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## Life Satisfaction of Polish football fans

Maciej Wronkowski<sup>1</sup>, Alicja Kostencka<sup>2</sup>, Jolanta E. Kowalska<sup>3</sup>,  
Aldona Molesztak<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Municipal Sports Club Włókniarz Toruń, Primary School No. 28 in Toruń, Poland*

<sup>2</sup> *Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Institute of Physical Culture, Poland*

<sup>3</sup> *University of Lodz, Department of Physical and Health Education, Poland*

<sup>4</sup> *Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology*

**Key words:** life satisfaction, football fans

### Abstract

**Introduction:** As the popularity and the importance of positive psychology is growing, the level of life satisfaction of people of different backgrounds has been more and more often put to analysis, including life satisfaction of football fans. The issue of football fans' life satisfaction seems to be interesting not only with regard to all football fans in general, but also to members of different football fan groups in the Polish stadiums. Thus, the present study attempts to determine the level of life satisfaction among Polish football fans and the differences between their groups. **Material and methods:** The research used the method of a diagnostic online survey and was conducted on a sample of 775 people (148 women and 627 men) who actively participate in sports events as football fans. The respondents in the survey were divided into 4 groups depending on their declared affiliation to the fan group: Supporters (so called "Pikniki" or Picnicking Fans), Ultras, Hooligans and Hardcore Football Fans (Kibole). **Results:** The life satisfaction level of Polish football supporters is medium or high across all fan groups: Supporters, Ultras, Hardcore Football Fans as well as Hooligans. Therefore, it may be concluded that their life satisfaction is on a similar level. Considering the absence of statistically significant differences between particular groups regarding life satisfaction, it is likely that some determinants of happiness vital for the group of Hooligans as fanatic supporters of football and their 'own' football club may be also characteristic for other groups of supporters.

## INTRODUCTION

Football (or soccer as they call it in America) is a sport fascinating millions people around the world, not only people somehow connected to the game, but primarily its fans. As the popularity and the importance of positive psychology is growing, the level of life satisfaction of people of different backgrounds has been more and more often put to analysis, including the life satisfaction of football fans. The issue seems to be interesting not only with regard to all football fans in general, but also to members of different football fan groups in the Polish stadiums.

The present study attempts at determining life satisfaction level of Polish football fans and the difference between supporters declaring their affiliation to different fan groups. The issue seems to be an interesting one as it has been hardly ever mentioned in literature. The research so far has concentrated mainly on the anti-social behaviour of football supporters inside and outside stadiums, while the number of studies concerning life satisfaction of football supporters is very scarce.

### *Life satisfaction definition*

Life satisfaction has been defined in a number of ways. One of those definitions describes life satisfaction as an overall evaluation of life and emotions following from it<sup>1</sup>. According to R. Veenhoven, life satisfaction is based on individual experience and reflects internal life benefits, is relatively durable and shows moderate dynamics<sup>2</sup>. The construct is also referred to as happiness, a subjective well-being or life satisfaction<sup>3</sup>. A. Zalewska<sup>4</sup> has a similar opinion when she writes about life quality as a system of attitudes of a person demonstrating the person's approach to their own life as a whole and its various domains, e.g. work, health. Such approaches are defined including two aspects: an emotional one-comprising positive and negative emotions, and a cognitive one-which is life satisfaction<sup>5</sup>.

The construct of life satisfaction and feeling of happiness is also associated with the category of life quality<sup>6</sup>. As J. Czapiński stresses, researchers of mental well-being assume that life quality of a person is determined by the fact whether or not the person likes the life

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<sup>1</sup>E. Kasprzak, Zadowolenie z życia jako kategoria emocjonalna i poznawcza, *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne*, 2012, 17, 1, p. 187-188.

<sup>2</sup>R. Veenhoven, Evidence based pursuit of happiness. What should we know, do we know and can we get to know? Erasmus Happiness Economics Research Organization, EHERO, 2012 [<https://personal.eur.nl/veenhoven/>]

<sup>3</sup>Ibidem; op.cit. E. Kasprzak, Zadowolenie... p. 187.

