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# Terminal values as predictors of religious experience in the lives of married couples and singles

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**Abstract:** The aims of the research I embarked on were: (a) to show the preference of terminal values in personal and in social character as well as the level of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence among singles and married couples; and (b) to show the relation between terminal values in personal and in social character and religious experience: God's presence and God's absence in two groups: singles and married couples. In the research the following methods were applied. In order to define the level of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence - the Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) by S. Glaz, and in order to show the terminal values preference among the singles and married couples the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) was applied. The research was carried out in Kraków. The age of the respondents ranged from 35 to 45. All people were Polish born. The analysis of the subject matter seems to indicate: Married couples have a higher level of religious experience of God's presence than singles. Married couples respect most two values in social character (*mature love, true friendship*), and two values in personal character (*a comfortable life, freedom*). Singles respect most three values in personal character (*a comfortable life, a successful life, freedom*), and one social value (*mature love*). The strongest variables which contribute to accounting for the variance of religious experience (God's presence and God's absence) were found to be two values in personal character: *freedom* in case of singles and *wisdom* in case of married couples.

**Keywords:** Terminal Values, Married Couples, Relationship, Religious Experience: God's Presence and God's Absence, Singles

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## 1. Introduction

Being interested in the issue of terminal values preference, in personal and in social character, which determine a person's most important aims and aspirations, and in religious experience: God's presence and God's absence within various social groups, the author has attempted to show the relation between the aforementioned variables in the lives of singles and married couples in the present period of clearly noticeable socio-cultural change.

In our culture two kinds of lifestyle appear: as a single and as a married person (Slany, 2002). The lifestyle of a single is directed at self-realization with regard to other people and the surroundings (Prusak, 2005; Dobroczyński, 2005), whereas the lifestyle of a married person also aims at forming a community and bringing up offspring alongside self-realization with regard to other people and the surroundings (Stala and Osewska, 2010; Liberska, 2011). The former lifestyle (that of a single person)

suggests that a human being achieves self-realization while caring for his and her own development in an individual and social dimension, and simultaneously, being free, derives life satisfaction, has no obligations towards others, for example because he or she is not in a relationship with anyone. The latter lifestyle (that of a married person) indicates that a human being achieves self-realization in an institution of marriage, in which the concern about his or her own development in an individual and social dimension, experiencing happiness and loneliness take place within a permanent relationship with another person.

A value is considered as something that directs human behavior in a given culture (Opoczyńska, 1995), that is respectable and desirable owing to a certain goal (Schwartz, 1992). According to Oleś (2003) values perform an important role - namely, they regulate individual and community lives in a given society. They direct human life to concret goal and promote the integration of personality and religious life (Piontek, 2008). In this paper, Rokeach's

definition of value was applied (1973). According to Rokeach, the value concept is a constant belief that a specific mode of conduct or end (ultimate) state of existence is personally and socially superior to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence. Rokeach (1969) considers a value to be a type of belief that is 'centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave'. Rokeach distinguished two kinds of values: instrumental and terminal. Terminal values can be in personal and in social character and define the end state of human desires and aspirations (such as personal freedom, salvation). Terminal values refer to desirable end-states of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime. Instrumental values are in moral character and denote competency and are seen as desirable modes of conduct (e.g. helpfulness, self-control). The terminal values denote aims that people set, whereas the instrumental values are modes of conduct thanks to which those aims can be achieved. Particular values exist within an orderly system. Hence a human ability to point to values which are higher or lower in his or her hierarchy of values.

