

Friendship as a Value in Academic Ethos

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research work reported here was to clarify the semantics of the notion of “friendship”. The main research question is to what extent friendship is recognised by students and teachers as a value constituting the identity of the Jagiellonian University’s academic community. From it follows another one: what role does friendship play in the value system of the academic ethos– does it have the potential to clarify or transform values enshrined in documents and recognised as enduring? This study uses qualitative data generated from the collected research material: semi-structured interviews and online surveys with closed questions, single and multiple choice. Content analysis was used to examine the interviews by identifying words, phrases and sentences related to the research tasks. The conclusions can be summarised as: 1. Friendship functions in horizontal relationships; 2. Friendship is an essential value of university ethos, realised through its other, already recognised and acknowledged, values: fair treatment, kindness, responsibility and respect for the other; 3. Friendship evolves in the system of references; 4. Friendship realised as a value of the ethos leads to a merger of the professional and the private spheres; 5. Friendship is automatically excluded when a vertical relationship appears.

KEYWORDS

Friendship; university; academic ethos; academic community; higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Polish universities are changing their identity due to two main factors: the drive to internationalise research and its results, reinforced by the 'Act of 20 July 2018. The Law on Higher Education and Science' (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2018) and the development of digital technologies transforming the nature of interpersonal relationships. The latter aspect became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic,

Initial observations suggest shifts on the value scale from relationality to efficacy, from collectivism to individualism, from a long distance from authority to its reduction, as well as from a sense of agency to an expectation of guidance and rules. At the same time, university students have been reporting a decline in their sense of general well-being, ranging from apathy to depression.¹ The enforced isolation provoked questions about the meaning and nature of interpersonal bonds stronger than those between fellow students – about friendship, its understanding and significance.

State of the Research

The changes taking place at Polish universities cover three areas: management (Kromolicka, 2017), education (Sławek, 2017) and research (Potulicka, 2017), all interrelated. Their common foundation is shaped by values, which are an expression of ideas and related emotions. The value map of Polish universities is made up of truth, kindness, fairness, reliability, tolerance, loyalty, self-reliance, honesty, dignity, and freedom expressed in *Akademicki Kodeks Wartości (Academic Code of Values)*, (Jagiellonian University, 2003). Friendship did not feature among these as a distinct quality. In research on friendship, one can notice a large disproportion between Polish and foreign universities. While the importance of friendship in human development in the context of the educational system has been researched in relation to foreign university students (Brooks, 2007; Heron, 2019; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006), less attention has been paid to the understanding and realisation of friendship between university teachers and students (Heiman, 2000; Loving, 2011) and among lecturers (Sonu, 2013). From a psychological perspective, friendship represents one of the fundamental human needs (Chasin & Radtke, 2013; Hays, 1985; Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Tokuno, 1986).

Hypotheses and Objectives

Friendship as a value plays a significant role in shaping the contemporary academic ethos. The concept and the phenomenon it generates absorb the values traditionally attributed to the university, making them more comprehensible and easier for students to adopt.

The aim of the research work reported here was to clarify the semantics of the term *friendship* within the space of the academic community at the Jagiellonian University (JU),

¹ Open-ended in nature, the observation was carried out by the author in 2019–2021 on groups of students attending university courses. They should only be regarded as an inspiration for undertake research and an impetus to formulate research problems. The diagram for the observations is taken from Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Cf. National Culture, in Hofstede's Insights, <https://hi.hofstede-insights.com/national-culture> [accessed: 25.10.2019].

Poland's oldest school of higher education with an established tradition and prestige, which makes it provide a model of good practice for other universities. As the Jagiellonian University also enjoys international recognition, knowledge of the transformation of values taking place within its walls and of the identity of Polish academia will be a factor in facilitating the establishment and nurturing of cooperation with foreign universities.

Friendship is a word sensitive to cultural contexts: it is shaped in a network of interpersonal connections, and these grow out of mentalities and ways of constructing perceptions of the world. The latter manifest themselves in language. Calling someone a friend entails a set of expectations and behaviours that are not necessarily the same across cultures (Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 85). Understanding differences and similarities provides tools for the creation of a sustainable foundation for academic collaboration less exposed to misunderstandings arising from different mentalities.

