

USING VALUE-BASED MARKETING MESSAGES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON THE FOOD MARKET

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to empirically analyze the value references embedded in the marketing messages of selected food brands. It focuses on manufacturer brands and the private labels of Poland's two largest retailers – Biedronka and Lidl – across dairy products and their plant-based counterparts. The objective is to identify the dominant values in brand communication and determine how these differ by product type.

Design/methodology/approach: The study was based on the methods of case study and content analysis of selected food promotional messages in terms of the overt and covert appeals to values they contain (as conceptualised by Ciecuch, Schwartz, 2018). The focus was on messages about dairy products and their plant-based alternatives, broadcast on in Poland. Both the verbal layer of the messages and their visual side were analysed and evaluated. The content analysis was complemented by an exploration of the world literature and empirical research in this area.

Findings: Analysis of the marketing messages of brands of traditional dairy products and their plant-based substitutes reveals clear differences in the values exhibited. The former focus on tradition and safety and make stronger use of ethnocentric and conservative narratives, which reinforces their position as guarantors of stability and quality. Plant-based brands, on the other hand, are more likely to appeal to hedonism, openness to change and ecological universalism, willingly combining pleasure with encouraging variety in their culinary experiences. Interestingly, values from the area of transcending oneself, such as caring, tolerance or ecological universalism communicated explicitly in terms of environmental responsibility, appear infrequently, which may be due to insufficient market readiness for ideological communication.

Research limitations/implications: The study was limited to online campaigns in Poland, which constrains generalisability. Further comparative research across media, product categories and cultural contexts would enhance understanding of value communication strategies.

Originality/value: The findings highlight that the effectiveness of communication using value appeals will depend on the authenticity of the message and the consistency of the brand's actions with the declared values and the sharing of these values with the target segment.

Keywords: food products, sustainable food behaviours, values, online marketing communication.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Contemporary marketing communication is increasingly moving beyond the realm of communicating functional product attributes to focus on emotional, identity and axiological aspects. One important area of interest for marketing researchers and practitioners is now becoming the role of values in marketing communication (see Bernytė, 2018; Taufique, 2022; Kolwas, Domanski, 2023). In marketing, values are understood as essential components of the brand narrative, the use of which contributes to creating deeper connections with consumers (Altkorn, 2001; Keller, 2012). Messages referring to specific values can have an informational, persuasive or competitive function (Wiktor, 2013). The literature indicates that consumers are more likely to choose brands that resonate with their own beliefs and lifestyles (Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, 2017). Values not only determine consumer attitudes and decisions, but can also be an important part of brand construction and narrative. In particular, it seems important to understand how values are present and communicated in marketing messages, and how they influence brand perception and purchasing behaviour.

This article attempts to empirically analyse the marketing messages of selected food brands in terms of the presence and type of value references appearing in them. Both manufacturer brands and private labels of the two largest retail chains in Poland - Biedronka and Lidl - were analysed, focusing on dairy products and their vegetable equivalents. The aim of the study was to identify the values that dominate the brands' communication. In addition, an attempt was made to identify how they are differentiated according to the type of product. The study was based on a content analysis and a comparative analysis of selected food advertising messages in terms of the overt and covert appeals to values they contain (as conceptualised by Ciecuch, Schwartz, 2018).

2. Schwartz's value model

Consumers' behaviour in the market is not only driven by the needs they feel, but also by the values they hold in their lives. In psychology, values are understood as certain kinds of preferences, whether realised or not, that determine human perception or action. They are assumed to have a motivational meaning - they are a force that motivates people to behave in different ways or are a manifestation of motivation (Ciecuch, Schwartz, 2018). In Schwartz's terms, values are defined as the cognitive representation of a 'motivational, desirable, supra-situational goal' (Ciecuch, 2013). At the same time, he points to six main characteristics of values (Alaminos-Fernández et al., 2023):

- they are beliefs related to affect,
- they refer to desirable goals that motivate action,
- they transcend specific situations and actions,

- guide the evaluation of actions, people and events,
- are ordered in order of importance,
- given order of importance guide action.

In his model, Schwartz proposes a circular structure of values (cf. Figure 1) indicating that values are not categories isolated from each other, but are interrelated.

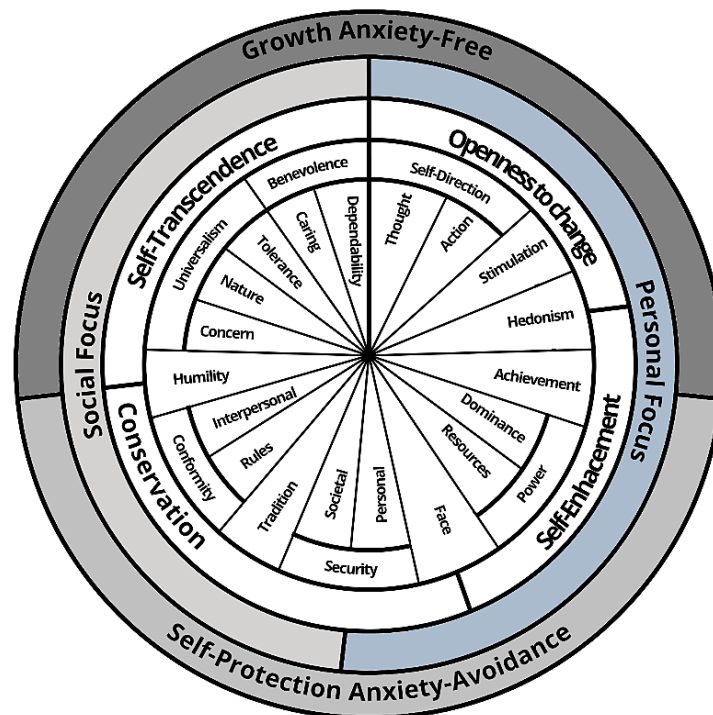


Figure 1. Modified Schwartz value circle.

