Social desirability is considered a potential and typical bias in the measurement of various attitudinal, value or personality variables. Schwartz and colleagues (2012) proposed in a recent paper that describes a refined values theory to control for social desirability by introducing a method factor in a Confirmatory Factor Analysis model that loads on all value items. The interpretation of this method factor as social desirability was based on the inspection of the loadings of the value items on this method factor: More socially desirable items displayed stronger loadings. In the current study we try to empirically validate this interpretation. For this purpose we conducted two studies. In the first study the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) of Schwartz (Schwartz et al., 2001) in its classical 40-item form was used to measure ten basic human values. Social desirability was measured by the Social Desirability Scale (SDS-17) developed by Stöber (2001). The study was carried out in Poland on a group of 2,806 adult participants. In the second study the new version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire was used to measure 19 values (Schwartz et al., 2012). Two facets of social desirability were measured: egoistic and moralistic bias (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni and Vecchione 2007) along a differentiation based on the work of Paulhus (2002). This study was carried out in Poland on 573 adults. In both studies we estimate the relationship between the various social desirability scales and the method factor. We report results of the analyses and discuss problems with such an approach to modeling social desirability.

Key words: Social desirability; method factor; human values; confirmatory factor analysis