The main research question is: To what extent is *friendship* recognised by students and teachers as a value constituting the identity of the academic community at the Jagiellonian University? From this follows another one: what role does *friendship* play in the value system of the academic ethos of the JU – does it have the potential to clarify or transform values that are enshrined in documents and considered enduring? In what direction is this transformation heading: strengthening the traditional type of master-student relationship, or rather bridging the distance, favouring the horizontal or vertical type of relationship?

Theoretical Background: Philosophical Dimensions of Friendship

The starting point for reflection on the essence of friendship is the thought of Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, book VIII), where three motivations for establishing and nurturing this type of relationship are distinguished: pleasure, benefit and the friend's virtues. It can also be put differently, in connection with the three types of goods, and we would then speak of "utilitarian friendship", based on a calculated exchange of goods, "hedonistic friendship", the essence of which is pleasure, and "altruistic friendship", based on excellence and morally beautiful, the highest in the hierarchy of friendships.

According to the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* "Friendship, as understood here, is a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern on the part of each friend for the welfare of the other, for the other's sake, and that involves some degree of intimacy" (Helm, 2021). It is combined with 'love' in its non-sexual formulation - as *philia* (Cooper, 1997, p. 625). However, in contrast to love in the above sense, friendship is more concrete, directed rather towards a particular person than an ideal, requiring reciprocity, interaction.

Friendship, by contrast, is essentially a kind of relationship grounded in a particular kind of special concern each has for the other as the person she is; and whereas we must make conceptual room for the idea of unrequited love, unrequited friendship is senseless. Consequently, accounts of friendship tend to understand it not merely as a case of reciprocal love of some form (together with mutual acknowledgment of this love),

but as essentially involving significant interactions between the friends – as being in this sense a certain kind of relationship (Helm, 2021, para. 3).

Friendship involves a desire for psychological identification with the object of friendship, through shared interests, sharing views on important issues and spending time together, however without the impulse to physically unite with the object of friendship (Thomas, 1989, p. 185). Friendship between individuals who are at different levels of the university hierarchy can be debatable. While it is conceivable on the part of the student to want to identify with the teacher because of the latter's personal qualities, knowledge and experience, the reverse identification, i.e. of the teacher with the student, is rather difficult to imagine. A similar relationship occurs when reciprocity is taken into account. Even if both parties refer to the bond between them as friendship, the semantic emphasis will have a different colour in either case. This aspect of friendship will be discussed on the basis of empirical findings.

Intimacy, understood as insight into a friend's affairs, requires both commitment and openness. This is another characteristic of friendship: "I tell my friends things about myself that I would not dream of telling others, and I expect them to make me privy to intimate details of their lives" (Annis, 1987, p. 351). According to some researchers, it can also manifest itself in the desire to share the same living space (Moore & Frederick, 2017, p. 119; Sherman, 1987, p. 589). The trust necessary for the manifestation of this trait is based on common values and views (Telfer 1970-71, p. 227). Obviously, this is not a complete community since a complete congruence of values is, firstly, impossible and, secondly, would not provide space for mutual enrichment. Aristotle's words that a friend is the other self should be seen as the goal of friendship to which one aspires and not as something existing in fact.

The commonality of views and values coupled with the space occupied and enriched by intimacy is strengthened through joint action. Individual friendship relationships extended to more than one person and cultivated as part of university tradition translate into a concern for the common good. However, there is also an opposing tendency to exclude those who are not counted as friends (Lintott, 2015, p. 334). In that case, the university becomes an isolated space, an "ivory tower". Thus, the question of friendship as part of university ethos is at the same time a question about the possibilities of co-operation with the university's environment: public benefit and informal educational institutions, as well as all kinds of organisations whose aim is to cultivate timeless values.

Research Tasks

- To explore the semantic scope of the word 'friendship' as perceived by Jagiellonian University students and teachers
- To explore the nature of horizontal and vertical communication structures in relationships described as friendship

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The narrative interviews were collected from 26 teachers and 30 students. They were invited to give an interview via an e-mail invitation. The respondents were selected from the JU's employees and students. 120 e-mails to teachers and 150 to students were sent. The obtained numbers, 26 and 30 respectively, are those who answered invitations, accepted them and, finally, gave interviews. Significant number of the e-mails with invitations remained unanswered. 1% of those who answered, excused themselves because of "lack of time". Another 1% did not appear at the arranged meeting.

There was no selection regarding either sex or department. According to the initial assumption of the research, the JU's community was regarded as whole with the respect to "teachers – students" division.

