

Hedonism, fatalism and ‘carpe diem’: Profiles of attitudes towards the present time

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationships between three types of attitude towards the present time and sense of purpose and meaning in life, positive and negative affect, time conception, past and future time orientations, and the ‘Big Five’. K-means cluster analysis revealed three profiles of attitudes towards the present time: ‘Epicureanism’, ‘fatalistic hedonism’ and ‘absence from here and now’. ‘Epicureanism’, in contrast to ‘fatalistic hedonism’ and ‘absence from here and now’, was positively related to sense of purpose and meaning in life, positive emotions and positive evaluation of time.

Keywords

Present time orientation, time conception, time metaphors

Introduction

Some people are said to live in the past. Although the past time has passed it seems to them that this time is still present. They brood over what once happened and it still arouses strong emotions in them. These people are characterized by past time orientation. There are also some people for whom only the future is important. They spend a lot of time dreaming and planning. They often construct more or less realistic scripts of future events in their imagination. These people can be described as having the future time perspective. Other people, however, are focused primarily on

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the present. These people prefer what is current to what has already happened or what will occur. These people can be characterized as present time oriented. Generally, time orientation involves attitudes towards these three time dimensions: the past, the future and the present.

This article elaborates on present time orientation, especially complex types of attitude towards the present time. Present time orientation is usually defined in psychology, especially cognitive psychology, as hedonism. People with a hedonistic focus on 'here and now' are capable of using changes which take place in their environment to maximize pleasure and their own benefits. Such behaviour results from lack of reflection on the past and the future. Such people do not try to interfere with the changes which take place but they are determined to avoid distress and maximize pleasure (see Nosal and Bajcar, 2004). Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) comment on the following characteristics of a hedonistic attitude towards the present: focusing on pleasures and neglecting the past and the future; making decisions on the spur of the moment; love of risk; a busy social life.

Present time orientation is also defined by some researchers as fatalism. Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) describe people with a fatalistic approach towards the present in the following way: they hardly ever think about the future; they are not involved in making and realizing plans as they believe they do not have any influence on the future as it has already been planned; they believe in a bit of luck rather than the results that hard work brings. People with such a temporal orientation endure the present with resignation since they think people do not have any influence on events. Fatalists live a day-to-day existence not because they seek pleasure but because they want to avoid planning the next day and seek to minimize the fear of a determined future. According to Zimbardo and Boyd (1999), growing up in poverty often makes people 'prisoners' of a fatalistic focus on the present. According to Maslow (1999), if a fatalist focuses on the present, they stop 'wanting', they lose free will and they live according to the rule: 'whatever will be, will be; this is what the world is like'.

It would appear that present time orientation is expressed in empirical psychological literature only as an attitude which causes problems in psychosocial functioning, but concentration on the present is manifested not only hedonism or fatalism but also, for example, in children's joy of living, joy from seeing the world, from playing, and simply from the fact of existence. Also, performing work with passion signifies concentration on the present. That is why we decided to distinguish and explore a different type of concentration on the present other than hedonism and fatalism, that is, active 'carpe diem' concentration on the present (see Sobol-Kwapinska, 2009). Two aspects of the active present time orientation may be distinguished: focus on what is happening 'here and now' and

consciousness of the value of each moment of life. This attitude does not involve neglecting the past and not taking into account any consequences. It is rather about being free from the burden which is the past and from thoughts about what is going to happen in a moment. The focus on what the moment brings enables an involvement in the present which entails a feeling of freshness and spontaneity in perceiving the reality. Discerning the value and uniqueness of every moment of life usually comes from reflection on the transience of life. The active concentration on the present has a lot in common with the concept of 'here and now' in Gestalt therapy (Zinker, 1977) and with the concept of 'mindfulness' in cognitive therapy (Hayes and Wilson, 2003).

The aim of this article is further analysis of a 'carpe diem' present time orientation, that is, the analysis of relations between compound forms of attitudes toward the present and the purpose of life, emotional state, time conception, past and future time orientation, and the five dimensions of personality. By compound forms of attitudes towards the present we mean mixed present time orientation, an attitude which is composed of hedonistic, fatalistic and active concentrations escalating to different extents. Thus the results of three present time orientation scales (Hedonism, Fatalism and Carpe Diem scales) were the grounds for distinguishing groups of participants with different kinds of attitudes towards the present.