Various research findings so far show that among researchers there are two different ways of understanding of the concept of religious experience and its origin: reductionist and autonomous. The reductionist approach to religious experience as suggested by Freud (1951) and Feuerbach (1957) is a consequence of assumptions related to the minimalist concept of man and the theory of psychoanalysis. For instance, according to neuropsychologists, it is thought that St. Paul's vision near Damascus was a result of a dysfunction of the occipital lobe of the cerebral cortex (Montmorand, 1920). According to Freud (1951), religious experience is a result of a conflict between id and ego in human beings. The representatives of the autonomous thinking, however, accepting the existence of the supernatural sphere believe that religious experience, in turn, is a kind of human experience occurring in the context of the ultimate value (Fromm, 1966; Vergote, 1967). With regard to religion, it denotes a process of direct acquisition of knowledge about religious reality as well as the whole spectrum of human experience (Godin, 1985). Emphasizing the objectivity of religious cognition and the intentionality of religious acts, James (1968) seems to admit that religious experience is a kind of communion with a force perceived as divine. It is experiencing 'something more', i.e. experiencing a higher, divine reality (James, 1968). Whereas according to Otto (1968) it is a feeling of sacredness and dependence at the same time. It is so specific that it cannot just equal any human experience.

Religious experience can be invoked by psychedelic substances (Grof, 1985, 1995; Smith, 1964). Therefore, Pahnke (1966) embarked on a study of psychedelic experience. He was determined to find out whether experiences invoked by such substances bear any resemblance to the experiences of mystics or whether they differ. Such subjective states invoked by chemical

substances have been described by such scientists as Masters and Houston (1966). For Clark (1969), in some such an experience is positive; in others, however, it can lead to irrevocable mental dysfunctions or personality disorders (Stevens, 1987; Snyder, 1986).

Researchers, drawing on the theoretical background worked out by thinkers like James (1968) and Maslow (1962), have created several study tools. They are used for studying religious experience and include: Mysticism Scale (Hood, 1975; Hood et al., 1989), Centrality of Religiosity Scale (Huber, 2003), and Mystical Experience Questionnaire (MacLean et al, 2012). The author of this paper, however, taking into account the achievements of these scientists and the concept of religious experience in accordance with the Christian religion (Rahner, 1984; Głaz, 1998), created a study tool for measuring the intensity of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence (Scale of Religious Experience) (see Głaz, 2011). The following elements should be distinguished in it: the object of religion (God personified), the subject of religion (a human being with his or her cognitive, emotional and volitive spheres) and religious relation, which is in personal character. The latter can be defined as a kind of union with God personified through which a human being attains the aims of his or her own existence. In the process of religious experience we have shown three stages: the openness of a human being to God, communication of God with a human being, and acceptance by the human being of the influence of God's spirit that inspires, comforts, heals and lives in harmony with themselves and the universe (Jarosz, 2003). A human being, when entering a relation with God, gains new knowledge about himself or herself, other people and God. Through that knowledge God 'speaks' to them and a human being responds with their faith, love and involvement (Zdybicka, 1979). What decides about the type of religious experience are elements brought in by both a man and God, taking into consideration the uniqueness and distinctive features of those elements. That is why a human being shows two different kinds of religious experience in his or her life: experience of God's presence and of God's absence. These sorts of experience are specific. They are frequently a source of different and new knowledge, which can be subject to psychological analysis. They are also a reason why opposing feelings appear in human life, like happiness - sadness, elation - doubt. The intensity of those feelings, which are set in human personality, is volatile, and their consequences are visible in a human being's attitude (Głaz, 2011).

## 2. Aims of the Study

Studies carried out by applying the Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) among numerous groups prove that people with a high level of experience of God's presence reveal greater curiosity in seeking something new, greater involvement in pursuit of goals and a greater sense of

meaning in life than people with a low level thereof (Głaz, 2002, 2003). The study by Głaz (2007) indicates that terminal values in personal and in social character are significantly related to singles' and married couples' meaning in life. The analysis of the subject indicates that values are connected with religiosity of young people (Głaz, 2010). Values are conducive to the realization of one's existence (Popielski, 2008). Values are essential in maintaining mental balance (Drucko and Magaletta, 1994; Nagel and Sgoutas-Emch, 2006). The analysis of yet another study reveals that self-reported religiosity was unrelated to pro-social behavior (Shariff and Norenzayan, 2007).

