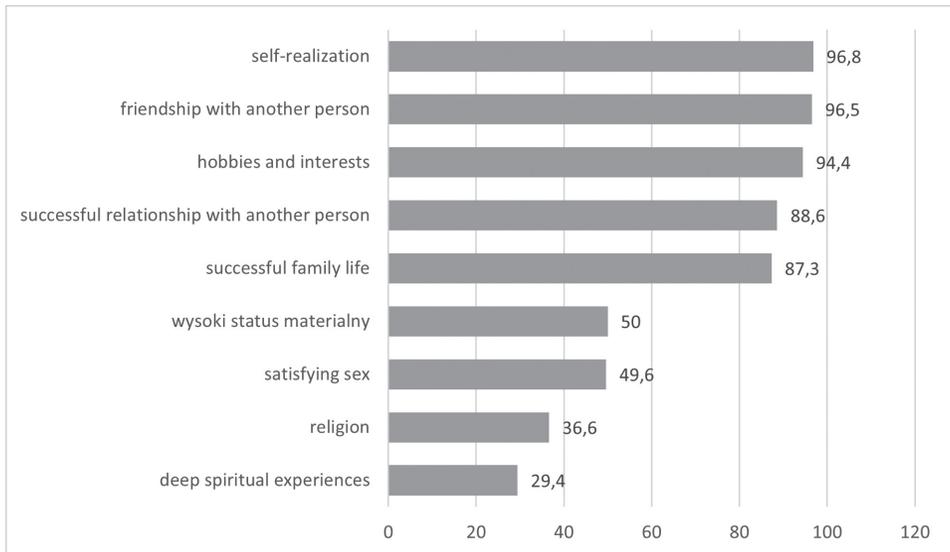
Source: own calculations based on the PPPiW study “Academic Youth on Family and Religion 2020”.

It should be noted that, generally, these women – “hedonists” – did not deviate from the choices of the surveyed female friends. Here, the most important turns out to be also self-realization and own plans (97.8% in total) and further learning (95.1% in total). The change is visible in relation to building a professional career and achieving a high material status. These women more often (92.9% in total) than the rest of the surveyed female students (79.9% in total) indicated this value as important (3rd position in the hierarchy). For the rest, peaceful family life was more important (81.6%). The relationship with the other person, although it was important for “hedonists” to a similar extent (89.4%) as for the rest, took only the

fourth position on the value pyramid. A similar situation occurred with family life and having children – both values (although similar in the percentage of choices) occupy further positions than in the distribution for all women. Hedonists also think about economic emigration slightly more often (19.1%) than the rest of the respondents (13.9%).

Below, in Chart 3, we can see what other values build the meaning of life for women who chose the pleasure from life as their main sense-creating value. They accounted for 88.6% of the surveyed women.

Chart 3. Values that give life meaning in the opinions of “hedonists” (N = 432) (%).



Source: own calculations based on the PPPiW study “Academic Youth on Family and Religion 2020”.

Compared to the rest of the surveyed female students, “hedonists” have a change in the position of the initial values. They assessed the meaning of their lives primarily through the prism of self-realization (96.8% in total) and friendship with another human being (96.5% in total), while other women chose the opposite order (95.5% and 94.7% in total). The remaining values occupy the same places, but in their case, the stronger or weaker intensity of the choices is observed. And so, “hedonists” slightly more often (94.4% in total) than the rest (92.7%) chose hobbies and interests, more often (88.6% in total) than the rest (87.1% in total) chose a successful relationship with another human being, more often (50% in total) than the rest (46.1% in total) chose high material status, more often (49.6% in total) than the rest (44.6% in total) chose satisfactory sex. Less important (36.6% in total) than for the rest (38.8% in total) in the context of the meaning of life for them were values such as religion and deep spiritual experiences (29.4% in all hedonists, 32% in all women).

CONCLUSIONS

The study carried out by the PPPiW Laboratory indeed falls into the category of measuring values in a crisis situation. As A. Kasperek notes, “the social correlate of the individual borderline situation is the crisis in the general social dimension (e.g. economic or political)” (2018). Such a crisis was undoubtedly triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, especially in the first half of 2020, when knowledge about it was limited and people were feeling the threat. This was the moment when one could have expected mental changes.