With regard to the theoretical grounds of our research we largely applied the Zimbardo and Boyd (2008) theory of optimal time perspective, the Gestalt theory of here and now (Zinker, 1977), the Onion Theory of Happiness (Czapinski, 1994), and the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

We presumed that the analysis of relations between hedonistic, fatalistic and active 'carpe diem' orientations would show the distinctiveness of the active orientation in relation to other present time orientations. Hedonistic and fatalistic present time orientations have a lot in common. Both hedonism and fatalism are linked with low levels of well-being, high anxiety, risky behaviours, problems with interpersonal relations, low efficiency at work (DeVolder and Lens, 1982; Epel et al., 1999; Keough et al., 1999; Nosal and Bajcar, 2004; Nuttin, 1985; Rothspan and Read, 1996; Zimbardo and Boyd, 1999, 2008). Presumably, fatalistic concentration on the present is linked with hedonism in a feedback loop – the person who is convinced of their powerlessness and lack of influence on what is happening escapes by looking for pleasure at all costs. Hedonistic concentration on the present causes a sense of insufficiency and apathy which can lead to a sense of helplessness and passive waiting for the future.

How do we explain how active present time orientation relates to different psychosocial functioning from hedonism and fatalism? In the light of

optimal time perspective theory (Zimbardo and Boyd, 2008), it can be said first of all that openness differentiates active concentration from hedonism and fatalism – openness to the present time and also to the past and future. Hedonism and fatalism are in a sense an escape from past, present and future in sensory pleasures and passivity (Nosal and Bajcar, 2004; Zimbardo and Boyd, 1999, 2008).

According to Zimbardo and Boyd (1999, 2008) balanced and flexible time orientation is the optimal time perspective. The optimal time perspective is essential for an effective life. Flexible time perspective permits a choice of the best time orientation at a given moment. This time orientation also gives an opportunity to look at various life experiences from different perspectives.

People who are characterized by frequent active present time orientation are open to what happens here and now, and that is why they can adapt to changeable life situations. Therefore we supposed that participants with frequent active present time orientation would be characterized by moderate concentration on past and future. Active present time orientation is openness to the present moment, so presumably it would be related to openness to the external world and other people.

'Carpe diem' concentration also means consciousness of what is experienced 'here and now' and awareness of the worth of the present moment. These aspects of the concentration on the present are stressed in Gestalt therapy (Zinker, 1977). Thanks to active concentration on the present and the focus on sensations, the reality can be perceived as much richer. It is easier for one to overcome sorrow and fear, emotions referring to the past and future respectively, owing to the awareness that the past and future do not really exist. The only existing time dimension is 'here and now', a time free from sorrow and fear. People who adopt a 'carpe diem' approach see the past from the angle of the present, which is the only and most important time in which one can really exist. Such an attitude towards the past releases its owner from their burden. It could also be said that 'carpe diem' present time orientation also facilitates planning the future. An individual who is able to concentrate on what (s)he feels and desires here and now has a greater opportunity to choose more rewarding goals that (s)he prefers or is able to achieve. In addition, active orientation enables individuals to achieve goals owing to good concentration on activities being performed here and now to achieve particular goals. That is why we assumed that subjects who actively focus on the present will rarely experience negative emotions, especially fear, but they will more often experience positive ones.

The abilities to focus fully on the moment here and now and to experience a wide range of sensations here and now also help us to concentrate fully on the other person living at this moment and to read his/her emotions. It all helps to maintain good relations with other people. It was

assumed that people who actively concentrate on the present had a tendency to compromise with others.

Active orientation could also be understood as a positive attitude towards life – life ‘here and now’, that is, the only real life which people get. Thanks to ‘carpe diem’, individuals can get what Czapinski (1994) called the will to live, which is the deepest and most important layer of well-being. To a great extent, it is the childlike joy of existence in its own right.

‘Carpe diem’ could be compared with the joy of doing something exciting. Here, this approach has much in common with the ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihaly, 1999), which is so absorbing and enjoyable that it becomes autotelic, that is, valuable in its own right, even if it does not produce any results. Research reveals that people who often experience ‘flow’ are deeply convinced of the value of their life and the importance of life goals (Csikszentmihaly, 1999). Active orientation is connected with being absorbed in what is being done. That is why we thought it would also be connected with the perception of the value of life and meaning of goals in life.

It is also worth pointing out gender differences in time perception (see Block, 1990) According to research, women more often perceive time as cyclic and valuable in every moment of life (Nosal and Bajcar, 2004). They more frequently associate their well-being ‘here and now’ with their family and children, whereas men usually pay more attention to their professional career. It can be assumed that there are some gender differences between the attitude towards the present and the attitude towards time, other people and the world.

To sum up, in this work the main research questions are as follows:

- What compound forms of attitudes towards present time can be distinguished?
- What are the relations between the compound forms of attitudes towards the present time and purpose in life, positive and negative affect, time conception, past and future time orientation and the five dimensions of personality?

These questions will be answered by: (a) using cluster analysis to distinguish groups of participants differing in attitude towards the present time; and (b) comparing these groups with regard to purpose in life, positive and negative affect, time conception, past and future time orientation and the five dimensions of personality.

The following hypotheses were formulated:

- Present-time oriented people rarely adopt hedonistic and fatalistic attitudes towards the present and they have positive attitudes towards time

and the sense of life. They often experience positive emotions and rarely negative ones. They maintain emotional balance and they are diligent and open to other people and the world; what is more, they have a tendency to compromise.