The online surveys were constructed in two versions: for teachers and for students separately, although the questions were similar. In the introductory part the surveyed were asked about being employee/being student at the JU, and they were asked to indicate how long they work/learn at the JU. Those who marked not being a teacher/a student at the JU's were automatically excluded by the system from further answering. The main part consisted of 6 questions concerning the words indicating horizontal and vertical type of relations (multiple choice questions), space of the student – teacher interactions, and formal/informal salutations and channels of communication (single choice questions).

The invitation to fill the survey was sent to all teachers and students who had active JU's e-mail address in 2021, which makes 4737 teachers and 34432 students. It was filled by 200 teachers and 491 students. The surveys included introductory questions about the length of employment/studying at the JU. The results are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Responses to question "How long have you been working at the JU?"

Year of Experience	Percentage (n)
More than 30 years	21,1% (42 people)
21 – 30 years	20,6% (41 people)
11 – 20 years	35,2% (70 people)
5 – 10 years	11.1% (22 people)
3-5 years	4,5% (9 people)
Less than 3 years	7,5% (15 people)

Table 2. Responses to question “How long have you been studying at the JU?”

Years of Study	Percentage (n)
more than 10 years	0,8% (4 people)
5-10 years	7,1% (35 people)
3-5 years	25,1% (123 people)
less than 3 years	67% (329 people)

Instruments

The narrative interviews were conducted online, via Skype or TEAMS. The process consisted of several stages. At the first step the potential interviewees were invited to give the interview and in the e-mail the purpose of the research was explained, as well the details about the research grant and its contractors. The statement of anonymity of the whole process of the interview giving and the data processing was ensured. At the second stage an e-mail with the appointed date confirmation was sent on the eve of the planned meeting. The very interview constituted the third stage: after saying “good morning”, the purpose and general rules were recapitulated and the kick-off question was asked. The interviewers did not stop the interviewee and avoided directing the speaking. They engaged themselves only when the interviewee signaled, verbally or by prolonged silence, that they did not know what to say. In such case one of the questions was asked: “do you recognize the university ethos?”, “tell me about your friends at the university, please”, “what values do you regard as important in academia?”. The interview was recorded on outer device, such as dictaphone. At the stage of the data processing the conversation was written down. All the words indicating the interviewee identity, surnames, proper names, “empty words”, such as “yyy...”, “hm...”, repetition, etc. were removed. The interviews were marked with symbols: T – for teachers and S for students, and order numbers: 1-26 for the teachers and 1-26 for the students. Finally, the interviews were marked as T. 1, T. 2,T. 26, and S. 1, S. 2, ...S. 30.

The online surveys were put into Google disc and made available to the surveyed via links. The links were disseminated by the faculties’ and institutes’ offices. The results were obtained in the form of summaries and charts on the Google disc.

Data Collection and Analysis

The process of analyses consisted of two parts: the analysis of the interviews and the analysis of the online surveys data. Content analysis was applied to identify and interpret the meaning of the pre-determined key-words such as “friendship” and familiar to it, “teacher” and “student” in the texts of the interviews. This method was chosen because it is designated to identify and interpret meaning in recorded form of communication by isolating small pieces of the data that represent salient concepts (Kleinheksel et al. 2020, p. 127; Kolbe & Burnett 1991, p. 243-250;). I assumed that the texts of the semi-structured interviews are a rich source of information about the phenomenon of “friendship” (Julien 2008, 121-123). I stayed close to the text and described

what was occurring on the surface (Graneheim & Lundman 2004, p. 107). Such an approach was determined by the fact that the interviews were conducted online and observing emotions by facial expressions, gestures or changes in voice intonation made latent content analysis impossible. Qualitative manifest content analysis helped me to organize the texts of the interviews into categories that reflected shared meaning. To sum up, the method I applied to the textual analysis was qualitative manifest content analysis and it consisted of the following stages: my immersion into the data, identifying units of meaning (“friendship”, “student”, “teacher”), condensation of the phrases by shortening them without losing their original meaning, coding – by using the above-mentioned units of meaning and categorizing. “Friendship” was the leading theme. An effort to apply MAXQDA software to conduct the qualitative analyses was also taken (Gizzi & Rädiker 2021, p. 35) but at the final stage manual coding was applied (Saldana 2009). It was more time-consuming but it proved to be more precise and allowed me to avoid many cross-checking processes. After the words had been found, small pieces of the texts were isolated. Then, I searched for the words that occurred in the neighborhood of the key words. I used them to identify the semantics of the key-words. The analysis allowed me to precise the semantics of the word “friendship”, which was the main purpose of that part of the research. Application of the content analysis method allowed me to consider both the participant and the context of the category of “friendship”

