

**«БУТИ» ЧИ «МАТИ»:  
ПОЧУТТЯ СЕНСУ ЖИТТЯ  
ЯК ІНДИКАТОРА ДОРОСЛОСТІ**

*Ставлення до життя безпосередньо пов'язане з обраною системою ціннісних орієнтацій. Останні допомагають людині ствердно відповісти на питання про наявність сенсу життя та послідовно його втілювати. Загалом, наявність сенсу життя, або його відсутність, тісно пов'язані з людською екзистенцією. При цьому категорія «мати» спирається здебільшого на пошук матеріальних благ, а категорія «бути» – на розвиток зацікавлень, поглиблення знань і прагнення допомогти іншій людині. Дослідженням охоплено 125 студентів віком 21 – 26 років.*

***Ключові слова:** сенс життя, ціннісні орієнтації, категорія «бути», категорія «мати».*

**Introduction.** Youth in adolescence creates its system of values by reevaluating the gained views, opinions and beliefs. Issues related to the meaning of life and identity become more important [23, 22]. Looking at the world with childlike naivety becomes blurred, and there is a reflection on further education, the future job and marriage. Such features are known as sense-creating. Then there begin to raise doubts and controversies concerning oriented activities. The young man begins the process of putting into order of own vision of life according to the expressed values. On one hand, rejection of certain values appears and at the same time seeking new ones that affect the behavior, commitment to the goals in life and making choices. By the need to realize oneself the stage of discovery and realizing the meaning of life arises [9, 29].

The meaning of life in a young man develops in three stages. The first stage, during adolescence, is an identification phase. At this time it is characteristic to look for patterns of personality worthy of imitation, for example, by deference and identification with various heroes of sports, movie or music. The next step occurs at age of 20 – 22, referred to as the phase of life concept in general known as «space phase.» In this phase very general, wishful views on the world and life are created in connection with the need to answer the

various questions that arise in the crucial moments of life. The third phase is the concretization of the meaning of life, realizing by finding answers to the question: what is the meaning of my action? [25, 219 – 221, 245].

Attitude towards life is associated with the system of approved values. It lies at the basis of recognized and implemented standards and rules of conduct. Awareness of the importance of value and striving to achieve them is the chance of a positive response to the question about the meaning of life.

**Explanations of terminology.** The term «meaning of life» in the literature is understood and interpreted differently. Commonly it can be understood as the desirability of existence, the idea of life plan, the idea of existence. The meaning of existence is considered to be vital task faced by man. Depending on the orientation of life it can be internal, integrated structure based on the actions and aspirations, or social, where the predominant behavior is aimed at the public good, and philosophical, which is based on an objective and comprehensive understanding of the world [8, 93 – 95]. This concept refers to the deeply personal and yet universal primary and personalized experiences and needs of man. Alfred Adler formulates it as follows: «an individual progresses only in the right direction when it is alive and committed to success as a part of a whole» [1, 254]. According to Krzysztof Obuchowski meaning of life is the need «that consists in the fact that without the creation of own, abstract conception of life in which one can positively fulfill oneself till the end of existence, development of his personality is not possible» [24, 256]. This need, or rather its satisfying, determines normal functioning and is subordinated by long-term activities leading to self-realization [24, 256].

In contrast, Richard Klamut considered the meaning of life as «a state of subjective feeling of life satisfaction, because the actions taken or goals made by man are actually due to its own (...) system of values» [15, 42].

According to Kazimierz Popielski «a broad understanding of the meaning of life, however, carries with it the danger of too general and not very palpable formulating its contents» [27, 127]. In light of this conclusion there seems to be justification in attempts to define the meaning of life issues for researchers in different disciplines: philosophy, psychology, sociology and theology that adopting a different point of reference, contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the intricate question of the sense of life. The notion of the meaning of life companions its senselessness. Janusz Marianski says that it is a condition, in which one subjectively feels the lack any value in its activity and life. Senselessness is bound simultaneously with the fact that an individual had previously sense, the purpose of life, but lost it, at the same time one is accompanied by a certain idea, which for some reason is not able to pursue [21, 299]. The loss of meaningfulness of life is one of the main causes of neuroses and personality disorders. It manifests itself in the loss of hope, generally conceived goals, confidence, creative activity. In many cases it also

applies to states of depression, discouragement, aggression, frustration [28, 27]. It is a dangerous condition where «in the absence of values that bring sense to life provokes a sense of passivity, resignation, poor self-esteem and even suicidal tendencies» [20, 335].