- People with a hedonistic approach to the present also often adopt fatalistic attitudes to time, have a negative attitude towards time, a poor sense of life, often experience negative emotions and strong neuroticism, tend to lack diligence and openness, are not kind to other people and have an aversion to the world.

Method

Participants

A sample of 320 participants were tested in this study. The sample consisted of 216 women and 104 men, ranging from 19 to 65 years of age ($M = 32.85$; $SD = 11.94$). The research was carried out in Poland. The participants were recruited from the general population in towns and cities. Most of them received the questionnaires with appropriate instructions from psychologists; some of them received the questionnaires by post. The group was intended to consist of 250 women and 250 men and so a considerable number of questionnaires were sent. In the end, however, there were far more female participants in the group – twice as many as males – because of gender differences relating to accuracy in completing the questionnaires.

Among the participants were academically educated people ($N = 174$), people with secondary education ($N = 139$) and four people with vocational secondary education. Three people did not give any information about their education. The participants followed about 30 different occupations. Most women worked as teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and social workers, whereas men worked mostly as technicians, blue-collar workers, farmers or were in the medical profession. As far as age was concerned, most participants were still young – 54 per cent had not turned 30. All these factors should be taken into consideration in interpreting and generalizing the results of the test.

Instruments

Present time orientation. The ‘Moment’ Questionnaire (KM, Sobol-Kwapinska, 2009) was used to test three forms of present time orientation. It consists of three scales (Hedonism, Fatalism, Carpe Diem) distinguished by means of factor analysis.

The Hedonism scale ($\alpha = 0.72$). This scale is composed of nine items; for example, 'Only good fun counts'. It measures the level of hedonistic present time orientation. High scores are obtained by those for whom pleasure is the most important thing and who do not pay too much attention to the past or the future. These individuals tend not to take into account the consequences of their own behaviour.

The Fatalism scale ($\alpha = 0.74$). The Fatalism scale has eight items; for example, 'There is no point in thinking about the future because it cannot be predicted'. This scale measures fatalistic present time orientation. People obtaining high scores live a day-to-day existence and believe that there is no sense in planning the future because it is determined by fate.

The Carpe Diem scale ($\alpha = 0.79$). Twelve items are included in this scale; for example, 'I appreciate the value of every moment of life'. The Carpe Diem scale measures active present time orientation. People who score high on this scale are capable of fully focusing on the present. They often try to enjoy every day as much as possible and they appreciate the value of every moment of life. They are usually able to identify the rhythm of their body and adjust their everyday activity to it.

The KM asks participants to indicate how the statements agree with their attitudes towards the present time. The responses are based on a four-point scale ranging from 'entirely correct' to 'completely incorrect'. Validity of the KM is evidenced by its correlations with other time perspective scales. For instance, the Fatalism and Hedonism scales strongly negatively correlate with the Future scale, and the Carpe Diem scale strongly correlates with the Telicity scale from the Temporal Orientation Questionnaire AION-2000 (Nosal and Bajcar, 2004).

Time conception. Time conception was assessed with the Time Metaphors Questionnaire (KMC; Sobol-Kwapinska, 2008). This questionnaire consists of 10 scales. The Constructive Time (CT) scale ($\alpha = 0.93$, 20 items) contains metaphors which reflect time as directed towards discovery of the truth and towards achievement of goals (for example, 'Time is a way to put plans in operation'). The Friendly Time (FT) scale ($\alpha = 0.86$, 12 items) describes time as a good, trustworthy friend, who can soothe and teach (for example, 'Ever-ageing time teaches all things'). The Awareness of Mortality (AM) scale ($\alpha = 0.84$, nine items) includes metaphors which emphasize the inevitability of death (for example, 'Time is an incurable disease'). The Hostile Time (HT) scale ($\alpha = 0.86$, 10 items) depicts time in terms of disappointment, a poison and a cruel enemy (for example, 'Time is a disappointment'). The Confusion in Time (CO) scale ($\alpha = 0.82$, nine items) characterizes time as a prison and a dark power which is out of control (for example, 'Time flows beside me').

The Rapid Passage of Time (RP) scale ($\alpha = 0.85$, 10 items) consists of items representing time as a vehicle which moves with an excessive speed (for example, 'Time flies like an arrow'). The Significance of the Moment (SM) scale ($\alpha = 0.77$, seven items) includes two kinds of metaphors: describing time as a river and indicating the necessity of making the most of each moment of life (for example, 'Each moment is worth one's weight in gold'). The Chaotic Time (CH) scale ($\alpha = 0.80$, seven items) consists of items which describe time as turbulent (for example, 'Time is like a stormy ocean'). The Subtle Time (ST) scale ($\alpha = 0.79$, six items) describes time as light and peaceful (for example, 'Time is like incense smoke'). The Empty Time (ET) scale ($\alpha = 0.67$, five items) represents time as boredom, tiredness and monotony (for example, 'Time is like a drowsy afternoon').