The data obtained in the process of online survey data gathering were subjected to quantitative analysis. I focused on three purposes. First of all, I measured differences between the groups of students and teachers concerning the frequency of the words used to describe the type of relations. Secondly, I used it to assess relationships between such variables as friendship, mating, rivalry, mentorship, etc. within the frames of the same group (teachers and students, relatively). And thirdly, I used it to test the hypothesis that “friendship” as a concept describing relations occupies high position among other words. I used descriptive statistics which implied focusing just on the sample. Making conclusions on the whole population of the JU was not a purpose in this research.

RESULTS

The results were divided into two groups, similarly to the source materials and methodological division. Only at the final stage of the analyses conclusions on their complementarity were made.

Performance of Research Task One: *Investigation of the semantic scope of the word ‘friendship’ as perceived by the Jagiellonian University students and teachers*

In the relationships: teacher-teacher, teacher-student-student-teacher, student-student, *friendship* is present in all three forms: as “hedonistic friendship”, “altruistic friendship” and “utilitarian friendship”. However, the proportions of these three types of friendship are different.

Teacher-teacher relationship

The dominant type of friendship is hedonistic, based on the joy of spending time together and sharing academic passions.

We get together and it is great. That is what I think is also such a measure of friendship, that even if we do not see each other for a couple of months, then later we do not need to adjust somehow. It starts to work immediately, and this also seems to me to be very important in my perception of friendship, also without such preconceptions, some unnecessary expectations. I do not have expectations of my friend, he does not have expectations of me. And that works out great (T. 12).

In the case of the junior teacher-senior teacher relationship, the friendship is tinged with a sense of responsibility and the consequences of recognising someone as a friend, changing the type of relationship. In this type of relationship, there is a tinge of mentoring, guidance: “He was not only my champion in terms of academic work, but also kind of friend, where he supported me in various moments in life that were not easy, because that is the way life worked out for me” (T. 12).

A narrow group of teachers draw a clear line between their professional, university life from their private life, attributing friendship only to the latter sphere:

Although I spend time at work from morning to evening and talk to people about various topics and am close to them, I would hardly call anyone a friend. I have friends outside of work. I like these collaborators a lot and often somewhere private topics come up as well, but it is not friendship. I do not think it is good, although if friendship like that comes along, then so be it, but I think these are some very rare cases (T. 17)

Friendship is also excluded in the superior-subordinate relationship, although both persons involved are still university teachers: “From the point of view of a head of unit, such things like friendship or camaraderie already look completely different” (T. 11), “It is quite lonely at the top – heads of units do not have friends” (T. 14).

Teacher-student relationship

Teacher-student relationship inherits some of the characteristics of the senior teacher-junior teacher relationship. To the greatest extent, an altruistic type of friendship is revealed here as the desire to do good and to support the development of the one who is lower in the hierarchy. On the one hand, there is a sense of responsibility for the young person and on the other one can notice the student’s expectation that the senior fellow student/teacher will act as an authority. Friendship is seen as singling someone out from the crowd, and this causes teachers to abandon friendship with students in favour of treating everyone fairly:

Not with students, and I will say that this is not, in my opinion, a good relationship. The practical, pragmatic insight convinces me not to have such a relationship and to strive for it. And this is because, in my opinion, it creates a sense of undervaluing and even unfair treatment of the group as a whole in the other participants of a given course, the students. And I make no secret of the fact that in all my behaviour as a teacher, I

absolutely strive for, I have this as a motto in front of me: fair or equal treatment of all students' (T. 7).

The desire for fair i.e. equal treatment also appears from what the students say: "(...) when the teacher has a different attitude towards me than the other students, I feel bad thinking of them" (S. 5). Trust in the teacher's competence is combined with emotional distance: "Well, it seems to me that such relationships based on help, on support in the academic sphere should revolve within some kind of professionalism there and not go into such a sphere of more private contacts" (S. 22). In the case of attempts to reduce the distance, students experience discomfort: "I feel quite uncomfortable when my tutor writes to me on Facebook, even though it is an accepted form of communication and it can be done" (S. 13).