Source: (Schwartz et al., 2012).

The values in the wheel are ordered according to rules of congruence and conflict. Adjacent values are co-executable due to the fact that they represent similar goals. In contrast, values on opposite sides of the circle represent conflicting goals and as such are not co-executable. The similarity between values thus decreases as the distance between them increases in location on the circle (Cieciuch, 2013; Cieciuch, Schwartz, 2018).

Schwartz's initial 1992 model included 10 basic universal values: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, adaptation, tradition, benevolence and universalism. These form four groups: transcending self, empowering self, openness to change and conservatism. The borderline value is hedonism, which falls into two adjacent groups. In addition, the four groups represent the extremes of two dimensions - the first is transcending the self, versus strengthening the self, and the second is openness to change versus conservatism (Cieciuch, 2013). In 2012, the traditional division was modified, distinguishing an additional nine values in the circle. A summary of all values with their definitions is included in Table 1.

Table 1.
Characteristics of values in the modified Schwartz model

| Group of values | Value | Definition | Focus |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| openness to change | self-direction-thought | independence of thought; freedom to explore and choose one's own ideas and develop one's own skills; forming one's own view of the world | personal ("I") |
| | self-direction-action | independence to make decisions and pursue own chosen goals; freedom to choose action | personal ("I") |
| | stimulation | changeability, novelty, excitement | personal ("I") |
| self-enhancement | hedonism | pleasure, sensual gratification | personal ("I") |
| | achievement | personal success achieved in accordance with social standards | personal ("I") |
| | power-dominance | power over people, exercising control over people | personal ("I") |
| | power-resources | power over resources, control of material and social resources | personal ("I") |
| | face | maintaining and protecting one's public image, social status, avoiding humiliation | personal ("I") |
| conservation | security-personal | security in one's immediate environment | personal ("I") |
| | security-societal | security and stability in society | social ("others") |
| | conformity-rules | compliance with rules, law (also formal requirements of those in authority) | social ("others") |
| | conformity-interpersonal | avoidance of hurting and annoying other people | social ("others") |
| | tradition | acceptance and maintenance of the customs, ideas and traditions of one's own culture, religion or family; respect for tradition | social ("others") |
| | humility | recognition of the smallness of one's place in the world and in history | social ("others") |
| self-transcendence | benevolence-dependability | being a reliable, trustworthy member of the group | social ("others") |
| | benevolence-caring | concern for the welfare of other group members | social ("others") |
| | universalism-concern | striving for equality, justice and the well-being of all people | social ("others") |
| | universalism-nature | environmental protection, nature conservation | social ("others") |
| | universalism-tolerance | acceptance and understanding of others who are different from oneself | social ("others") |

Source: own elaboration based on (Cieciuch, 2013; Gauthier et al., 2020; Schwartz et al., 2012).

Consumers' value system influences not only their attitudes, but also their market behaviour and purchasing decisions. Schwartz's value theory is widely used in food consumption research (Barthes, 2018; Bryla, 2021; Grunert et al., 2014; Olsen et al., 2016; Puska, 2019; Sihvonen, Luomala, 2017). To date, value associations have been shown with (after: Bryla, 2021):

- convenience food consumption (related to values motivating people to seek new experiences, act independently and enhance their own personal interests),
- consumption of organic food (associated with values such as safety, hedonism, universalism, benevolence, stimulation, self-direction and conformity),
- the choice of healthier eating practices in the broadest sense (linked to values such as achievement, tradition or universalism).

Given that consumer behaviour is not only conditioned by their value system, but can also be influenced by marketing communication activities, it is worth incorporating the value motif into the messages used to stimulate more sustainable consumption. In the next section, existing research related to this issue will be discussed.

3. Value motifs in communication messages and sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumer behaviours (a.k.a. pro-environmental or environmentally responsible behaviours) are behaviours undertaken by consumers with the intention of reducing negative and/or positive environmental impacts (Gallo et al., 2023; Ghaffar et al., 2023; Irfan, Bryla, 2025). Increasingly, in addition to environmental impacts, the social dimension of consumption is also taken into account by pointing to the concept of socially responsible consumption, which implies consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions that prevent or minimise not only environmental but also social problems (Lee, Cho, 2019).

In the case of food consumption, the catalogue of sustainable behaviours can include (Nestorowicz et al., 2024):

- limiting the consumption of commodities whose production largely contributes to environmental degradation, such as foods of animal origin, especially red meat or dairy,
- buying and consuming meat, fish, eggs from ethical farms where animal welfare is taken care of,
- buying and eating certified products (e.g. organic food, fair trade),
- buying food mainly from local suppliers/farmers and choosing mainly seasonal fruit and vegetables when shopping,
- buying only the amount of food that will be eaten before the products expire or spoil,
- buying food without unnecessary packaging or in environmentally friendly packaging,
- buying and using products with a short shelf life so that they do not go to waste; and sharing food when you have too much.