The KMC asks participants to indicate 'how they imagine time' (Sobol-Kwapinska, 2008). Responses are based on a four-point scale ranging from 'very appropriate' to 'very inappropriate'. The validity of the KMC is shown by its correlations with hypothetically related variables (Sobol-Kwapinska, 2008; Sobol-Kwapinska and Nosal, 2009; Sobol-Kwapinska and Oles, 2007).

Past and future time orientations. The Temporal Orientation Scale (AION-2000; Nosal and Bajcar, 2004) was used to assess past and future time orientations. In this study seven subscales of this method were used: Past (Pa, measures a person's concentration on the past and positive evaluation of the past, $\alpha = 0.70$); Future (Fu, the direction of thinking inclined to the future, $\alpha = 0.75$); Telicity (Tel, describes exactness of goals and persistence in achieving them, $\alpha = 0.82$); and Planning (Pla, formulation and thinking of plans, $\alpha = 0.82$).

The 'big five'. The five basic personality dimensions were measured with the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; McCrae and Costa, 2004). This questionnaire is composed of 60 items. The NEO-FFI version translated by Zawadzki et al. (1998) was used in this study (Neuroticism, Neu, $\alpha = 0.80$; Extraversion, Ext, $\alpha = 0.77$; Openness, Ope, $\alpha = 0.68$; Agreeableness, Agr, $\alpha = 0.68$; Conscientiousness, Con, $\alpha = 0.82$).

Purpose in life. Sense of purpose in life was assessed with the 20-item Purpose in Life Test (PIL; Crumbaugh, 1968). The PIL measures the degree to which an individual experiences a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The answers to the statements are scored on a seven-point scale. One extreme of this scale reflects feelings indicative of purpose and the other extreme reflects feelings of no purpose in life. The Polish version of the PIL ($\alpha = 0.71$), was applied in this study (Popielski, 1996).

Positive and negative affect. Emotional state was measured with the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988). The original PANAS includes two 10-item mood subscales: Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA). In the present study, participants were asked to indicate how they felt generally on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = very slightly or not at all to 5 = extremely. The Polish version of the PANAS (alpha = 0.82 for PA subscale, alpha = 0.80 for NA subscale), translated by Sobol-Kwapinska (2009), was used in this study.

Results

Data analysis

Cluster analysis is a statistical technique that groups individuals into categories based on their similarity (Hair and Black, 2000). In this study, K-means cluster analysis was used to identify patterns of attitudes towards the present time. K-means cluster analysis is a method serving 'to partition N objects (each having measurements on V variables) into K classes (C_1, C_2, \dots, C_K), where C_t is the set of n_t objects in cluster t , and K is given' (Steinley, 2006: 179). The K-means algorithm operates by defining K initial seeds and obtaining the squared Euclidean distance between the objects and seeds vectors. Each object is assigned to the cluster with the minimum distance in relation to its defining seed. The K-means cluster analysis is the preferred method when the number of clusters is known in advance, and when the seed or anchor points that define the profiles for these clusters are specified (Lorr, 1983; Steinley, 2006).

To examine attitudes towards the present time, a series of K-means cluster analyses were performed with hedonism, fatalism and active concentration on the present as the constituting dimensions. Results on the Hedonism, Fatalism and Carpe Diem scales were included in the cluster analysis. The analysis resulted in participants being assigned to three groups (Table 1). These clusters had similar numbers and differed by the degree of concentration on the present. The results of the cluster analysis carried out in subgroups of men and women were similar. Table 1 shows the final K-means cluster profiles transformed into standardized scores. Cluster names were based on the results from the three present time orientation scales.

Cluster I comprises 133 participants (91 women, 42 men). They are characterized by a relatively strong active present time orientation (CD), and rather weak fatalistic and hedonistic orientations (FAT, HED). These persons can be called 'Epicureans'. Group II consists of 108 participants (32 men, 76 women) who obtained average scores on the Carpe Diem scale (CD) and high scores on the Fatalistic (FAT) and Hedonistic

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of T results in three present time orientation scales.

Scale	Clusters					
	I (N = 133)		II (N = 108)		III (N = 79)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Carpe Diem	55.69	6.11	51.70	8.17	38.14	7.20
Fatalism	44.47	6.53	59.94	7.27	45.74	7.59
Hedonism	47.04	7.03	58.95	8.14	42.79	7.54

scales (HED). These participants were named 'Fatalistic hedonists'. Group III encompasses 79 participants (30 men and 49 women) with low scores on the Carpe Diem (CD), Fatalistic (FAT) and Hedonistic (HED) scales. These persons were named 'Absent from here and now'.