Student-student relationship

Here friendship emerges naturally as a consequence of learning together, studying for exams and spending leisure time together. According to the students, a more casual atmosphere than in secondary school is conducive to the formation of intimate relationships. These, in turn, provide support and a sense of belonging:

When it comes to friendships born at university, it was not just that I came to a foreign city and already knew people and only spent time with them, but I also just started to integrate into the community. And that is where I met a lot of great people with whom we form such a group of friends, we learn together, we experience our university successes and failures together, and my experience tells me that no matter what the situation is I can write to this group and I know that these people will help me. We go to different classes together, so also on such a purely educational level we can help one another, that is, we can study together for the courses we attend and gain a lot of interesting insights and comments on our own work. For instance, I can write to my friend who is in the same course and ask him if what I am doing is ok; if my presentation covers the subject, if my essay is appropriately worded for the subject matter of the class, if the topic of my paper is appropriate for the needs of that particular course. You can get that kind of help. But you can also be together at the weekend' (S. 13).

In the perception of contemporary students, the university is a place where lifelong friendships are formed: "(...) it will not end at university" (S. 9); "(...) it will not end. It is so different and so deep that I think if it ended at university, I would be very disappointed and I would find it very hard to accept" (S. 16).

Friendship within and beyond the university space

Friendship is characterised by the sharing of space and intimacy, understood as consent to let a friend have insight into one's private matters and a willingness to engage in them (intimacy understood as *into-me-see*). In the course of the research, it was noticeable that there was an expectation of the friend to be willing to make an effort to constantly get to know a given person, to be for them (with the assumption of reciprocity). The shared university space proved to be an insufficient condition for a relationship to be called *friendship*. In all cases, the shared

passion, the love of learning, the sense of belonging to the university community needed to be complemented by spending free time together, topped off by an invitation to one's intimate space – home. Only then was the relationship called *friendship*.

The other thing that influences such a friendship is that I remember the first time I visited him and spent the night at his house. So that is something that also seems to me like such a major step: that you are just at someone's house, you blur the boundaries. This university is alive because we have common interests, but they go beyond it, they move into the private sphere (T. 19).

Extra-linguistic dimensions of friendship

Friendship shapes and develops in a system of references such as space, age, role – student, teacher, mentor/tutor” “And my conclusion would be that the place we are in, friendships, are shaped in a system of references. Friendships as one type of relationship - they change. I mean they change because the relational arrangement changes” (T. 19). Space, the workplace, influences relationships by changing their place in the university hierarchy: “The moment they graduate and decide to write their PhD dissertation with me in a group (...) then on that first day we just switch to first-name terms” (T. 5). In this case, there is no talk of friendship, or even camaraderie, but the emotional distance is reduced, in contrast to that favoured with students: “It does not mean at all that we have suddenly become comrades, but I think we work better. Whereas with the students - I definitely think that this distance should remain” (T. 5). It shortens even further when a PhD student becomes an academic:

My PhD thesis adviser decides to offer getting onto first-name terms. This is something that changes the mutual relationship a great deal and, on the other hand, allows you to see yourself a little bit differently. In the self-assessment, it is precisely this issue of friendship, but friendship in the academic world, understood here also as a kind of recognition: ‘you are one of us’, an academic recognition as well, because it also seems interesting to me that this takes place on this academic level, academic integrity. (T. 19)

The selected quotes are representative of the themes discussed. It was in a similar fashion that many respondents addressed questions about friendship – its understanding, role and place, both in the university space and in non-university life. The conclusions can be put as follows:

- *Friendship functions in horizontal relationships*: It is a relationship of equals whose offer for each other in terms of values is more or less the same. When there is an imbalance, the relationship is referred to by other terms, and even if the word *friendship* appears, it is with the proviso that we are talking about an unequal relationship: master-student, mentor-student. The student-teacher relationship is an asymmetrical one. As such, it excludes friendship the way Aristotle understood it.