Sustainable behaviour in the food market is therefore not only related to dietary and shopping choices, but also to what happens to leftover food or the waste that food consumption generates. Due to the limited volume of the article, the authors will focus their analysis on behaviours related to reducing the consumption of animal products, in particular the substitution of dairy for its plant-based counterparts, as well as the choice of products identified with higher quality values, such as organic or locally produced food.

As indicated earlier, people's values are an important motivating force for certain behaviours, including environmentally sustainable behaviours, constituting - together with beliefs and norms - their main antecedents (Lima et al., 2024). In relation to Schwartz's values model, research (Lee, Cho, 2019) has shown that benevolence and universalism have a positive impact on socially responsible consumer behaviour, while achievement and power interact negatively. Consequently, interest in social status, prestige, power, authority and wealth decreases the tendency to engage in this type of behaviour, while concern for the well-being of all people, world peace and living in harmony with nature increases the propensity.

Consumer values are used in various marketing activities, e.g. as one of the criteria in segmentation processes and also as the basis of communication and advertising strategies (Olsen et al., 2016). Extensive communication and sales activities are used to stimulate demand

for specific food products. A special role in the context of shaping pro-environmental eating behaviour is played by any communication activity that aims to encourage consumers to choose a more environmentally sustainable diet or to deal appropriately with the food they buy and the waste resulting from its consumption. Appealing to values in communication activities can draw an individual's attention to the need to engage in a particular pattern of behaviour and support them in making pro-environmental and pro-social decisions, including in their food consumption (Campbell-Arvai et al., 2014).

Communication messages, particularly advertising messages, are designed to attract the attention of the recipient and then, through an appropriately designed appeal, encourage a specific action or behaviour (Rogala, 2011). The inclusion in the message (in an indirect or direct, overt or covert manner) of values consistent with the consumer's value system seems to be the right direction in the context of increasing the effectiveness of the impact of the message and evoking specific reactions on the part of the recipient. Previous research in this area yields interesting findings. According to research (Gauthier et al., 2020), for the effectiveness of advertising, in addition to the congruence between advertising messages and the values of the target group (including cultural values), the congruence between the values included in the advertising message and the values activated by consumers is essential (Gauthier et al., 2020). When creating value congruent messages, practitioners should first identify the values of the target audience (Fischer et al., 2021) and then create a message based on the framing that has the greatest potential to stimulate specific behaviours. Research in the area of sustainable consumer behaviour indicates that combining different forms of framing (e.g. self - other framing, positive - negative framing) has the greatest potential in this regard (Florence et al., 2022).

In the case of so-called green advertising, activating an appropriate response towards sustainable behaviour is conditioned by several factors. These include the nature of the message (including the type of green behaviour promoted), the profile of the consumer (including their values), and the context (e.g. culture or social norms) (Lima et al., 2024). Appealing to the value system is thus one possible means of influencing the upscaling of sustainable consumption. For example, with regard to ethical products, the values held by the consumer determine the level of receptivity to their advertising, which consequently influences their willingness to purchase (Osburg et al., 2019). In the following section, the authors will analyse the phenomenon of incorporating appeals to values in the marketing communication of selected brands of dairy products and their plant-based alternatives.

4. Research methodology

Considering food production, the dairy industry is one of the most negatively impacting on the environment. Indeed, it contributes to significant greenhouse gas emissions, water and land

consumption (Crippa et al., 2021; Finnegan, Goggins, 2021; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019). On the other hand, dairy products such as milk, yoghurt and butter are one of the most frequently chosen product categories and constitute an important component of many societies' diets (Hawashin et al., 2025). Consequently, it is becoming an important challenge to meet the growing demand for these goods, with the need for greater environmental sustainability in their production (Ivana, Puvača, 2024; Peterson, Mitloehner, 2021). Changes in the area of consumption related to reducing dairy products in the diet, choosing organic versions or plant-based substitutes are one promising solution (Kumar, Choubey, 2023; Pocol et al., 2020; Randall et al., 2024), especially with the assumption of supporting consumers on their path towards more sustainable consumption using modern technologies (Nestorowicz et al., 2024).

In this article, the communication messages of selected dairy product brands broadcast in various media were analysed. The choice of this product category was dictated by both the importance to consumers and the environmental impact of their production. The analysis was narrowed down to products such as natural and fruit yoghurts and plant-based yoghurts and milk equivalents as the most common consumer choices. Sales in the category of plant-based dairy substitutes are growing dynamically year on year, with the discounters' private labels dominating (Listonic Ads, 2024b), which is why the Go Vege (Biedronka) and Vemondo (Lidl) brands were also included in the analyses. The communication of the most popular brands on the Polish market was analysed in detail (Listonic Ads, 2024a, 2024b):

- in the case of private labels - Mleczna Dolina, FruVita and Go Vege from the Biedronka offer and Pilos and Vemondo from the Lidl offer,
- for other brands - Zott, Jogobella, Bakoma, Piątnica and Alpro.

As mentioned earlier, plant-based dairy substitutes, including plant-based drinks, are the best-selling category in discounters, hence the dominance of Biedronka and Lidl's private labels. However, in addition to private labels, the Alpro brand (Danone) also occupies an important place in this product category, hence its inclusion in the analyses (Pankowiak, 2024).