'Epicureans', 'Fatalistic hedonists', and 'Absent from here and now' groups, separately for women (see Table 2) and men (see Table 3), were compared with regard to levels of positive and negative emotions and purpose in life by means of analysis of variance ANOVA and Scheffe post hoc tests. The raw scores from all the scales were transformed into T scores. We analysed the clusters separately as a function of gender because of gender differences in attitudes toward time, as mentioned in the introduction.

Purpose in life, and positive and negative affect characteristics of clusters

MANOVA indicated that there was a significant effect of cluster grouping on sense of purpose and meaning in life and affect scores (for the female sample $F = 5.86$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$; for the male sample $F = 2.63$, $df = 6$, $p < .05$). As illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, follow-up ANOVAs indicated that compared with the 'Fatalistic hedonists' cluster and the 'Absent from here and now' cluster, the 'Epicureans' cluster had higher scores on the PIL and PA scales and lower scores on the NA scale.

Time conception characteristics of clusters

There was a significant effect of cluster grouping on time conception only for the female sample (MANOVA: $F = 2.88$, $df = 20$, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and significant differences of scores on the PIL, PANAS (PA, NA), KMC (CT, FT, AM, HT, CO, RP, SM, CH, ST, ET), AION-2000 (Pas, Fut, Tel, Pla), and NEO-FFI (Neu, Ext, Ope, Agr, Con)¹ for the female sample.

Scale	Subscale	Clusters						Significance of differences F groups
		I		II		III		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
		'Epicureans'		'Fatalistic hedonists'		'Absent from here and now'		
		N = 91		N = 76		N = 49		
PIL		53.19	7.71	47.18	11.06	47.68	11.16	9.27*** I-II; I-III
PANAS	PA	52.38	7.92	50.22	9.59	45.52	12.93	7.77*** I-III
	NA	48.35	8.85	54.33	10.45	53.59	10.16	9.08*** I-II; I-III
KMC	CT	52.20	7.53	51.59	9.00	47.81	10.82	4.16* I-III
	FT	50.79	9.10	51.73	9.62	47.32	9.86	3.42*
	AM	47.59	8.78	54.18	9.83	48.60	10.13	10.87*** I-II; II-III
	HT	46.84	8.61	53.73	10.64	49.37	9.09	11.03*** I-II;
	CO	46.95	9.52	55.55	9.60	50.13	8.82	17.48*** I-II; II-III
	RP	49.70	8.66	54.86	8.79	49.07	9.22	9.21*** I-II; II-III
	SM	51.37	9.35	54.20	8.09	48.96	8.70	5.51** II-III
	CH	48.22	9.91	54.88	10.19	49.87	8.52	10.11*** I-II; II-III
	ST	50.27	9.92	53.38	9.25	49.37	9.30	3.30*
	ET	47.21	9.26	53.38	11.67	49.51	8.15	8.00*** I-II
AION-2000	Pas	50.46	10.17	45.64	9.95	54.82	8.06	13.86*** I-II; I-III; II-III
	Fut	52.18	7.39	43.29	9.07	52.60	9.36	28.01*** I-II; II-III
	Tel	51.93	8.22	48.93	10.32	48.33	8.40	3.42*
	Plan	51.99	8.54	45.86	9.12	50.61	9.36	10.20*** I-II; II-III
NEO-FFI	Neu	48.44	8.39	54.03	10.15	53.64	9.96	8.84*** I-II; I-III
	Ext	52.22	10.07	49.94	8.93	46.84	10.28	4.91* I-III
	Ope	51.52	10.17	48.47	10.12	52.22	8.65	2.85

(continued)

Table 2. Continued.

Scale	Subscale	Clusters						Significance of differences F groups
		I		II		III		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
		'Epicureans'		'Fatalistic hedonists'		'Absent from here and now'		
		N = 91		N = 76		N = 49		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
	Agr	53.84	9.02	49.87	10.35	48.66	10.62	5.57** I-III
	Con	52.03	9.10	50.79	9.57	48.30	10.28	2.44
MANOVA: (df = 6)						5.86***		

Notes: ¹PIL, Purpose in Life Test; PANAS, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; PA, Positive Affect; NA, Negative Affect; KMC, Time Metaphors Questionnaire; CT, Constructive Time; FT, Friendly Time; AM, Awareness of Mortality; HT, Hostile Time; CO, Confusion in Time; RP, Rapid Passage of Time; SM, Significance of the Moment; CH, Chaotic Time; ST, Subtle Time; ET, Empty Time; AION-2000, Temporal Orientation Scale; Pas, Past; Fut, Future; Tel, Telicity; Pla, Planning; NEO-Five Factor Inventory; Neu, Neuroticism; Ext, Extraversion; Ope, Openness; Agr, Agreeableness; Con, Conscientiousness.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; symbols I,II,III relate to differences between groups ($p < .05$)

Follow-up ANOVAs showed that compared with the 'Absent from here and now' women cluster, the 'Epicureans' female cluster had higher scores on the Constructive Time (CT) scale and, compared with the 'Fatalistic hedonists' female cluster, they had lower scores on the Awareness of Mortality (AM), Hostile Time (HT), Confusion in Time (CO), Rapid Passage of Time (RP), and Empty Time (ET) scales. The 'Fatalistic hedonists' female cluster, compared with the 'Absent from here and now' cluster, obtained higher scores on the Awareness of Mortality (AM), Confusion in Time (CO), Rapid Passage of Time (RP), Significance of the Moment (SC), and Chaotic Time (CH) scales (see Table 2).