<sup>4</sup>A. Zalewska, Wiek, płeć i stanowisko pracy a zadowolenie z pracy, *Psychologia jakości życia*, 2009, tom 8 nr 1, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>E. Kasprzak, Poczucie jakości życia pracowników realizujących różne wzory kariery zawodowej. Wydawnictwo UKW, Bydgoszcz 2013, pp. 45.

herself/himself<sup>7</sup>. Similarly to A. Zalewska the author concludes that the mental well-being is an emotional and cognitive evaluation of people's own life, when the emotional assessment is a reaction to certain events, while the cognitive one concerns satisfaction and fulfilment<sup>8</sup>. E. Kasprzak<sup>9</sup> points to the fact that the strong characteristics of emotional judgment result in them being frequently the basic and the only benchmark of satisfaction. The author writes that when one is asked about life satisfaction at the moment of experiencing a current affective activity, one is asked about the personality traits, mood or emotions of the last hours, days, or weeks. In her considerations the author seeks to demonstrate that the level of life satisfaction based on an individual emotional or cognitive indicator may not be valid<sup>10</sup>. One of the most renowned English social psychologists of the twentieth century, M. Argyle<sup>11</sup> considered life satisfaction evaluation problematic as it is somewhat subjective. In his opinion people tend to compare their current conditions with the earlier periods in their lives, with what they know about lives of other people, or the images they hold of other people's lives. The author also mentions that happiness may be understood as the reflection of life satisfaction or as the frequency and intensity of positive emotions<sup>12</sup>. The feeling of life satisfaction held as identical with the feeling of happiness is described by M. Sobol-Kwapińska as the conviction of the reasonability of the goals most important in life as well as perception of the value of life, optimism and control over one's own life, a positive, active and interested attitude towards life, deriving satisfaction from everyday activities, frequent positive and infrequent negative emotions<sup>13</sup>.

As mentioned above, life quality is a concept related to the feeling of happiness<sup>14</sup>. The ambiguous term of "life quality" is often used in literature and is understood to be the synonym of welfare, well-being and satisfaction. Not only is the life quality a confusing term but also defined basing on philosophy psychology, sociology, economic, health or pedagogy<sup>15</sup>. K. Włodarczyk-Śpiewak stresses the complexity and multidimensionality of the concept which results in a plethora of its definitions and attempts at explanation. In her opinion the quality of life is a state of satisfaction, happiness and contentment following from the overall

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<sup>7</sup>J. Czapiński, Czy szczęście popłaca? Dobrostan psychiczny jako przyczyna pomyślności życiowej [w:] J. Czapiński (red.), *Psychologia pozytywna*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2004, p. 241.

<sup>8</sup>Ibidem; op. cit. A. Zalewska, Wiek, pleć...s.2; E. Diener, R. E. Lucas, S. Oishi, Dobrostan psychiczny. Nauka o szczęściu i zadowoleniu z życia, [w:] J. Czapiński (red.), *Psychologia pozytywna*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2004, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Op.cit. E. Kasprzak, Zadowolenie..., p. 190-194.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>M. Argyle, *Psychologia szczęścia*, Wydawnictwo Astrum, Wrocław 2004, p. 14-21.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>M. Sobol-Kwapińska, *Życie chwilą? Postawy wobec czasu a poczucie szczęścia*, Wyd. KUL, Lublin 2007, p. 126.

<sup>14</sup>A. Bańka, *Psychologia organizacji* [w:] J. Strelau (red.) *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki* t. 3, GWP Gdańsk 2000, p. 321-350.

<sup>15</sup>A. Molesztak, Satysfakcja z pracy zawodowej u żołnierzy szeregowych, W: Między wychowaniem a karierą zawodową/ red. Beata Jakimiuk, Lublin : Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2013 p. 436

existence, i.e. taking advantage of the good health, satisfaction in life, social position, wealth, consumption and the natural environment<sup>16</sup>. Life satisfaction has an impact on human behaviour. According to E. Diener and R. Biswas-Diener happy people function in a better way in relation to three spheres of life: health, social relations and work<sup>17</sup>. A well-known Polish researcher of happiness J. Czapiński refers the impact of life satisfaction on health to the famous Latin sentence "mens sana in corpore sano" which means "a healthy mind in a healthy body", concluding, however, that it is not the healthy body that heals the mind but the mind cures the body<sup>18</sup>.