In the next step, the authors collected advertising messages from brands' social media profiles (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and websites. This content was analysed in detail, according to the criteria adopted earlier:

- frequency of product mentions on the website and social media,
- the presence of values in the message,
- nature of references to the consumer (e.g. educational, informative, emotional),
- the presence and type of calls to action (e.g. try, dare, explore),
- the visual presentation of the product,
- modes of argumentation used in advertising messages,
- language used in advertising communication.

Each material was independently analysed by the authors, who assessed the content based on predetermined criteria. Once the independent assessments were completed, the inter-rater agreement (IRA) was calculated, yielding a satisfactory level of consistency across all coded dimensions. The results were then compared and verified. The focus was on identifying

recurring patterns and trends in the communication of the brands under study, which ensured the objectivity and reliability of the results. Based on the verified results, a synthesis of the results was carried out to isolate the key communication strategies used by the brands under study and to identify the values present in them.

5. Discussion of results

In the first step, private labels - Mleczna Dolina, FruVita and Go Vege (brands from the Biedronka discount store) and Pilos and Vemondo (from the Lidl offer) were analysed. In the case of Biedronka's private labels, the chain's social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube platforms, as well as its website, were analysed. In social media, publications from a 12-month period (March 2024-March 2025) were taken into account. It was noted that the Biedronka chain devotes relatively little attention in its communication activities to the brands analysed in the article. In the case of the brand's official profile on Instagram, only 5 posts are related to private label dairy products. For the Fruvita brand product, it emphasises the nutritional values and the simple composition. In the case of the low-carbohydrate product series, the social media communication is worth highlighting the reference to personal focus related to self-enhancement. An example of this communication is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Example of a message referring to values related to self-enhancement¹.

Source: Biedronka brand profile on Instagram.

¹ 🍏 A filling breakfast? 🥛 With Fruvita yogurts and skyr! 🥛

Add some granola or muesli, a handful of your favorite nuts and dried fruit, plus fresh fruit, and enjoy a perfect meal. 🥰🥰🥰

So, what do you prefer – yogurt or skyr? 🥛

#biedronka #fruvita #skyr #yogurt #dairy #breakfasttime #breakfast #morningmeal

Biedronka's website presents only informative messages, focusing on brief product descriptions. The information provided under 'Private labels' presents a brief description of the product, along with promotional messages and information relating to taste and nutritional qualities. For some of the brands, slogans or promotional slogans were identified that can be classified as messages relating to the values discussed in the theoretical chapter. A summary of these is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Analysis of the values communicated by Biedronka's private labels

| Private label | Message | Identified value |
|---------------|---|--|
| Fruvita | "Everyone has their own taste" | self-transcendence - universalism - tolerance |
| Fruvita Pure | "Pleasure itself - just indulge" | self-enhancement - hedonism |
| Milk valley | "New packaging - same taste" | conservation - tradition, security-personal |
| Go Vege | "The plant challenge"; "You have the right to decide what you eat" | 1. Openness to change - stimulation; self-transcendence - universalism-nature. 2. Self-transcendence - universalism - tolerance; openness to change - self-direction-action |

Source: own compilation based on: www.biedronka.com (read 23.03.2025).

An analogous analysis was conducted for Lidl's private labels - Pilos and Vemondo. Its effects are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Analysis of the values communicated by Biedronka's private labels

| Private label | Message | Identified value |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Pilos | "All the best from milk" | conservatism - tradition |
| Vemondo | "Say YES to plant-based products" | openness to change - stimulation; self-transcendence - universalism-nature |

Source: own compilation based on: www.lidl.pl (read on: 23.03.2025).

It is worth noting that, unlike Biedronka's private labels of dairy products, Lidl's brands do not refer to values in their marketing messages published on the website. However, it should be noted that the Vemondo brand explicitly encourages consumers to take action (call to action), while Pilos emphasises the animal origin of the products. The messages themselves therefore leave no room for misinterpretation of the products' composition and reduce the potential for consumer error. This distinction is also evident in the visual sphere, where Vemondo products are dominated by the colour green and Pilos by the colour white, together with coloured visual elements denoting the individual flavours.

Also in the case of Lidl's private labels, only a few messages published on the Facebook and Instagram channels refer to dairy products. It is worth noting that by far more messages refer to high-protein products (3 messages in January-March 2025) and lactose-free products (2 messages).



Figure 3. Example of a message highlighting product composition².

Source: Lidl brand profile on Instagram.

It is also worth noting that dairy product messages, if present on the profile, appeal to ethnocentric attitudes, highlighting the local origin of the products (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Example of a message emphasising the origin of a product³.

Source: Lidl brand profile on Instagram.

Private label dairy product messages also explicitly refer to traditional taste, focusing around values such as conservatism and tradition (Figure 5).