The study of related literature shows that the Polish society among many values seems to respect at the first place work, marriage and family (Domański, 2009; Liberska and Malina, 2011). A family values are mostly security and love. Family members care about themselves and their children (Liberska, 2011). They experience loneliness and happiness in life within a permanent own marital relationship. Family is something where people seek support in difficult life moments (Rozpiętkowski, 2008). Studies carried out amongst singles reveal that preferred values of them seem to respect freedom and independence. They derive happiness in life from being free. They fail to show any serious commitments towards others. However, they can have high expectations towards others than towards themselves. They are strongly involved in their professional life and sometimes work 12-14 hours a day (Prusak, 2005; Czernecka, 2011).

The problem of values and religious experience in the process of self-realization as a person is well known to psychologists (Frankl, 1992; MacLean et al., 2012; Popielski, 2008; Głaz, 2000). However, there is still a lot of problems waiting for further detailed research in this field of interest. In the present analysis of the problem it is expected that due to a difference in lifestyle, specific interests, kind of work done and interpersonal relations among singles and married couples, there is a significant relation between the kind of terminal values, which perform an important regulatory function in a human being's personality and religious life, and the kind of religious experience, which constitutes an important element of his or her religiosity, in the aforementioned social groups, and which both related literature and priestly work seem to indicate. According to Rokeach (1973) terminal values in personal character are strongly focused on an individual and accomplishment of one's own existence, whereas terminal values in social character refer more to the relation and approach to another person and the surroundings. Rokeach (1973) and Popielski (2008) claim that every person has a specific hierarchy of values. The value on top of the hierarchy has a central position in a person's life, and that values perform an important regulatory function in his or her personality and religious life. The analysis of the problem reveals that values most respected by married couples and singles have a significant

relation with their meaning in life and religious experience: God's presence and God's absence (Głaz, 2007). It is suggested that also in this case married couples respect most values which refer to accomplishment of personal and common aims and aspirations (e.g. care about the family), whereas singles show more interest in values in personal character (such as freedom). It is also expected that most preferred values, due to their essential regulatory function and their central position in personality and religious life, contribute strongly to explaining the variance of religious experience of God's presence and God's absence in the lives of married couples and singles.

## 2.1. Hypotheses and Questions

Related literature and the study problems suggest the following hypotheses:

H1. Married couples respect most values such as mature love, care about the family, wisdom and salvation.

H2. Singles respect most values such as freedom, social recognition, an exciting life and a successful life.

H3. Values most respected by married couples and singles have a significant relation with religious experience of God's presence and God's absence.

The aim of the study of this paper is to seek answers to the following study questions:

1. Are the lifestyles of singles and married couples differentiated by variables: (a) relating to terminal values in personal and in social character; (b) relating to religious experience, that is experience of God's presence and God's absence?

This study question suggests that respective study groups are accompanied by a certain preference of terminal values in personal and in social character and by a certain level of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence depending on their lifestyle.

2. To what extent and in which order do the above-mentioned variables relating to terminal values in personal and in social character explain the variance of dependent variables related to religious experience: God's presence and God's absence amongst singles and married couples?

This study question aims at revealing the influence of a predictor of religious experience - understood as God's presence and God's absence - such as terminal values in personal and in social character, taking into consideration the subjects' lifestyle.

## 2.2. The Study Subjects

In order to gain empirical material with which to solve the study problem, a study was conducted amongst singles and married couples, which took place in Krakow. The age of the respondents ranged from 35 to 45, which is perceived as a final stage of family forming and an essential stage in determining a professional career. All participants were Polish born, culturally homogeneous, and stemmed from families of average affluence. The results obtained on the basis of 120 sets of correctly completed questionnaires from

persons who believe that they had an experience of God's presence and God's absence (singles: 30 females and 30 males, and married couples: 30 females and 30 males) were further analyzed. The married couples included people (males and females) in a permanent relationship, legally recognized and confirmed during a church wedding ceremony. They have been married for 13 - 20 years. All married couples have set up a family and bring up 1 - 3 children.