In order to summarize the results of the analyzed part of the research, it should be noted that if we take into account the aggregated affirmative answers, then for all the surveyed women the most important value was self-realization and striving to implement one’s own plans (94.3% in total), and the least important was economic emigration (in 13.9% in total). In turn, they most often defined the meaning of life through the value of friendship with another human being (95.5%), and least often through deep spiritual experiences (32% in total). The most popular position among the surveyed women towards the choice: moral values or pleasure, was the one that gives priority to moral principles, which does not always bring pleasure (82.8% in total). The hedonistic values that were the focus of attention of this study were not the most important in the axiological hierarchy of female students, but it must be said that they are an important point of reference. Entertainment, consumption, pleasure, and exciting impressions were the most important goals for 46% of the surveyed women, and for 88.6% the pleasure from life was its meaning – these are the women that were conventionally referred to as “hedonists”. On the other hand, the following of such principles in life that give pleasure in the first place was close to 14% of the respondents.

The conclusions that arise after the analysis of the axiological choices of the surveyed women, including “hedonists”, can be formulated as follows:

1. The surveyed students want, above all, to implement their plans and educate themselves
2. Relationships with other people are also important for them – those based on friendship and those built on love
3. Religious and spiritual values do not constitute the meaning of their lives and are marginal.
4. In terms of the choice of values, the “hedonists” do not differ much from the other surveyed female colleagues – their hierarchies largely overlap. However, there are some differences in the choices they made:
 - they attach greater importance to a professional career and achieving a high material status,
 - relationship with another person, family life, and having children are values that they place lower in the hierarchy than in the case of other women,
 - more often than the rest of the respondents, they think about economic emigration,

- the meaning of life for them is primarily self-realization,
- sense-creating values are for them (more often than for other respondents): hobbies and interests, a successful relationship with another human being, high material status, and satisfactory sex,
- however, less often than other women, they define the meaning of their lives by values such as religion and deep spiritual experiences.

The results of the measurement are not generalized to the entire population of female students, but in relation to the surveyed young women, it seems reasonable to say that the values related to pleasure are important to them and do not occupy marginal positions in their axiology. This state of affairs can be explained by the relatively young age of the respondents and their current obligations. After all, these are people who are just on the threshold of their adulthood, serious obligations are still ahead of them – so now they think about their plans, about friendships, relationships, about enjoying life, and about self-realization. It is hardly surprising. These declarations can also be considered in the context of comments formulated several years ago that it is women from the youngest age groups who will increasingly present attitudes of acceptance of post-materialistic values and the very possibility of choosing will be considered by them as a value (and not the content of this choice itself) (Frąckowiak 2006, 157). In other studies carried out a few years ago among students of one of the Polish universities, it was also emphasized that they increasingly strive for professional success and have a sense of subjectivity and influence (Kędzior 2018, 228). In these reflections, we also recognize the view of women surveyed in 2020 by PPPiW.

Perhaps the lockdown situation, which probably particularly affected young people (due to the necessity to suspend social gatherings), may explain such an attitude of young women to pleasure and consumption of life. When the students were filling in the questionnaires, the lockdown was already a reality.

The culture of consumption also provides an important context for these results in terms of women's attitudes towards pleasure. G. Matthews noted that the cultural supermarket is largely channeled through the mass media (Mathews 2005, 258). Advertising is a tool of this culture that directly offers the recipients pleasure in return for the purchase of a certain product. And here, in advertising, we find two contemporary female models shaped by the media – a woman who should “make her own way, educate herself to develop her interests and take care of herself” and (Małysa-Kaleta 2012, 29) the model of a traditional woman, that is a mother and a “housewife”. We see the impact of these patterns in women's value declarations. Even at the end of the 1990s, it was noticed that young women saw themselves mainly in the traditional role of a mother, and not in the modern role of a “successful woman” (Frąckowiak 2006, 152). Today, however, the latter model is more up-to-date and preferred by the surveyed female students. Additionally, the advertisement emphasizes that women enjoy consumption, mainly the consumption of their own appearance, which results from the fact that a woman's self-esteem largely depends on her attractiveness

(Królikowska 2004, 162). Hence, the women's great interest in pleasure. Universities also play an indirect role as a space in which students participate. They often present an attitude that relieves students of many duties and assigns them to academic teachers. The student receives confirmation of the appropriateness of his demanding attitude, and the university puts itself in the role of a supermarket where one can choose amongst many products. Such an attitude, of course, does not teach pleasure directly, but it accustoms and reassures the young person that he is in the center of attention and his needs are the most important. As a consequence, this consumption attitude is also observed in interpersonal relations – "Everything that is a manifestation of social life, and consumption is a clear manifestation of it, is expressed in interpersonal relations demonstrated more or less publicly" (Golka 2008, 216).

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