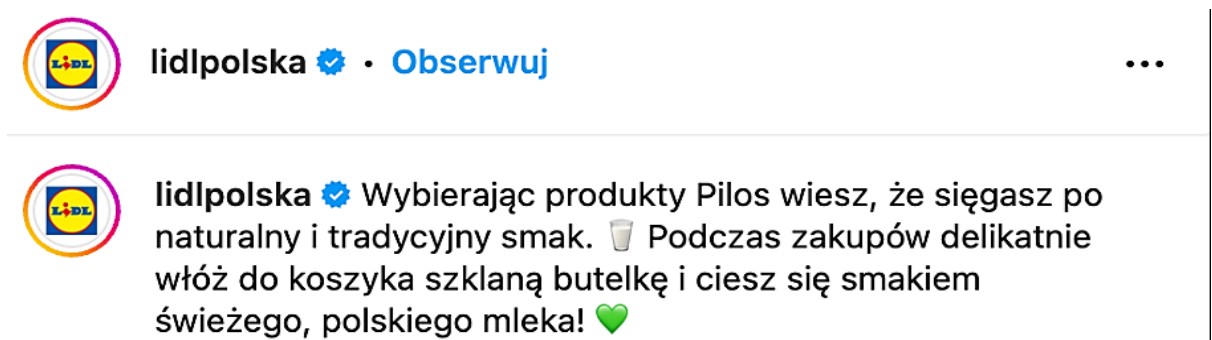


Figure 5. Example of a message appealing to tradition⁴.

Source: Lidl brand profile on Instagram.

² 🌿 Plant-based smoothies from Vemondo come with no added sugar, so maybe we should sweeten them up a little? ☐

Let us know what compliments come to your mind for them. 🗨️

Let them blush! 😊💕

#Lidl #LidlPolska #Vemondo #smoothie #vege #veganuary #fruits

³ Cottage cheese from your region? Now you can find it at Lidl! 📦 It's Regional Week, so when you go shopping at Lidl, don't forget to grab the cheese available in your area! ☐👉

#Lidl #LidlPolska #RegionalWeek #cheese #cottagecheese

⁴ By choosing Pilos products, you know you're reaching for a natural and traditional taste. ☐ While shopping, gently place a glass bottle in your basket and enjoy the taste of fresh Polish milk! 🍷

It is worth noting that only one brand (Go Vege) directly refers in its communication to values defined as ecological universalism. In the case of the others, the messages emphasise encouraging people to take action or 'push the boundaries'.

In the second part of the analysis, attention was focused on widely distributed retail brands. These brands were: Zott, Jogobella, Bakoma, Piątnica and Alpro. Table 4 presents a summary of the marketing slogans used by the above brands on their official websites.

Table 4.

Summary of marketing slogans for brands Zott, Jogobella, Bakoma, Piątnica and Alpro

| Private label | Message | Identified value |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Jogobella (Zott) | "Deliciously fruity yoghurt with extra large chunks of fruit that will give you a juicy portion of joy every day." | self-enhancement - hedonism |
| Jogobella Vege (Zott) | "Jogobella in a vegan version is a delicious alternative for all fans of plant-based products. The combination of coconut cream with extra-large pieces of fruit provides a fullness of flavour exactly like the classic version of Jogobella." | self-enhancement - hedonism; conservatism - security-personal |
| Zott Protein | "Zott Protein - always a win-win." | self-enhancement - achievement |
| Bakoma Bio | "Appetising snacks created from fresh milk and ripe Polish fruit." | conservation - tradition; conservatism - security-personal |
| Ave Vege (Bakoma) | "Welcome to the plant-based side of life." "Awaken your appetite for life". | 1. Openness to change - stimulation; self-transcendence - universalism-nature 2. Openness to change - stimulation; self-enhancement - hedonism |
| Piatnica | "For those who need to recharge their batteries and for those who simply want something delicious: yogurts of various textures with a variety of tasty additives". | conservatism - security-personal; self-enhancement - hedonism |
| Piatnica Roślinna | "They work well wherever traditional milk is used". | conservatism - tradition; security-personal |
| Alpro | "Turn up your breakfast"; "Vegetable doesn't bite". | 1. openness to change - self-direction-action 2. self-transcendence - universalism - tolerance; |

Source: own compilation based on the websites of the brands surveyed.

It is worth noting that two of the surveyed brands (Ave Vege and Alpro) have separate websites and social media channels. In the case of the other brands, the communication somewhat resembles the communication strategy of private labels - messages encouraging change, focused on the 'I' and one's own experiences stand out. Among the traditional products, as in the case of private labels, references to the region or country of origin of the milk, and to nutritional and taste values stand out. Contrary to expectations, in the case of vegan products it is in vain to find references to environmental values. Such information is available, but not at the product level, but at the level of the company-wide strategy. The exception in this respect is the Alpro brand, which communicates the environmental impact of the product (Figure 6). In the case of the other plant-based dairy counterparts, the taste qualities are mainly emphasised. When analysing the content of marketing messages, their educational role in the area of changing consumer habits is also clearly visible - in the case of vegan products, recipes

and methods of use dominate, while in the case of dairy products, references to the origin of the products' components, traditions and taste qualities attract attention.



Figure 6. Example of appeal to organic universalism⁵.

Source: Alpro brand profile on Instagram.

During the research, values appearing in messages on pages or subpages dedicated to individual brands were also analysed (Table 5). It is worth noting that the main messages of the brands analysed are largely dominated by conservative and self-enhancement values. Values related to openness to change are less prominent in the messages, while values related to transcending oneself are the least frequent. It is interesting to note that the main narrative line of all the brands surveyed, on their websites or sub-sites, basically omits values directly related to ecology, with only subtle references expressing themselves by emphasising the plant-based origin of the product. Above all, there are no explicit references to environmental issues, animal welfare or social responsibility. This may be surprising, especially in the context of the growing importance of sustainable consumption in the literature (White, Habib, Hardisty, 2019; Vergura et al., 2023). The absence of such a narrative presumably may be due to fears of over-ideologising the message or a belief that the market is not mature enough to adopt pro-social attitudes as a primary purchase motive.