### 2.3. Characteristic of Methods Applied

The choice of appropriate tools was determined by the aim of the study. The author applied such study tools available to present-day psychology which would help define the preference of terminal values, level of religious experience and the relation thereof.

a) The Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) by S. Głaz. The author has created a research tool for measuring the intensity of religious experience - God's presence and God's absence. It is comprised of a set of 37 statements religious in character and referring to the Christian religion. Each statement on the scale is accompanied by seven possible answers. The task of a respondent is to choose an opinion on the seven-point Likert-type scale expressing to what extent he or she agrees or disagrees with a given statement. Factor validity were applied. For the interpretation of the results of factor analysis, the variables (statements) whose loadings exceeded 0.400 were taken into account. The scale has three sub-scales. The first one describes the intensity of experience of God in general (DB), the second scale serves to measure the intensity of experience of God's presence (OB), and the third scale describes the intensity of experience of God's absence (NB). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency is high and stands at 0.91- 0.94. The correlation coefficients obtained stand at a high level and are positive (0.57 - 0.64) (Głaz, 2011). The scale was tested on several samples, which included students of Catholic state universities as well as elderly people.

b) In order to determine values preference amongst singles and married couples, the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) was applied. It consists of two sub-scales. Each sub-scale consists of 18 values. One of the sub-scales is used to measure the preference of terminal values (personal and social), i.e. the most important goals and desires, whereas the other sub-scale is used to order instrumental values (moral and competence), which are the most general modes of conduct. Rokeach estimated the permanence of each value (test reliability) by the test-retest method ( $N = 250$ ) and the scores for terminal values were coefficients ranging from 0.51 to 0.88, and for instrumental values from 0.45 to 0.70. The ranking correlation coefficients between the Polish and American versions of the terminal and instrumental values scales were 0.99 and 0.98 respectively. The (r) Pearson coefficients for individual positions equaled: in case of terminal values - on average 0.79, and for instrumental values - on average 0.68 (Rokeach, 1973). In

the present paper only the scale of terminal values in personal and in social character was used.

### 2.4. Research Strategy

Researchers dealing with problems connected the human life are well familiar with the question of terminal values in personal and in social character. However, there is a noticeable lack of more detailed studies, which encourages further investigation of the problem. Alongside the aforementioned methodological principles at hand, a further strategy of this study was outlined.

The study results amongst singles and married couples obtained by means of the Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) and the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) were further analyzed. In order to show the significance of differences between the groups of respondents (singles and married couples) the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. The results were subsequently interpreted on the basis of the mean values (M) and standard deviations (SD). For the variables expressed by ranks a non-parametric significance test (Mann-Whitney U test) was applied. Showing statistically significant differences and rank values will enable to find answers to the main study question - namely, to what extent the lifestyle differentiates the world of terminal values in personal and in social character as well as religious experience: God's presence and God's absence.

Also, the procedure of the analysis of the multiple stepwise regression was applied. This type of method has several functions: it aims at finding independent variables (so-called 'significant'); it describes the relation between an independent variable and a dependent variable (multiple regression coefficient - R); and it sets the percentage value of the explanatory variance of a dependent variable ( $R^2$ ); it also shows the order in which independent variables are entered into the equation of the regression. Taking into consideration the specificity of the subject groups, the applied research procedure will show what kind of terminal values is significantly correlated with religious experience of God's presence and God's absence in the groups of singles and married couples.

## 3. Results

A) In accordance with the assumptions, the analysis of the obtained results made it possible to answer the question to what extent one's lifestyle differentiates terminal values in personal and in social character and religious experience of God's presence and God's absence.

Results obtained using the Scale of Religious Experience (SRE) reveal that both singles and married couples are characterized by an average level of religious experience: God's presence and God's absence. A noticeable statistically significant difference among singles and married couples occurs only in one factor: experience of God's presence (OB) ( $p < 0.05$ ), with married couples having a higher level thereof than singles. In second factor, which relates to experience of God's absence (NB), the results scored by

singles and married couples were very similar.

The results obtained using the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) relating to terminal values in personal and in social character show that among singles the following values were ranked the highest: *a comfortable life* (5.0), *mature love* (6.0), *freedom* (7.0) and *true friendship* (7.0), whereas the lowest ranked values turned out to be: *an exciting life* (16.0) and *pleasure* (16.0), *national security* (14.0) and *equality* (13.0). In the group consisting of married couples, the highest ranking received terminal values such as *mature love* (5.0), *a comfortable life* (5.0), then *wisdom* (6.0) and *self-respect* (7.0), whereas the lowest ranked values were: *pleasure* (16.0), *a world of beauty* (16.0), *an exciting life* (14.0) and *social recognition* (13.0). See Table 1 for the results of the analysis.