Meaning of life and not feeling it are closely tied to human existence. Inadequate education of model or the hierarchy of values, and following the short-term attaining the so-called useful and needs, may determine the loss of meaning in life.

Another concept: «value» is an abstract, having many meanings. Designatum of value can be e.g. good, beauty, truth, freedom. Man exists in a world of values that affect its proper development, that determine its behavior, aspirations and interactions. In spite of that, it very difficult to define and clarify what exactly they are [3, 12]. The definition of values is also an extremely difficult task. Dictionary of the Polish language, says that the concept of «value» is a feature which constitutes about the qualities people or things, or what we can be expressed by the equivalent of cash or other means of payment [30, 660]. It is generally accepted that «value» is a fundamental category of axiology and represents everything that is considered valuable, important for the individual and society. Thus, it is «something» worthy of desire, combining the positive experiences [18, 125].

The term «value» is derived from the Latin word «valor» or «valere» (value or be of value). This word originally used in everyday life meant strength, bravery, courage, strength of character [31, 8]. Max Scheler is deemed creator of the term «value» (1874 – 1928), who believed that values are general or individual. He also believed that man has his own system of values, their life goals and desires that are based on the implementation of values [17, 19]. Previously the word «good» was used to describe these meanings.

One of the most general definitions of values was presented by Danuta Dobrowolska. She claimed that «value» is «everything that is the subject of needs, attitudes, hopes and aspirations of man. This may, therefore, be a material object, person, institution, idea, type of activity» [22, 175]. The author pointed out that the values can be understood as «an important good (...) worth more than others to to be achieved in life» [5, 104]. Henry Świda mentioned that «value is what triggers human motivation,» [26, 11]. However, according to Kazimierz Denek, the term «values» means: to be strong, powerful, healthy, relevant for yourself and for someone. When we say that a thing is valuable for us, it means that it is not indifferent. We recognize its quality, beauty, usefulness, just its some perfection [4, 16]. A similar position is taken by Stanisław Kowalczyk, who says that the value is, «what is the object of desire, which awaited by a man, what is the purpose of man's operations» [16, 129]. Janusz Hompliewicz for the value adopts what for the human being is valuable and what is worth to engage in not only in terms of work but also of will. He believed

that the values that guide in life are responsible for shaping his personality, attitudes and actions [11, 142].

With listed and described positions one may conclude that the criteria describing values are very diverse. The value sometimes is a goal or an indicator to determine the objectives or motives, sometimes it is identified with a norm, or is a subjective reflection of man's convictions and yet another time it is attributed to material things. Therefore, as Malgorzta Talarczyk notes, it is complicated to construct a definition of values, which would contain in itself the multiplicity of its meanings. However, grouping of values becomes more real [31, 8]. It is understood that the values do not exist singly, and form systems making up a system. A man who appreciates family life, also values health and qualities of the mind of their own children, and strives to achieve the goods necessary not only to him but also other family members [26, 58 – 59]. Family and school affects mainly creation and implementation of a system of values. Developing and finding own values is achieved through independent and responsible choices. They are formed from the experience and their determinants are «meanings, goals, aspirations, attitudes, interests (...) and activities» [7, 211]. The value system, considered as a system consists of three dimensions: beliefs, ideals and preferences. And so, convictions (convictions, beliefs) include worldview regarded by the individual as a true and justify chosen material and moral order of the world, and what place in this system is given to a subject (the strength of conviction is important). In contrast, the ideals (patterns, models) allow to set criteria of what targets, what is moral, beautiful, fair. From the content and characteristics ideals legal and moral norms are derived. The final dimension of the system of values are preferences, likes and dislikes. They can be seen in the acceptance of certain situations, phenomena, objects, or states of affairs, or manifested unwillingness or lack of consent to their opposing varieties [29, 59].

The concept of «value system» is widely interpreted by Anthony Kepinski. It is recognized on three levels: biological (biological laws in the life of individuals, the preservation of life and species), emotional (emotional attitude to the environment mainly social), and socio-cultural (looking to the future, setting goals) [14, 47].

Eugeniusz Bielicki proposed to determine the value system as «state of matters resulting from the making order in the ontogenetic experience in the process of evaluation of reality, which is to determine what is good and what is bad, and therefore in the process of assimilating the values and value to objects, which constitutes one of the fundamental determinants of regulation of entity behavior» [2, 48 – 49]. In the literature there are many different classifications of value. They can refer to many areas of life, both personal, family and professional, life in a peer, school environment, in formal and informal groups.

One of the classification is dichotomic division according to which the value can be divided: Due to the matter of values (things and ideas), coverage, or universality (universal and individual), time (historical and present), durability (permanent and temporary), the sphere of engagement (emotional and intellectual), the overall assessment (positive and negative) [6, 12].