Past and future time orientation characteristics of clusters

MANOVA pointed to a significant effect of cluster grouping on the past and future time orientation scores (for women $F = 10.12$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$; for men $F = 6.53$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$). As illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, compared with the 'Absent from here and now' cluster, the 'Epicureans' cluster

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and significant differences of scores on the PIL, PANAS (PA, NA), KMC (CT, FT, AM, HT, CO, RP, SM, CH, ST, ET), AION-2000 (Pas, Fut, Tel, Pla), and NEO-FFI (Neu, Ext, Ope, Agr, Con)¹ for the male sample.

Scale	Subscale	Clusters						Significance of differences F groups	
		I		II		III			
		'Epicureans'		'Fatalistic hedonists'		'Absent from here and now'			
		N = 42		N = 32		N = 30			
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
PIL		52.26	8.60	45.82	8.88	52.53	10.46	5.54**	I-II; II-III
PANAS	PA	52.17	8.30	46.05	11.10	50.67	9.16	3.94*	I-II
	NA	46.11	8.52	46.86	8.64	46.92	9.93	.10	
KMC	CT	49.48	11.64	47.67	10.14	46.13	12.95	.74	
	FT	50.72	10.07	49.44	10.89	47.25	11.96	.89	
	AM	49.20	10.00	51.42	10.11	48.66	10.88	.65	
	HT	49.24	9.85	52.63	10.20	49.38	10.73	1.18	
	CO	46.60	8.71	52.26	10.07	47.25	9.84	3.63*	I-II
	RP	44.90	11.14	50.01	10.72	47.18	10.91	1.97	
	SM	47.43	11.35	46.51	10.35	44.21	11.41	.76	
	CH	47.11	8.79	50.19	9.35	47.04	10.64	1.18	
	ST	48.03	10.93	49.29	10.51	45.25	9.02	1.25	
	ET	48.87	6.43	54.31	10.85	47.83	10.44	4.64***	II-III
AION-2000	Pas	52.58	8.65	45.17	9.50	53.28	8.68	8.31***	I-II; II-III
	Fut	55.49	9.50	42.85	9.86	56.05	7.65	22.08***	I-II; II-III
	Tel	52.89	9.91	46.13	11.67	49.67	12.86	3.22*	I-II
	Pla	53.53	9.59	45.08	10.86	53.82	11.84	7.16***	I-II; II-III
NEO-FFI	Neu	45.83	9.01	47.67	8.86	46.87	11.77	.32	
	Ext	50.56	8.77	48.44	10.56	49.39	11.80	.39	
	Ope	51.97	9.46	42.50	9.89	50.90	8.31	10.60***	I-II; II-III
	Agr	50.18	6.92	44.68	10.96	46.32	9.72	3.58*	

(continued)

Table 3. Continued.

Scale	Subscale	Clusters						Significance of differences F groups
		I		II		III		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
		'Epicureans'		'Fatalistic hedonists'		'Absent from here and now'		
		N = 42		N = 32		N = 30		
	Con	49.64	8.30	47.00	10.88	48.40	13.17	.56
MANOVA: (df = 6)								2.63*

Notes: ¹ PIL, Purpose in Life Test; PANAS, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; PA, Positive Affect; NA, Negative Affect; KMC, Time Metaphors Questionnaire; CT, Constructive Time; FT, Friendly Time; AM, Awareness of Mortality; HT, Hostile Time; CO, Confusion in Time; RP, Rapid Passage of Time; SM, Significance of the Moment; CH, Chaotic Time; ST, Subtle Time; ET, Empty Time; AION-2000, Temporal Orientation Scale; Pas, Past; Fut, Future; Tel, Telicity; Pla, Planning; NEO-Five Factor Inventory; Neu, Neuroticism; Ext, Extraversion; Ope, Openness; Agr, Agreeableness; Con, Conscientiousness.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; symbols I,II,III relate to differences between groups ($p < .05$)

scored lower on the Past (Pas) scale, and compared with the 'Fatalistic hedonists' scale, they had higher scores on the Past (Pas) scale, Future (Fut) scale, Planning (Plan) scale, and, in the sample of men, on the Telicity (Tel) scale. The 'Absent from here and now' cluster had higher scores on the Past (Pas), Future (Fut), and Planning (Pla) scales than the 'Fatalistic hedonists' cluster.