**Table 1.** Ranking distribution of terminal values in personal (o) and in social (s) character in groups of singles and married couples

| Groups                          | Singles   | Married couples  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Most preferred terminal values  | a comfortable life (o) (5.0)<br>mature love (s) (6.0)<br>freedom (o) (7.0)<br>true friendship (s) (7.0)   | mature love (s) (5.0)<br>a comfortable life (o) (5.0)<br>wisdom (o) (6.0)<br>self-respect (o) (7.0)                |
| Least preferred terminal values | an exciting life (o) (16.0)<br>pleasure (o) (16.0)<br>national security (s) (14.0)<br>equality (s) (13.0) | pleasure(o) (16.0)<br>a world of beauty (o) (15.0)<br>an exciting life (o) (14.0)<br>social recognition (o) (13.0) |

B) It was also resolved to study the relation of terminal values in personal and in social character (which are the independent variable) with the dependent variable, which is experience of God's presence (OB) and God's absence (NB) in the groups of singles and married couples respectively. See Table 2 and 3 for results analysis.

**Table 2.** Independent variables relating to terminal values in personal (o) and in social (s) character explaining the variance of religious experience: God's presence (OB) in groups of singles and married couples. The results of the multiple stepwise regression analysis

| Groups          | Values explaining the variance of experience of God's presence (OB) | R     | B    | Percentage of explained variance (R <sup>2</sup> x 100%) |
|-----------------|---|-------|------|--|
| Singles         | freedom (o)   | 0.555 | 0.62 | 30   |
|                 | self-respect (o)  | 0.567 | 0.43 | 32   |
|                 | social recognition (o)  | 0.576 | 0.21 | 34   |
|                 | wisdom (o)  | 0.579 | 0.54 | 35   |
| Married couples | wisdom (o)  | 0.510 | 0.45 | 25   |
|                 | salvation (o)   | 0.536 | 0.34 | 28   |
|                 | inner harmony (o)   | 0.541 | 0.52 | 30   |
|                 | a world of beauty (o)   | 0.580 | 0.32 | 34   |
|                 | mature love (s)   | 0.615 | 0.57 | 38   |

In the group of singles four different terminal values, all in personal character, namely *freedom* (o), *self-respect* (o), *social recognition* (o) and *wisdom* (o), explain the variance of the independent variable - experience of God's presence (OB). The first one, *freedom*, accounts for 30% of the variable experience of God's presence (OB) (R = 0.555), and all of them together account for 35% of the variable of

that experience (R = 0.579). The goodness of fit of the obtained equation of stepwise regression determines the F-test value F = 5.21, df = 4, p < 0.05. Moreover, in the group of married couples five different terminal values - four in personal character and one in social - *wisdom*, *salvation*, *inner harmony*, *a world of beauty* and *mature love* - account for the variance of the independent variable - experience of God's presence (OB). The first one, *wisdom*, accounts for 25% of the variance of experience of God's presence (OB) (R = 0.510), whereas all of them together account for 38% of the variance of that experience (R = 0.615). The goodness of fit of the obtained equation of stepwise regression determines the F-test value F = 6.21, df = 5, p < 0.05.