The most known classification was proposed by Milton Rokeach, who has identified the following groups of values: the final (autotelic) – autonomous, primates, central, core values and goals of human life. Their implementation is good in itself; Instrumental (basic), related to the general ways of behavior. They constitute a single conviction. Among the ultimate personal values he distinguished personal (eg. An exciting life, inner harmony, salvation), and social (eg. World peace, equality, national security). Among the instrumental demarcates he made division between moral values on specific behaviors rather than ultimate goals of life (eg. love, honesty, kindness, ability to forgive) and the values of competence, having more personal nature (including creative imagination, ability, ambition). The values in the second group are subordinate. They have less meaning. They constitute a secondary element in achieving the highest (autotelic) values. They are purely executive, serve the fulfillment of the objectives of the higher [13, 40]. Yet another system of values was proposed Roman Ingarden, which gives the following values: vital, cultural, moral. He has identified vital values (pleasure, useful), cultural (cognitive, aesthetic, social and moral) and moral [12, 221].

Stanisław Kowalczyk, emphasizing the link between the value of man as a personal being, distinguished the following values: material and economic, biological and vital, sensitive-emotional and ludic, cognitive-intellectual, focusing on truth, artistic and aesthetic, with a key value of beauty, moral, and religious and sacred [16, 140].

Bronislaw Grulkowski fundamentally distinguishes the two concepts of «to be» and «to have». Their analysis, as one of the first, was made by Gabriel Marcel. He claimed that an individual in his relation to the world can choose only one attitude: «to have» or «to be». The attitude of «to have» is otherwise self-centered attitude, defensive or «problematizing». The attitude of «to be» is an attitude of commitment, which concerns the participation of people favoring this value in the lives of other people. It connects to the so-called sense of being «invited», «requested» [10, 7].

On the other hand, Erich Fromm, was the very first to make psychological analysis of «to be» and «to have». The attitude of «to be» is associated with being at disposal, open attitude to other people who desire to enter in various interactions with them. This is attitude of a man who is confident, multi-dimensional, sincere, full of involvement in attitude to the world, in all its aspects (nature, other people, own person, the universe). It is characterized by dynamic (increasing) sense of relationship and unity of man, with all that

surrounds him. A person with this attitude is experiencing a sense of security in belonging, of community, as well as freedom and responsibility. It is benevolent and cordial, patient and authentic, capable of empathy. In life such man is guided by the ideals and has a meaning of own existence [10, 28 – 29].

«To have» is an attitude full of anxiety, one-sided, personally passive, characterized by a utilitarian approach to reality. It is based on an attitude of self-centeredness, a sense of isolation, separation and alienation towards the world. A dominant feature in the attitude of «to have» is the continued insecurity and uncertainty as to their own people. People who identify with this attitude are focused on themselves, their needs. They are geared to look for pleasure, conformism. They are characterized by a strong focus on material reality (things, money) [10, 28 – 29]. In conclusion, one can say that the attitude of «to be» and «to have» are opposing stances towards the world in its various aspects. The attitude of «have» relies mainly on a quest to possess material goods and the attitude of «to be» is based on the objective to develop the interest, deepen the knowledge and help another person.

**Assumptions research.** In a time of many cultural, economic, social changes, of moral crisis and the spread of large-scale consumer lifestyle, more and more often the following question arises: what is more important for young man: self-development of «to be», or to possess material goods «to have»?

So the aim of the study was to determine the relationship between attitudes of «to be» and «to have» and a sense of meaning in life.

The research covered 125 students, aged 21 – 26 years.

To measure attitudes of «to be» and «to have» the method of diagnostic survey with the questionnaire technique was used. Version of the scale used by Bronislaw Grulkowski was adapted. The scale contains 24 claims, 12 of which points directly to the attitude of «to be» and 12 to the attitude of «have». The final version included one buffer assertion. Theorems have a seven-step scale of Likert. Measure of the attitude of a particular person as the attitude of «to be» or attitude of «to have» is the sum of scale points of individual claims and the direction of these statements and the related method of counting. Obtaining the maximum score (168 points) indicates the maximum severity of the attitude of «to be» and obtaining the lowest possible score (24 points) is the maximum severity of the attitude of «to have». Among those values there is a continuum of attitudes with a varying degrees of orientation towards «to be» or «to have».

**Results of own research.** Analyzing the results of the research, it can be seen that the attitude of «have» is manifested by the vast majority of respondents (44%), while the attitude of «to be» by only less than 22%, and the attitude of «have-to-be» by more than 32% of respondents (*Table 1*).