- *Friendship is an essential value of university ethos, realised through its other already recognised and acknowledged values:*² fair treatment, kindness, responsibility and respect for the other.
- *Friendship evolves in the system of references:* Changing one's place in the university hierarchy, for example by changing status from student to doctoral student or obtaining a doctoral degree, results in a reduction/increase of emotional distance.
- *Friendship realized as an ethos value leads to a connection between the professional and the private sphere:* The absence of such a link moves the relationship into the realm of phenomena that are already beyond the semantics of 'friendship'.
- *Friendship is automatically excluded when a vertical relationship emerges:* Respondents argued that 'friendship' in the teacher-student relationship would potentially be an obstacle to the fulfilment of the tasks arising from the teacher's vocation: being an authority, a guide, a mentor, providing a personal role model and ensuring fair treatment. Recognising someone as a friend, i.e. an equal, was interpreted as: a) a kind of promotion and recognition – "you are one of us"; b) abuse towards other students - lack of equal treatment.

Performance of Research Task Two: *Exploration of the nature of horizontal and vertical communication structures in relationships described as friendships: the task was carried out via online surveys, in the form of single-choice and multiple-choice questions.*

The results concerning the online surveys were organized as answers to the following questions:

- What is the length of employment/studying of the surveyed? (Table 1, Table 2)
- What words describe present state of the horizontal structures of the relations: student – student, student – teacher? (Table 3)
- What words describe present state of the vertical structure of the relations student – teacher, teacher -student? (Table 4)
- What words describe ideal/desired state of the vertical structure of the relations student – teacher, teacher -student? (Table 5)
- What are preferred channels and forms of addressing for students and teachers, respectively? (Table 6)
- What are preferred spaces of contacts, university vs. non-university space, for students and teachers respectively? (Table 7)

² The values shaped over the centuries by university tradition form a map that facilitates navigating the web of relationships. Its landmarks are shaped by the values detailed in the *Akademicki Kodeks Wartości* (Jagiellonian University, 2003). They have gained a practical dimension in the document *Kodeks. Dobre Praktyki w Szkołach Wyższych* (Code. *Good Practices in Higher Education* Polish Rectors Foundation, 2007). The legal framework is defined by the Statutes of the Jagiellonian University, while the way forward is symbolically delineated by the *Jagiellonian University Development Strategy until 2030* (Jagiellonian University, 2021).

They were presented as tables. The two first are placed in the part “Sample”. It is worth noticing that among the teachers who filled the survey there were 42 people (21,1%) who had worked at the university more than 30 years, 41 (21,6%) – working between 21 and 30 years, 70 (35,2%) – 11 – 20 years, 22 (11,1%) – 5 – 10 years, 9 (4,5%) – 3 – 5 years, and 15 (7,5%) – less than 3 years. The table shows that most of the surveyed people have worked at the university more than ten years and almost half of them – more than twenty years. It means that they shaped their attitude towards teaching process and university values at the 1990’s. Historical circumstances, connected with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and liberating Poland from its influence determined in them strong feeling of vocation, responsibility for the society and call for leadership. They also belong to the generation for which higher education was a kind of ennoblement due to the fact that a tiny amount of the society graduated from university. In 1990/1991 the scholarisation index in Poland was 9,80% whereas in 2010.2011 it rose till 40,8% (Maciołek 2016, p. 37). The younger ones who have worked at the university less than 10 years make 23,1% of the whole number of the surveyed. They do not have significant influence on the university educational policy in its formal aspects but they affect students in informal ways due to the fact of belonging to the same generation. In turn, among the students who filled the survey there were 329 (67%) people who have studied at the university less than 3 years, 123 (25,1%) have studied 3-5 years, 35 (7,1%) – more than 5 years, and 4 (0,8%) people - more than 10 years. The table shows that the biggest group of students consists of those who have just started their “adventure” with the university and, mentally, they belong to the “digital epoch” in which information is easily accessible. They expect from a teacher flexibility, leadership and rather general knowledge of the world and relations, a kind of “know-how to live”, than just a pack of information on a subject. In this respect the length of employment and possibility to affect students’ minds seem to be tightly connected.

The JU’s community create sub-groups of the students’ one and the teachers’ one. The question about relations within the groups, and the place of friendship, was asked to identify the presence of such a concept and phenomenon at all. Let us remind the question asked: “What words describe present state of the horizontal structures of the relations: student – student, student – teacher?” The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Responses to question “What words describe present state of the horizontal structures of the relations: student – student, student – teacher?”