**Table 3.** Independent variables relating to terminal values in personal (o) and in social (s) character explaining the variance of religious experience of God's absence (NB) in the groups of singles and married couples. The results of the multiple stepwise regression analysis

| Groups          | Values explaining the variance of experience of God's absence (NB) | R     | B    | Percentage of explained variance (R <sup>2</sup> x 100) |
|-----------------|--|-------|------|---|
| Singles         | true friendship (s)  | 0.336 | 0.52 | 12  |
|                 | equality (s)   | 0.372 | 0.23 | 16  |
|                 | freedom (o)  | 0.436 | 0.47 | 19  |
| Married couples | mature love (s)  | 0.324 | 0.36 | 10  |
|                 | wisdom (o)   | 0.427 | 0.23 | 18  |
|                 | family security (s)  | 0.463 | 0.48 | 22  |
|                 | self-respect (o)   | 0.476 | 0.39 | 23  |

In the group of singles three different terminal values - two in social character and one in personal - namely *true friendship* (s), *equality* (s) and *freedom* (o) account for the variance of the independent variable - experience of God's absence (NB). The first one, *true friendship*, accounts merely 12% of the variance of experience of God's absence (NB) (R = 0.336), whereas all of them together account for 19% of the variance of that experience (R = 0.436). The goodness of fit of the obtained equation of stepwise regression determines the F-test value F = 6.42, df = 3, p < 0.05. In the group of married couples, however, four different terminal values - two in personal character and two in social - such as: *mature love* (s), *wisdom* (o), *family security* (s) and *self-respect* (o) account for the variance of the independent variable - experience of God's absence (NB). The first one, *mature love*, accounts for merely 10% of the variance of experience of God's absence (NB) (R = 0.324), whereas all four of them together account for 23% of the variance of that experience (R = 0.476). The goodness of fit of the obtained equation of stepwise regression determines the F-test value F = 6.81, df = 4, p < 0.05.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of the subject matter of this paper concerning the relation between terminal values in personal and in social character, and religious experience of God's



presence and God's absence in the groups of singles and married couples indicates that each of those dimensions is important and significant and that each of them performs an appropriate role in the entire human existence.

a) It indicates that married couples are accompanied by a higher level of religious experience, that is God's presence and God's absence, than singles. It appears that married couples are only accompanied by a higher level of God's presence, whereas both singles and married couples present an equal level of experience of God's absence. It was expected, in accordance with the suggestions made by some researchers (Prusak, 2005; Głaz, 2007), that married couples show a higher level of experience of God's absence than singles.

b) The first hypothesis, which suggests that married couples respect more values which favor self-realization, bringing up offspring and building a community, was confirmed. It concerns values such as mature love, care about the family, wisdom and salvation. The present study indicates that from among eighteen terminal values married couples respect most two values in social character - mature love and true friendship, and two values in personal character - a comfortable life and freedom. Only one social value suggested in the hypothesis - mature love - was among the values most respected by married couples. In accordance with the suggestions in related literature and the study hypothesis (Rozpiętkowski, 2008; Domański, 2009), married couples, who reveal a high level of experience of God's presence and His absence show considerable care about each other and their children, respect terminal values like care about the family and salvation and perform an essential regulatory function in their lives.

c) The second hypothesis, which suggests that singles respect most personal values such as freedom, social recognition, an exciting life and a successful life, was only partly confirmed. The present study indicates that from among eighteen terminal values singles respect most three values in personal character - a comfortable life, a successful life and freedom, and one social value - mature love. Only two values suggested in the hypothesis - freedom and a successful life, which are in personal character, were among the values most respected by singles. It was expected, in accordance with the suggestions in related literature, that people taking on a lifestyle of a single and not being in any permanent relationship, would prioritize values in personal character, which means the ones that focus on an individual and favor the accomplishment of one's own goals.

d) The third hypothesis, which suggests that the terminal values most respected by married couples and singles have a significant relation with religious experience of God's presence and God's absence and explain its variance, was only partly confirmed. The study reveals that in the group of married couples among the most respected terminal values (with top four taken into consideration) one value in social character - mature love, and another one in personal

character - wisdom are significantly related with experience of God's presence, and one terminal value in social character - mature love and two in personal character - wisdom and self-respect have a significant relation with experience of God's absence. In the group of singles, however, among the most respected terminal values (with top four taken into consideration) none of the most respected values is significantly related to experience of God's presence, but one value in personal character - freedom and another one in social character - true friendship have a significant relation with experience of God's absence. It was expected, in accordance with the suggestions in related literature and findings by other researchers (Wojtasik, 2004; Głaz, 2007), that values most respected by married couples and singles, due to their essential regulatory function and an important position in an individual's personality and religious life, contribute to a large extent to explaining the variance of religious experience of God's presence and God's absence. The present analysis of the problem shows that married couples and singles respect terminal values, which form a hierarchical system and determine their most important aims and aspirations in social and in personal character; however, the values most respected by them, in this case, do not contribute to explaining the variance of religious experience of God's presence and God's absence as much as expected.