**Table 1. The results obtained in SPBiM  
in groups of «to have», «to be», «to have-be»**

Item	Woman		Man		Total	
	n=97	%=77,6	n=28	%=22,4	n=125	%=100
To have	42	33,60	14	11,20	55	44,00
To be	21	16,80	6	4,80	27	21,60
To have-be	34	27,20	8	6,40	41	32,80

By varying the respondents in terms of gender it should be noted that women and men in the vast majority exhibit an attitude of «having» (Table 2). In second place in men and women was the attitude of «have-be», least of each sex prefers the attitude of «to be».

**Table 2. Reported levels of meaning of life  
in the groups «have», «to be», «have-to-be»**

Item		To be group				To have group				To be-have group			
		woman		man		woman		man		woman		man	
Feeling of sense of life	Results range	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
low	<102	0	0	0	0	42	33,6	14	11,2	0	0	0	0
medium	120 – 102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	27,2	8	6,4
high	121>	21	16,8	6	4,8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The test results obtained in Part A of PIL scale indicates that people with dominant attitude of «to be» manifest a high sense of meaning in life (acquired results in the range of 117 – 155 points), people with attitude «to have» reveal the meaning of life low (below 101 points), but with the attitude of «have-to-be» – average (103 – 121 points).

Analyzing the meaning of life of subjects (Table 3) it should be noted that persons with a dominant attitude of «to be» mostly appreciate the purpose of life and an assessment of yourself (M = 2.55). Also they quite highly value the meaning of life (M = 2.33) and attitude towards death and suicide (M = 2.26). Slightly lower value is for affirmation of life (M = 2.05), and an assessment of own lives (M = 2.0). While the lowest – freedom and responsibility (M = 1.42). The most consistent answers were for evaluation of own life (S = 0.00), and the most diverse – the purpose of life, own assessment, freedom and responsibility (S = 0.51) (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean scores on a scale PIL in each category

PIL scale category	To be group		To have group		To be-have group	
	M	S	M	S	M	S
Life targets	2,55	0,51	2,66	0,64	2,60	0,89
Life sense	2,33	0,49	2,43	0,34	1,97	0,27
Life affirmation	2,05	0,41	1,66	0,57	1,74	0,44
Self assessment	2,55	0,51	2,53	0,57	2,66	0,50
Assessment of own life	2	0,0	2	0,0	2	0,07
Freedom and responsibility	1,46	0,51	1,33	0,49	1,46	0,64
Attitude towards death and suicide	2,26	0,44	2,46	0,50	2,51	0,50

In contrast, people with attitude of «to have» mostly value life goals ( $M = 2.66$ ), self assessment ( $M = 2.53$ ), and the least freedom and responsibility ( $M = 1.33$ ), and affirmation of life ( $M = 1.66$ ). Most consistent were responses in terms of assessment of their own lives ( $S = 0.00$ ), and the greatest diversity was in life purposes ( $S = 0.64$ ). Group of people with the dominant values of «be-have» values mostly self evaluation ( $M = 2.66$ ), which is followed by life goals ( $M = 2.60$ ), then attitude towards death and suicide ( $M = 2.51$ ). In contrast, the lowest rating was given to category of freedom and responsibility ( $M = 1.46$ ). The largest accuracy was also be applied for the assessment of own life (0.07) and the divergence for life targets ( $S = 0.89$ ).

In order to determine statistically significant differences between the groups that prefer the given value the groups were compared in pairs, or each with each, using t-Student's test. The results are in *Table 4*.

Based on the analysis it can be concluded that the highest differences exist between the groups «have» and «have-be» for the purpose of life,  $p = 0.00$  and affirmation of life  $p = 0.00$ . Statistical significance appears in these categories. The attitudes «to be» and «have» there is also noticeable statistical significance in the category attitude towards death and suicide  $p = 0.02$ . When comparing attitudes «to be» with attitude «have-be» statistical significance in the category affirmation of life,  $p = 0.04$  is shown. Other dependencies in all the groups are not statistically significant.

**Discussion.** The analysis of the results of the studies show that people with attitude «have» have a low sense of the meaning of life, about the attitude of «to be» – high, while for the attitude of «have-to-be» – mediocre. Studies have shown the existence of correlation between the type of attitude towards the world and the level of the meaning of life.