⁵ DELICIOUS
HEALTHY*
GOOD FOR THE PLANET
#switch to alpro

Table 5.*The messages of the brands surveyed on their websites or subsites*

| Brand | Website website/sub-site | Messages | Identified value |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Fruvita | subpage (biedronka.pl) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The No. 1 yoghurt brand in Poland, recognised with the Good Brand 2022 label. 2. Discover a wealth of delicious yogurts for everyone, whatever your needs. Natural and with fruit. Creamy and drinkable. Large and small. Find your favourite flavour and type for every occasion. 3. All Fruvita yoghurts are produced in Poland. They are created in cooperation with the best producers from selected Polish milk and the highest quality delicious fruit. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. self-enhancement – face, 2. openness to change - self-direction-action, self-transcendence - benevolence - caring, universalism - tolerance, 3. conservation - security-personal / conservation – tradition |
| Fruvita Pure | subpage (biedronka.pl) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone has their own taste. 2. Polish milk. Every day we take care to offer you the highest quality. 3. Drinking yoghurts. Simple composition. 4. Yoghurts in a cup. Fruvita Pure is just two ingredients, with no added sugar. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. self-transcendence - universalism – tolerance, 2. conservation - tradition, self-transcendence - benevolence - caring, conservation - security-personal, 3. conservation - security-personal, 4. conservation - security-personal |
| Milky Valley | subpage (biedronka.pl) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New packaging. Same taste. | conservation - tradition / conservation – security-personal |
| GoVege | subpage (biedronka.pl) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taste grows with GoVege. 2. We take care to offer you the highest quality every day. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. self-enhancement – hedonism, 2. conservation - security-personal |
| Pilos | subpage (lidl.pl) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delicious, because it's Polish! Choose products with the "Polish Product" label to support regional dairies and enjoy traditional flavours. 2. Delicious, because made with Polish milk! More than 100 products made from Polish milk. Simple recipe and traditional taste. 3. Delicious because diverse! Some Pilos products are awarded with unique certificates. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conservation - tradition, self-transcendence - benevolence – caring, 2. conservation – tradition, 3. openness to change - stimulation, conservation - security-personal, self-transcendence - universalism – tolerance |

Cont. table 5.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Vemondo | indication on the subpage (lidl.pl) | 1. Say YES to plant-based products! Are you vegan? Are you looking for products without meat or milk? Or do you want to broaden your culinary horizons and occasionally rely on products or ready-made dishes to add variety to your daily diet? In Lidl you will find a whole range of plant-based brands with delicious offerings based on oats, coconut or legumes. | openness to change - stimulation, self-enhancement - hedonism, achievement, self-transcendence - universalism-nature |
| Jogobella (Zott) | subpage (jogobella.com) | 1. Deliciously fruity yoghurt with extra-large chunks of fruit to give you a juicy dose of joy every day. | self-enhancement – hedonism |
| Jogobella Vege (Zott) | subpage (jogobella.com) | 1. Fruity, plant-based and delicious. | self-enhancement - hedonism, self-transcendence – universalism-nature |
| Zott Protein | subpage (zott-dairy.com/en/) | 1. The combination of fruit and fresh milk in our Zott Protein yoghurts is ideal as a snack between meals or as a post-workout meal. With 20g of protein per serving and no added sugar, it helps build muscle. It is gluten-free and low in fat, but still fruity and perfectly creamy! | self-enhancement - hedonism, self-enhancement – achievement |
| Bakoma Bio | website (bakomabio.pl) | 1. Simple composition - yoghurt, fruit, cane sugar. | conservation= – security-personal |
| Bakoma Ave Vege | website (avevege.pl) | 1. Welcome to the plant-based side of life. Try introducing more plant-based joy into your diet today. Ave Vege is full of delicious and light variants and flavours created with 100% plant-based ingredients. Discover them all and expand your natural appetite for life. 2. We contain no boredom or unnecessary calories. 3. We have plenty of variants without preservatives. 4. We restore vitality without lactose or gluten. | 1. openness to change - stimulation, self-enhancement - hedonism, self-transcendence - universalism-nature, 2. conservation – security-personal, self-enhancement – hedonism, 3. conservation - security-personal, openness to change – stimulation, 4. conservation – security-personal, self-enhancement – achievement |
| Piatnica | website (https://piatnica.com.pl/) | 1. Naturally from here. From Piatnica, well from where. 2. River topic. The best flavours from the banks of the Narew River. 3. Breakfast is a must. You have to eat in the morning, so do not begrudge yourself delicacies from Piatnica! | 1. conservation - tradition, self-transcendence - universalism-nature, 2. conservation - tradition, self-enhancement – hedonism, 3. conservation - tradition, self-enhancement - hedonism |

Cont. table 5.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Piatnica Roślinna | subpage (https://piatnica.com.pl/) ⁶ | Delicious, 100% natural vegetable drinks from Piatnica will work well wherever traditional milk is used. Great for coffee, cereals, smoothies and baked goods. Find them in the shop fridge - you will definitely recognise our characteristic bottle with a handle! | conservation - security-personal, conservation - tradition, self-transcendence - universalism-nature |
| Alpro | website (alpro.com) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boost your breakfast - mmm! We encourage you to try delicious breakfast recipes that will turn your morning up! Find out how to start your day simply and deliciously using plant-based products! 2. There are so many plant-based products waiting for you. 3. Plant-based doesn't bite. Plant-based tastes good! We encourage you to enter the world of plants with us, where you will see that plant-based products do not bite, but taste delicious. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. openness to change - stimulation, self-transcendence – universalism-nature, 2. openness to change - stimulation, self-transcendence - universalism-nature, 3. conservation - security-personal, self-enhancement - hedonism, self-transcendence - universalism-nature |

Source: own elaboration based on: (Biedronka, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d; Lidl, 2025a, 2025b; Jogobella, 2025a, 2025b; Zott, 2025; Bakoma Bio, 2025; Bakoma Ave Vege, 2025; Piatnica, 2025a, 2025b; Alpro, 2025).