The obtained results indicate formulation of several important comments. The most respected terminal value by married couples is mature love, which is in social character, and by singles - a comfortable life, which is in personal character. According to Rokeach (1973) values form a system of beliefs, aspirations and aims within a hierarchy and their central position proves their important regulatory function in a human life. It implies that from among eighteen terminal values it is mature love that performs an important regulatory function in married couples' lives and in the lives of singles that is a comfortable life.

Terminal values, which are predictors of religious experience of God's presence and His absence, explain 35% - 38% of the variance of experience of God's presence in the lives of singles, whereas in the lives of married couples 25% - 38%. Moreover, they explain 12% - 19% of the variance of experience of God's absence in the lives of singles and 10% - 23% in the lives of married couples. They also explain almost twice as much of the variance of religious experience of God's presence in the group of singles and married couples as the variance of religious experience of God's absence in those groups. It would suggest that, in this case, terminal values contribute more to the occurrence of religious experience of God's presence than God's absence in the lives of singles and married couples.

The strongest predictor of religious experience of God's presence and His absence in the lives of singles is a value in personal character - freedom, whereas in the lives of married couples it is wisdom - also a value in personal

character. It seems to suggest that it is values in personal and egocentric character that perform an important function in religious experience of God's presence and His absence of singles and married couples, which was also confirmed by Popielski (2008).

The present analysis of the study problem suggests that a kind of lifestyle does not necessarily decides about the choice of the kind of terminal values, but it is rather the need for self-realization as a person. Married couples, who apart from professional work care about building a community and bringing up offspring, in accordance with related literature (Rozpiętkowski, 2008; Domański, 2009), should respect more terminal values in social character rather than in personal. It turns out that from among terminal values they respect more values in personal than in social character. It suggests that this kind of values has a central position in building a marital unity and bringing up offspring as well as in the process of the spouse development.

Researchers (Oleś, 2002; Oliynichuk and Popielski, 2008) are right in observing that it is not known to what extent the preferred values are only respected and desired and to what extent they are actually observed in the lives of married couples and singles. However, one must admit that the presented values preference of singles and married couples and its significant relation with religious experience of God's presence and God's absence suggests that terminal values, which determine a person's most important aims and aspirations, perform an essential regulatory function in personality and religious life of married couples and singles. It particularly refers to terminal values in personal character, which focus on an individual, are egocentric in nature and are connected with accomplishment of one's existence.

## 5. Conclusions

The present analysis of the subject matter, aiming at showing the relation between terminal values in personal and in social character and religious experience of God's presence and His absence in the lives of singles and married couples, implies several conclusions. There exists a significant correlation between terminal values in personal and in social character and religious experience of God's presence and God's absence amongst singles and married couples.

The strongest variables which contribute to explaining the variance of religious experience of God's presence and His absence turned out to be two terminal values in personal character: *freedom* in the lives of singles, and *wisdom* in the lives of married couples.

The analysis of the subject matter indicates that all dimensions taken into consideration in this paper are autonomic in their cognitive, emotional, evaluative and aspiring dimensions, however, they constitute an integrity of human life. They decide about singles' and married couples' cognitive-social development as well as the way they live

their lives.

The strategy of learning all life, which is currently in progress, should be included the values in personal and in social character, as one of the important aspects of learning outcomes. The research shows that this can be a significant and very important aspect in the development of marriage and singles as valuable people.

The present analysis of the subject matter can make a contribution to more detailed empirical studies. Many questions are still left with no answer, e.g. the one concerning the relationship between terminal values in personal and in social character and other, not studied so far elements of personality; factors which favor religious experience of God's presence and God's absence; or the role of one's own activity in accomplishment of values.

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