Arguing that life satisfaction has an impact on social relations E. Diener and R. Biswas-Diener concluded that happy people are more sociable and likable, and their company is more enjoyable for others than the company of discontented people. In their view, happy people have better relations with others what, consequently, improves their life satisfaction<sup>19</sup>. J. Czapiński confirms their conclusions pointing to the fact that while happiness facilitates the positive development of social relations, the state may be dependable on mental well-being. He also states that the kinds and aspects of those relations may differ in the case of men and women<sup>20</sup>.

The influence life satisfaction has on work was evaluated by Diener and R. Biswas-Diener<sup>21</sup> by addressing the question: Do happy people work better? Their research shows that superiors are convinced about the fact. One of the studies describes bosses' analyses based on appraisals of workers who filled in their happiness level surveys a few years prior to the research. The results have shown that the happiness level dating a few years back was just their conjecture on how well their work was evaluated by their bosses. Other findings by the two authors concern the facts that happy workers are less prone to change and tend to retain their jobs, and that better life satisfaction results in greater creativity of workers<sup>22</sup>. The feeling of happiness is related to satisfaction one gains from working or activities connected with hobbies and interests, as it has an impact on the process of identity shaping and facilitates establishment of relations, provides the sense of belonging and the soundness of actions<sup>23</sup>. M. Sobol-Kwapińska stresses the fact that the level of optimism has a great impact on the feeling of happiness, and that optimism may sometimes be approached to as a component

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<sup>16</sup>K. Włodarczyk-Śpiewak, *Aspekty jakości życia a poziom satysfakcji życiowej Polaków*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2006, p. 513.

<sup>17</sup>E. Diener., R. Biswas-Diener, *Szczęście*, Wydawnictwo Smak Słowa, Sopot 2010.

<sup>18</sup>Op. cit. J. Czapiński, *Czy szczęście popłaca...* 2004, p. 241.

<sup>19</sup>Op. cit. E. Diener, R. Biswas-Diener, *Szczęście...*, p. 66, 80.

<sup>20</sup>Op. cit. J. Czapiński, *Czy szczęście popłaca...* 2004, p. 239.

<sup>21</sup>Op. cit. E. Diener, R. Biswas-Diener, *Szczęście...*, p. 88-90.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>D. Myers, E. Diener, Who is happy? *Psychological Science* 6(1), 1995, p. 10-18.

of happiness<sup>24</sup> what seems to be confirmed by results of the research by Scheier and Carver trying to determine the positive correlation between the optimism level and the well-being in stressful situations<sup>25</sup>.

J. Czapiński writes also that there is not one and only concept of happiness as the construct is not possible to be empirically verified<sup>26</sup>. A happy person is a person who perceives herself/himself happy – thus, the subjective life satisfaction is the deciding factor<sup>27</sup>.

### ***Overview of football fans' characteristics***

The community of Polish football supporters is far from homogenous as it comprises distinct groups and a clear hierarchy can be outlined. Many studies have attempted to systemize the divisions within the subculture of football fans. According to M. Babik<sup>28</sup> an average observer basing his/her knowledge on media materials is not able to notice the existence of sub-groups within the football fans community as the Polish media most often write just about pseudo-football fans - the term which is in the author's opinion vague and sheds negative light onto all supporters<sup>29</sup>.

Among the numerous attempts at classifying groups of supporters the most interesting seems to be the one described by R. Kowalski<sup>30</sup>, the one so many other authors writing about football fans refer to. Although some researchers have pointed out that his classification attempt is subjective and dubious, it nevertheless provides a useful introduction to the classification of sports fans. R. Kowalski put forward seven main groups of supporters: Animals, Thugs (Zadymiarze), Official Hooligans, Ultras, Scarf-Wearing Fans (Szalikowcy), Supporters and Fanatics. However, what the author stresses is that the last group, Fanatics, is much more than just a group within the hierarchy of supporters but is too closely related to the community to be omitted<sup>31</sup>. Considering the simplest division of the subculture, one may come up with four basic groups: Supporters (so called Picnicking Fans or "Pikniki" in Polish), Ultras, Hooligans and Hardcore Football Fans (Kibole).

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<sup>24</sup>Op. cit. M. Sobol-Kwapińska, *Życie chwila?...*, p. 113.