An interesting phenomenon evident in the messages appearing on the websites is the differentiation of values according to the nature of the product. Standard dairy brands are more likely to emphasise personal security and tradition, while plant-based brands are more likely to use the values of stimulation and hedonism in their messages - offering change, freshness and alternatives to traditional habits. The use of different strategies demonstrates the diversity of market expectations and the need for segmentation. From this angle, it is also interesting to note the emergence of messages containing elements representing opposite values (e.g. security and stimulation). This may be a deliberate effort to combine stabilising values with those favouring change in order to interact more effectively with diverse audiences and minimise the risk of excluding any of them. A large proportion of messages not only convey values, but also have an educational function. This is particularly evident in the case of plant-based brands. The messages often contain instructions and suggestions for the use of the products, which can have a supportive function in the process of changing eating habits. The values of stimulation, self-direction-action and universalism-nature are thus not only present here declaratively, but supported by communication activities that facilitate their realisation.

⁶ The manufacturer invites you to visit the brand website <http://www.piatnicaroslinna.pl/>, but as of 25.03.2025 the link is inactive.

6. Summary

Analysing in detail the values that appear in the communication of the brands, it is possible to notice differences between the content for traditional and plant-based products (Figure 7). Content for traditional products very often refers to tradition and personal safety. In contrast, the most frequently appearing values for plant-based products are universalism-nature and hedonism. It is also worth noting the slightly different approach to communication in terms of the range of emerging values among private labels and manufacturer brands, particularly for traditional products. Private label communication is to some extent more differentiated in this respect. The situation is the opposite for plant-based products, but there similar values are more often communicated among own and manufacturer brands.

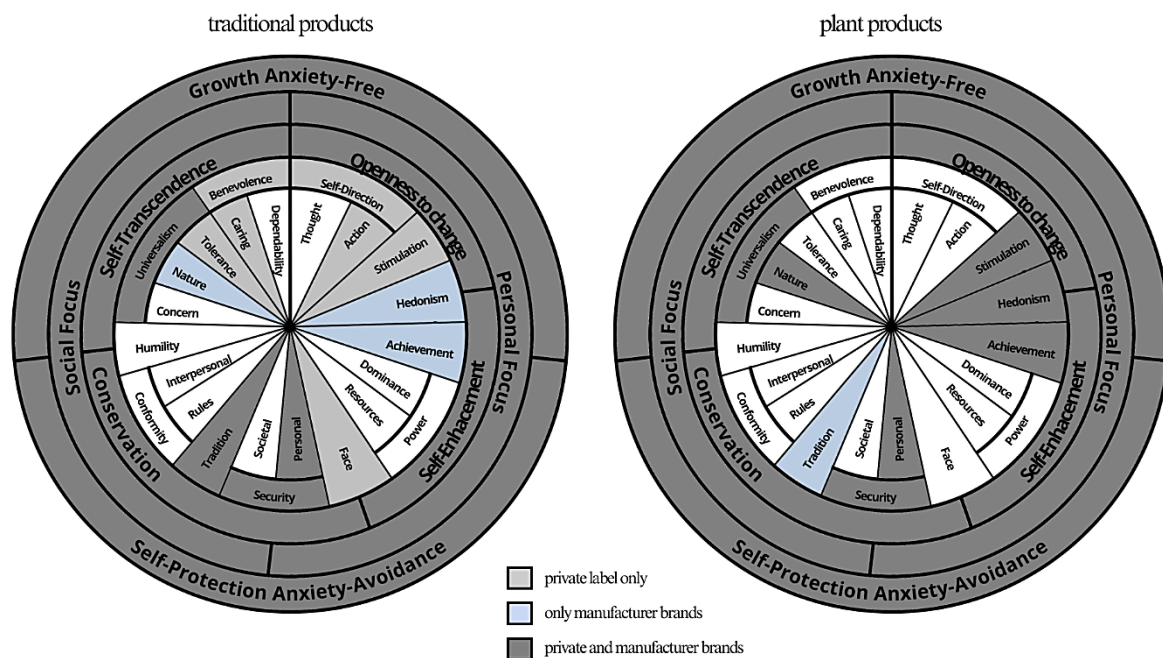


Figure 7. Values communicated by the brands surveyed, divided into traditional and plant products.

Source: own elaboration.