Descriptive Word	Student-Student Relation. (Percentage)	Teacher-Teacher Relation. (Percentage)
Colleague	82,5%	83,9%
Friend	41,5%	28,1%
Buddy	44,4%	11,1%
Mate	69%	79,9%
Rival	9,6%	8,5%
Authority	-----	26,6%

The Table 3 shows that the relations among students are much warmer than those in the group of teachers. Let us also remind that here the surveyed ones could choose more than one word. “Colleague” and “mate” are emotionally neutral, and they were pointed to as describing the type of relations most often. In the light of the general research question I posed, the words “friend” and “buddy” are the most interesting ones. While almost half of the surveyed students used these words to describe their relations, less than every third surveyed teachers regarded other teacher as “friend”, and a little bit more than every tenth – as a “buddy”. One remark is important here: the result of such little popularity of the word “buddy” can have connection with its semantics and vocabulary content of both groups: the youth language is different than that of the older generation. Nevertheless, among students “friend” is more often recognizable word to describe another student than it is among teachers. The words “authority” indicates that there is hierarchy among teachers. The factor was not observed within the group of students.

After vertical relations were recognized, two questions about the words describing horizontal relations were posed. First, the present state was observed. Here only one answer could be pointed to by a surveyed one. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Responses to question “What words describe present state of the vertical structure of the relations student – teacher, teacher -student?”

Descriptive Words	Student – Teacher Relation (Percentage)	Teacher – Student Relation (Percentage)
Colleague	6,5%	20,6%
Friend	2,6%	7%
Buddy	1,6%	1%
Mentee	57%	69,3%
pupil/teacher	92,1%	66,3%
Acquaintance	10%	22,1%
Authority	51,3%	-----

As we can see, identification of the place by teaching process is most common: 92,1% students regard themselves as subjects of the educational process with the figure of a teacher ahead, whereas 66,3% teachers see students simply as “pupils” – those who are to be taught. In the interesting for this research aspect of “friendship” the results show that neither teacher nor student is recognized by the other as “friend”. Only 2,6% students tend to perceive a teacher as a friend. In the teachers the number is a little bit higher – 7% tend to perceive a student as a friend. It is surprising because, intuitively, one could assume that the youth would tend to deformalize relations. On the other hand, the semantic of the word “friendship” needs to be considered and subjected to more profound investigations. The results show that students expect from a teacher being an authority – it is more than half of the surveyed ones. In this

respect the teachers and the students meet, which is supported by the choice of the word mentor/mentee. 69,3% of the teachers want to be mentors for their students and 57% students expect mentorship. It seems that this is the area where friendship, understood as selfless concern for the other's good, can be flourished.

The present state is an interesting starting point to create desirable future relations. With this idea in mind another question was posed: "What words describe ideal/desired state of the vertical structure of the relations student – teacher, teacher -student?". The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Responses to question "What words describe ideal/desired state of the vertical structure of the relations student – teacher, teacher -student?"

Descriptive Word	Students (Percentage)	Teachers (Percentage)
Friendship	3,5%	1,5%
Mating	5,5%	0,5%
Hierarchical, traditional relation	3,9%	2,5%
Master-pupil/follower	28,7%	47,7%
Equal relation formally defined	58,5%	47,7%

The results show that transparent norms are expected. Both students and teachers are aware that "equality" does not mean doing the same. It should be based on formal regulations on rights and obligations that are derived from knowledge, life experience and goals. The regulations are regarded as the result of previously conducted discussion and consensus resulting from mutual understanding. 58,5 % students and 47,7% teachers expressed strong need for such equality. It seems that the regulations are a kind of prerequisite for other types of relations, such as master – pupil follower, which is supported by 47,7% teachers and 28,7% pupils. In the latter answer the need of mentor – mentee relationship sounds. Nevertheless, structural frames that are recognized as formal regulations, are expected. Subsequently, a question about salutations and channels of communication was asked. In the Polish language and the JU's cultural tradition the words and salutations reflect place in hierarchy and, indirectly, points to the experience, knowledge, wisdom. The results are presented in the Table 6.

Table 6. Responses to question: "What are preferred channels and forms of addressing for students and teachers, respectively?"

Salutations and Channels' Preferences	Students (Percentage)	Teachers (Percentage)
Formal salutations, official channels	15,9%	64,3%
Informal salutations, unofficial channels	8,1%	4,5%
Both	76%	31,2%

The teachers prefer formal salutations and official channels – 63,3%. Regardless of the fact that choice “both” was also offered as answer to the question. The students mostly chosen the answer “both”, but if they were to choose “either or...”, the choice of formal salutations and official channels would be more preferable: 15% to 8,1%.