'Big five' characteristics of clusters

MANOVA indicated that there was a significant effect of cluster grouping on the five dimensions of personality (for women $F = 3.71$, $df = 10$, $p < .001$; for men $F = 2.64$, $df = 10$, $p < .01$). When we compared the female 'Epicureans' cluster with other female clusters (see Table 2), 'Epicureans' had lower scores on the Neuroticism scale, and compared with the 'Absent from here and now' cluster they had higher scores on the Extraversion and Agreeableness scales. In the case of men (see Table 3), the 'Epicureans' cluster scored higher on the Openness scale than the 'Fatalistic hedonists'

cluster, and the 'Fatalistic hedonists' cluster had lower scores on the Openness scale than the 'Absent from here and now' cluster.

Discussion

The present study aimed at exploring complex attitudes towards the present time and the results yielded by cluster analysis made it possible to identify three groups of participants with different patterns of such attitudes: 'Epicureans', 'Fatalistic hedonists', and 'Absent from here and now'.

To sum up the results of the analyses, we can say that 'Epicureans', both women and men, are characterized by a relatively strong sense of meaning and purpose in life, and positive emotions. Women from this group often perceive time as creation and men from this group experience time as calmness and order. Women and men from the 'Epicureans' group concentrate on the complete time perspective and engage in efforts to formulate and achieve goals. They are also open to experience of the world around them. The co-occurrence of the positive concentration on the past with the active concentration on the present means that 'Epicureans', especially men, may often use the strategy of recalling the past, making use of recollections to emphasize the worth of current experiences. It is likely that the concentration on the positive past secures a sense of continuity in time for 'Epicureans' and facilitates the process of shaping a richer future perspective.

'Fatalistic hedonists' are characterized as displaying a weak sense of purpose and meaning in life. Women from this group often experience negative emotions and men from the 'Fatalistic hedonists' group frequently experience apathy. It is worth noting that in Zimbardo and Boyd's (1999, 2008) research, students who were characterized by a fatalistic focus on the present were the most unhappy with their life in comparison with those who preferred other types of temporal orientation. In the present study, both women and men from the 'Fatalistic hedonists' group evaluated time negatively and they narrowed their time perspective down to 'here and now'. They tended to lack openness to other people and did not like novelties. The 'Fatalistic hedonist' women were susceptible to frustration, they often worried and they had a sense of being lost in time. They often had an impression that they did not cope effectively with the fast passage of chaotic time. In this context, it is worth quoting the results of Kelly's (2003) research which reported a negative relationship between worry proneness and perception of order in time. The fatalistic hedonistic women relatively often realize the meaning of the current moment, especially as passage of time reminds them of death. It can be said that these women desperately try to seize the current moment in order to use it for maximizing pleasure 'here

and now'. Such exercising of the current moment, however, usually causes even stronger feelings of loss and chaos in time and escalates the feeling of time pressure. This is probably linked with a sense of helplessness, passive awaiting for what fate brings, and anxiety. Strong anxiety leads 'fatalist hedonistic' women to withdraw into themselves for fear of past and future (see Nosal and Bajcar, 2004; Zimbardo and Boyd, 1999, 2008). It is probable that they try to relieve this anxiety through concentration on pleasure. These women may often experience a fear of intransigent fate (Tillich, 1952). Results from previous research also suggest that the limitation of time perspective is linked with a sense of time pressure (Nosal and Bajcar, 2004). The men from the 'Fatalistic hedonists' group had weak motivation to work, and they were relatively stand-offish.

The women who are 'absent from here and now' showed a weak sense of meaning and purpose in life. They rarely experienced positive emotions and more often negative emotions. These women were susceptible to frustration and had a tendency to worry. They preferred being alone to being in contact with other people, but at the same time they were found to be curious about the world. They are probably open to an internal world of experiences. Temperate estimates dominate in their time evaluations. This may mean that they have a rather weak insight into their time attitudes or that they are relatively indifferent to time. These women may also avoid thinking about the nature of time because of their anxiety. Women who are 'absent from here and now' more frequently come back to their positively perceived past and quite often think about the future, but they rarely engage in pursuing their aims 'here and now'. The strong concentration on past can in this case be linked with the lack of a sense of safety. Possibly the past is a 'mental anchor' for them (see Maslow, 1999; Nosal and Bajcar, 2004; Zaleski, 1994).

The men who are 'absent from here and now' are characterized by a strong sense of meaning and purpose in life and quite often experience positive emotions. They rarely perceive time as positive or negative – probably they tend not to think about the nature of time at all. The men who are 'absent from here and now' usually concentrate on the future. They are frequently frigid and egocentric. These men are rather stand-offish and egocentric in contact with other people and quite often compete with others. They keep time at a distance – they do not evaluate time positively or negatively. Simultaneously, these men are concentrated on positive past and on positive future. Their weak concentration on the present is probably caused by their excessively exhausting mode of life (see Gleick, 1999).