In the communications of the surveyed brands, a clear domination of values from the area of conservatism, especially tradition and personal security, is noticeable. These types of values appear first and foremost in the communication of dairy product brands such as Mleczna Dolina, Pilos, Piątnica and Bakoma Bio. Their content is mainly centred around the constancy of taste, the origin of milk from Poland, the simplicity of composition or the maintenance of known quality standards. In the context of Schwartz's model, these values play a kind of stabilising role - they respond to consumers' needs for security and predictability, which is particularly important in collectivist cultures and with a high avoidance of uncertainty (Schwartz, 2012; Ciecuch et al., 2014). Among Polish consumers, the adoption of such a strategy may therefore serve to build trust in an unstable and rapidly changing world. This is often further reinforced by components related to consumer ethnocentrism, which are

present in the messages of brands such as Pilos or Fruvita ('Produkt Polski', 'z polskiego mleka'). This leads to the reinforcement of narratives of safety and reliability, as well as supporting consumers' belief in the 'natural' advantage of local products and the need to support the national or regional economy (Cleveland, Laroche, Papadopoulos, 2009; Balabanis, Siamagka, 2022).

The brands analysed are also keen to apply values related to self-enhancement, in particular hedonism and achievement. Such messages appear, for example, in the brands Jogobella, Zott Protein, Fruvita Pure, Ave Vege or Alpro. They aim to highlight sensory experiences, enjoyment of consumption and convenience of use, as well as functional benefits (e.g. Zott's high-protein products or Ave Vege's lactose-free yoghurts). In the context of contemporary consumer culture, where food choices often play a role as an element of self-expression and lifestyle (Enriquez, Archila-Godinez, 2022), hedonistic and achievement-related values have an important motivational function (Wulandari, Putri, 2023). It is also worth noting that functional brands, such as Zott Protein, combine hedonism with an achievement component in their messages, building the image of the product as a tool to support success and goal achievement. This is particularly evident in messages relating to nutritional components, such as protein content, lack of sugar or the presence of quality certificates. This type of strategy can be interpreted as a form of „healthy selfishness” – consumption focused on self-care, embedded within the framework of one's own well-being (Kaufman, Jauk, 2020; Próchniak et al., 2025).

On the other hand, values from the area of openness to change appear mainly in messages about plant-based products, especially brands such as Go Vege, Vemondo, Alpro or Ave Vege. They appear in the form of incentives to experiment with diet, discover new flavours or make lifestyle changes ("Say YES to plant-based products", "Plant challenge", "Boost your appetite for life"). These messages are meant to stimulate the recipient to seek out new sensations and emotions, as well as being a kind of invitation to make new decisions. They can be interpreted as an invitation to change and to break the routine of eating and shopping. At the same time, these messages are part of the current of contemporary marketing, where the product is not only supposed to lead to the satisfaction of physical needs, but often also has the potential to inspire personal growth and new experiences (Kotler, Kumar, 2024; Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, 2024). This may suggest that it is precisely this type of message, which combines stimulation with self-direction in action, that may have particular potential to influence consumers seeking valuable, authentic consumption experiences.

In contrast, values from the area of self-transcendence, especially universalism - concern and tolerance - are surprisingly rare. Although some communications (e.g. Fruvita, Pilos) refer to inclusivity and local community, these values are not exposed as a central element of the communication strategy. This may indicate a still limited use of pro-social narrative in the Polish food industry, which is in contradiction with the growing consumer interest in the topics of sustainability and ethical consumption (NielsenIQ, 2022). A similar situation also applies to nature universalism. Only some brands, such as Go Vege or Alpro, communicate the ideas of environmental responsibility or an ethical approach to food in any way, but even they usually

do not do so explicitly. Interestingly, plant-based brands, which intuitively could convey these values, overwhelmingly focus on taste, convenience and product appeal, leaving out the ideational aspect. However, the above observations are confirmed by the scientific literature. As White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) point out, effective pro-environmental communication requires not only the presence of information, but also a well-chosen narrative that resonates with consumers' motivations. The lack of presence of universalism in the messages analysed may also be due to marketers' belief that ideational messages are not yet sufficiently sales effective (Peattie, Crane, 2005).

It is also worth noting that there is a broader, as yet underdeveloped potential concerning the use of values in marketing communications, especially in the context of the increasing role of personalisation of messages. The modern consumer not only expects a product to match his or her functional needs, but also his or her emotional and identity needs. Tailoring advertising content to the characteristics of the consumer, including his or her value system, can contribute to the effectiveness of communication, building deeper emotional engagement, stronger identification with the brand and, ultimately, loyalty (Bajak, Spindel, 2022). Given the advanced targeting capabilities, both behavioural and psychographic, the values held by the individual consumer have particular potential in the context of hyper-personalisation. This approach makes it possible not only to deliver personalised offers, but also to communicate with the consumer at the level of their identity, beliefs and life goals (Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, 2017; Blazeovich, 2021). In this case, the values held by the individual can become the foundation for developing a common ground between the brand and the consumer.

The analyses discussed in the article are not free of limitations that may affect the interpretation of the results obtained. First and foremost, the message analysis was based solely on messages published directly by the brands under study on social media and websites. In addition, the attribution of values to individual messages, despite the authors' efforts, may bear the mark of subjectivity. In order to take a broader perspective, it would be worth considering methodological triangulation in the future, combining content analysis with quantitative or qualitative research. Another limitation is the lack of direct reference to audience engagement and the effectiveness of the messages analysed. Finally, only brands operating on the Polish market were analysed, which limits the possibility of generalising the results. A potentially interesting direction for further research would be to compare the axiological communication of food brands on markets with different cultural profiles. At the same time, the above limitations can be treated as further directions of research on the subject outlined in this article.

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