Virtual space in which contacts occurred during the pandemic time of the COVID-19 and the voices that personal touch is indispensable, provoked a question about the space of teacher-student relations in touchable reality. It was posed as: “What are preferred spaces of contacts, university vs. non-university space, for students and teachers respectively?”. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Responses to question “What are preferred spaces of contacts, university vs. non-university space, for students and teachers respectively?”

Space Type	Students (Percentage)	Teachers (Percentage)
University space	61,8%	50,5%
Non-university space	38,2%	49,5%

The comparison shows that more students than teachers choose university space as a place of teacher – student contacts. It is 61,8% to 50,5%, respectively.

To sum up, the results of the online survey show that friendship is poorly recognized by students and teachers as a value constituting the identity of the JU’s academic community. It seems to be present within the frames of other words describing mutual relations, such as “mentorship” or “authority”. It is often recognizable as expectations for being/following an authority. The problem with recognition the types of relations, and subsequent dissatisfaction, are caused by the lack of clarity regarding obligations and right of both sides. Discussion and clarifying norms seems to be a first step towards the equality understood as recognition of ones place in the JU’s structure. It is a starting point for looking for words that describe a student – teacher relation in more precise way. The poor presence of “friendship”, both as words and phenomenon, results from the lack of dialogue between students and teachers about the expectations that are not included into syllabuses. These are the emotional need to be visible, understood and respected. Here, space for building friendly relations opens. “Friendship”, not as an established phenomenon but as a process of mutual recognition has the potential to revive the university ethos.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The hypothesis that “friendship as a value plays a significant role in shaping the contemporary academic ethos” has not been proven on the level of online surveys. Nevertheless, it was supported by the results of the interviews. The semantics of the word “friendship” was clarified and put into the set of the words describing relations among members of the JU’s academic community. The key finding is that it embraces the semantics *mentor – mentee* relations that

proved to be desirable by most of the surveyed representatives of the academic community. The main direction of necessary transformation in academia has also been recognized. It was expressed in the need to discuss and clarify obligations and rights both on the side of teachers and students, and put foundations under equality. "Friendship" is poorly recognized by students and teachers as a value constituting the university ethos. However, it was put into the frames of *mentoring* and as such it strengthens the traditional type of a master-student relationship, favouring the vertical type of relationships.

"Friendship" as part of a shared set of values for students and faculty in the university space is rather a poorly researched topic. Emmeche (2015) assumes that academic research and bonds of friendship are interrelated. Their interdependence is difficult to define due to the lack of clear boundaries between similar phenomena: friendship, camaraderie, love, as well as due to the complexity of the phenomenon of "academic research" itself. Emmeche focuses exclusively on the phenomenon of friendship between researchers, without considering the student as the subject of the studied relationships. Nor does it address the issue of community or the permanence of the ethos, keeping in its field of interest only the influence of friendship on scientific research and professional relations. Schmidt (2020), in turn, considers friendship between students from the point of view of the impact of relationships on the effectiveness of the educational process. McCabe (2016) takes a similar perspective. Friendship among students studied through the prism of their belonging to a type of collectivist or individualistic culture was discussed by Baumgarte (2016). He proposed a model for evaluating relationships that took into account three dimensions and six interpenetrating styles: "Independents versus Interveners, Includers versus Excluders, and Idealists versus Realists" (Baumgarte, 2016, p 2). The value of this study is in broadening the above mentioned perspectives about comparative approach towards students' and teachers' group, and also – about posing question about semantics of the notion "friendship", as it is seen from the "inside" of the oldest Polish university.

Incongruency between the interviews and surveys' findings was an unexpected outcome of this research. I had rather assumed that the finding of both types of the data would have been complimentary. That opens perspective for further research. First of all, as many of the interviewees mentioned, teaching and learning are relational processes. The relation was fed during the interview and it was not – in the online surveys. Secondly, friendship as a subject of conversation occurred during interviews but it was not highlighted in the surveys. Thus, the problem of developing a value by concentrating on it is a potential research topic. Another one, quite distant from this research but connected lies in investigating on vocabulary differences in "mapping university" in teacher and student groups, respectively. That could show what mental spaces are occupied when "university" is considered.

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