To sum up, as assumed in the hypotheses, people who are characterized by 'carpe diem' active concentration on the present rarely adopt hedonistic

or fatalistic attitudes towards time. This conclusion shows the strong difference between 'carpe diem' and hedonistic and fatalistic orientations. Another difference is that 'carpe diem' is connected with other variables unlike hedonistic and fatalistic orientations. It is a valid conclusion that casts light on presentist temporal orientation.

The hypothesis about the relation between the 'carpe diem' orientation and the sense of life and positive emotion experience was proved, particularly in the women's group and partly in the men's group. As stated in the introduction, 'carpe diem' concentration on the present may be regarded as the will to live, according to Czapinski (1994), that is, the fundamental life motive, the joy of life, the attitude in which life is the goal. We can claim after Zimbardo and Boyd (1999, 2008) that 'Epicureans' are characterized by attitudes towards time which are very close to the optimal temporal orientation, an attitude open to all time dimensions depending on the situation.

The hypothesis was partly confirmed that people with a 'carpe diem' approach display positive and open attitudes to time in general and towards the past and future. These relations were also more significant in the women's group than in the men's group. As previously assumed, unlike hedonistic fatalists, people who focus on the present in an active way are open to the past and future. It is worth pointing out that men more than women connect the value of the moment with work for future benefits. As mentioned in the introduction, the reason is that men focus more on their careers than women do.

As previously assumed, people fully focusing on the present time experience positive emotions rather than negative ones more frequently than hedonistic or fatalistic people. It is worth emphasizing that this applies more to the women surveyed than the men. Following the concept of here and now in Gestalt therapy (Zinker, 1977) it can be said that focus on the current moment enables one to feel a wide range of sensations here and now. It also helps to minimize the longing for the past and the fear of a preordained future. The source of positive emotions is also the focus on the activities, which is similar to the 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

It is worth noting that as far as the correlation between present time orientation and amicability and being open to other people and the world is concerned, the gender of the participants appeared to be significant. Women's focus on the present is connected with being open to other people, whereas in men it relates to being open to the world and new experiences.

To sum up, the findings of the present study have at least two implications for time research. First, it does appear that we can distinguish something more than hedonistic and fatalistic attitudes towards the present time,

namely active concentration on the present, called 'Epicureanism' in the present study. It enriches our understanding of the present domain of time orientation. Second, in contrast to 'fatalistic hedonism', 'Epicureanism' is linked with a sense of purpose in life, positive emotions, and openness in relation to time and the external world.

Taking into account the results of this study, we can paraphrase Horney's (1937/1999) distinctions with respect to attitudes towards other people and distinguish three types of attitudes towards time: 'moving towards time', involving acceptance of time, affirmation of 'here and now', and positive evaluation of the nature of time; 'against time', including attitudes of hostility towards time and negative evaluation of time; and 'away from time', marked by distance in relation to the passing of time. The 'moving towards time' attitude is characteristic of 'Epicureans', the 'against time' attitude characteristic of 'Fatalistic hedonists', and the 'away from time' attitude characteristic of 'Absent from here and now'. All these attitudes probably play an important role in personality. 'Epicureanism' is conducive to affirmation and acceptance of time. 'Fatalistic hedonism' releases feelings of dissatisfaction with time and rebellion in relation to passing time. These emotions may lead to reflection that, for example, life is not only about earning money but about pleasure and rest. In turn, 'absence from here and now' makes it easier to distance oneself from current events.

Although the current study presents some interesting findings, there are also some limitations which should be taken into consideration. The size of the sample is rather small, so generalization of the results should be done with caution. Additionally, instruments used in this study provided only self-report data. Future research is needed that uses other methods, such as experimental and narrative methods. Moreover, future research should also account for potentially confounding variables in attitudes towards the present time: relationships with happiness, self-esteem, story of life, identity and age. Another limitation of the study was that participants responded to numerous different scales, which is why the carry-over effects could have an influence on the results of our research.

Conclusion

In this article three types of attitude towards the present were distinguished: Epicurean, fatalistic-hedonistic and 'absence from here and now'. The hypotheses confirm that the Epicurean attitude is more connected with a strong sense of life, experiencing positive emotions, a more positive attitude to time, and openness to the world and other time dimensions than the other two attitudes towards the present. The results confirm the difference

between 'carpe diem' and hedonistic and fatalistic orientations. It is worth noting the gender differences in attitudes towards the present and the variables surveyed, which may mean that the attitude to the present time is more important for women's psychosocial existence than for men's. It is also worth drawing attention to the concept of absence from here and now, the more so because it is a typical attitude towards time in a society that pursues success.

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