**Table 4. Significant differences between groups in each category**

PIL scale category	«be» and «have»		«be» і «be-have»		«be-have» і «have»	
	t	p<	t	p<	t	p<
Life targets	-0,40	0,68	1,80	0,0687	2,74	0,0
Life sense	2,00	0,16	1,93	0,05	0,45	0,65
Life affirmation	1,72	0,46	-2,10	0,04	-3,07	0,0
Self assessment	0,02	0,98	0,40	0,68	0,49	0,62
Assessment of own life	-	-	-	-	-	-
Freedom and responsibility	-0,64	0,52	0,53	0,59	0,10	0,91
Attitude towards death and suicide	-2,26	0,02	-1,15	0,25	0,79	0,42

The attitude of «to be» is an attitude of admiration of people, the fascination of the world, activity, openness to others, the completion of the plans. In this aspect the existence of the sense of life in all its categories becomes justified with clear targets, affirm life, high self-assessment, assessment of own lives, a sense of freedom and a positive attitude to the death of rejecting suicide. People with this attitude have this accepting image due to positive attitude to the world. The subjects forming the group «to be» have a clear sense of the meaningfulness of their own lives. A factor that affects their sense of life are interpersonal relationships. More often they base their lives on universal, spiritual, metaphysical values. They have a goal of life, accept the prospect of death, they have a sense of achieving their full potential. They consider their lives as meaningful and full of meaning. They feel the need to be more autonomous and independent from the others. They perceive life as an important task ahead of them.

The attitude of «to have» characterizes a person who experiences the sense of danger, inhibition and caution, focus on oneself, distrust, narrowing of interest to the utilitarian values. This attitude causes more difficulty in determining own goals in life, a negative assessment of their own lives, beliefs with low freedom and responsibility for their own fate and hostility and fear of death. People characterized by an attitude of «having» take their positive attitude from a high rating from our own self-centeredness and reduced self-criticism and critical attitude to the world and other people. They discover the meaning of their lives in material things, prestige or recognition. Their strongest need is to look at the world only through what is easy, fun and immediate. The purpose of their involvement is not impersonal goal, but to draw attention to themselves, to emphasize their own uniqueness.

People with the attitude of «have-be» lie between «to be» and «to have». With the shift of continuum toward a of attitudes «have» they tend toward passivity and self-centeredness, expect more than they give of themselves. The change in the opposite direction will change life goals, affirmation of life. Their attitude to life, self-acceptance is open to reality may be less than those in the «to be» group. These are units cautious in actions that have been set more on reciprocity than on the initiative and dedication. They do not see suffering as much as people with «to be» attitude. They value lower the meaning and significance of their involvement.

**Conclusions.** The people tested in group «to be» have clear goals in life, realization of which gives them a sense of meaning of their own existence. Similarly feel people from the group «to-be» who see the meaning of their existence. In contrast, subjects qualified for the «have» group more likely than other respondents discover an emptiness and meaninglessness of their existence, feel the lack of sense of life and do not have clearly defined goals in life. People from the group «to be» base own self-esteem on positive attitude and openness to the reality; from group «to be and to have» on trust to themselves, their capabilities, and a certain reserve to the outside world; with the attitude of «be» base on competition and comparing yourself with other people and mistrustful and full of anxiety compared to reality.

These studies show how important the need to be familiar and implementation and awareness of the importance of human life is from childhood. Therefore, issues concerning the world of values should be exposed in educational programs.

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**Окраса Мажена. «Быть» или «иметь»: чувство смысла жизни как индикатора взрослости.** Отношение к жизни непосредственно связано с выбранной системой ценностных ориентаций. Последние помогают человеку утвердительно ответить на вопрос о наличии смысла жизни и последовательно его воплощать. В общем, наличие смысла жизни, или его отсутствие, тесно связаны с человеческой экзистенцией. При этом категория «иметь» основывается в основном на поиске материальных благ, а категория «быть» – на развитии интересов, углублении знаний и стремлении помочь другому человеку. Исследованием охвачено 125 студентов в возрасте 21 – 26 лет.

**Ключевые слова:** смысл жизни, ценностные ориентации, категория «быть», категория «иметь».

**Okrasa Marzena. «To be» or «to have» and the meaning of life as the indicator of adulthood.** The attitude towards life is associated with the system of approved values. An awareness of the importance of values and striving to achieve them is the chance of a positive response to the question about the sense of life. The sense of life or its lack is closely tied to human existence. The attitude of «have» relies mainly on thriving for material goods and the attitude of «to be» is based on the objective to develop the interest, deepen the knowledge and help another person. The research involved 125 students, aged 21 – 26 years.

**Key words:** attitude towards life, the meaning of life, system of values, the attitude of «have», the attitude of «to be».

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