<sup>25</sup>M. Scheier, C.S. Carver, Optimism, coping and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies, *Health Psychology*, 4, 1985, s. 219-247; M. Scheier, Carver C.S., Dispositional optimism and physical well-being: The influence of generalized outcome expectancies, *Journal of Personality*, 55, 1987, p. 169-210.

<sup>26</sup>Op. cit. J. Czapiński, *Psychologia pozytywna...*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup>E. Diener, Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 1984, 95, p. 542-575; J. Czapiński, *Psychologia szczęścia: przegląd i zarys teorii cebulowej PTP*, Warszawa 1994; J. Czapiński, *Szczęście – złudzenie czy konieczność? Cebulowa teoria szczęścia w świetle nowych danych empirycznych*, [w:] M. Kořta, T. Szustrowa (red.), *Złudzenia, które pozwalają żyć*, PWN, Warszawa 2001, p. 266-306.

<sup>28</sup>M. Babik, *Szkoła wobec subkultury kibiców*, Wydawnictwo WAM, Kraków 2010, p. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>R. Kowalski, *Potomkowie Hooligana. Szalikowcy*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2000, p. 33-35.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

Supporters (so called Picnicking Fans or “Pikniki” in Polish) approach a match as consumers. According to P. Piotrowski they are collectors of sensations and come to the stadium in the manner they would go to a supermarket; a match is a picnic for them – therefore their name<sup>32</sup>. They are just ordinary fans supporting their team, although they might not come to all its matches. This is the only group interested exclusively in a match as a sports event. They do not take part in fights and thus are called just “stadium fillers” by Hooligans. On the other hand, Ultras make sure the match does not resemble a picnic at all. They react tumultuously cheering the team all match long and creating elaborate and costly displays in the stadium<sup>33</sup>. Their tasks include preparation of so called “match choreography” including: pyrotechnics, flags, banners. In L. Śliwa’s opinion they cooperate with Hooligans but only a few of them engage in fights<sup>34</sup>. Hooligans are the fans held responsible for skirmishes around stadiums, and according to criminologists, they have close links with organised crime<sup>35</sup>. Also referred to as Hools (Hooligans), they are usually a group of well-built and athletic men. Their task is to protect all the other supporters of their team and their team’s colours. They also attack supporters of other clubs, provoke and take part in fights and consider themselves the football fans’ elite<sup>36</sup>.

Hardcore Fans (Kibole) are local supporters sitting in their own sector and therefore obliged to follow the practices of e.g. vocal support led by moderators, group scarf waving, clapping, whistling etc. They identify strongly with the club and thus wear club colours but yield to Hooligans in questions of ‘safety’ and to Ultras regarding the match displays. As in the case of Ultras only a few of them take part in fights but, although they are not hooligans, when cornered they face the danger and do not flee<sup>37</sup>.

Generally, all fans identify themselves with the team they support. Identifying with a football club for a long time is a complex sociological and psychological issue. K. Obuchowski wrote that people tend not to notice negative features in what they perceive as positive<sup>38</sup>, and according to J. Dudała fans perceive the beloved club only in the light

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<sup>32</sup>P. Piotrowski (w rozmowie z Michałem Dobrołowiczem), Dla polskiego kibica ważny jest etos, przywiązanie do barw klubowych, Serwis informacyjny RMF 24, 25.03.2015, <http://www.rmfm24.pl/sport/news-dla-polskiego-kibica-wazny-jest-etos-przywiazanie-do-barw-kl,nld,1703777> [dostęp: 20.02.2018].

<sup>33</sup>Op. cit. P. Piotrowski

<sup>34</sup>Op. cit. L. Śliwa

<sup>35</sup>Op. cit. P. Piotrowski

<sup>36</sup>Op. cit. L. Śliwa

<sup>37</sup>J. Kowalska, Widowisko sportowe-fair play w edukacji do kulturalnego odbioru. *Wychowanie Fizyczne i Zdrowotne*, nr 3, 2010, p.11-15.

<sup>38</sup>K. Obuchowski, Człowiek intencjonalny, PWN Warszawa, 1993, p. 173.



of positive emotions<sup>39</sup>. However, Cz. Matuszewicz describes emotions of fans as irrational and resembling sensations felt by some kinds of fanatics<sup>40</sup>.

The strong identification of supporters with the club was the subject of works by, e.g. R. Cialdini who claimed that supporters approach their club's losses and victories as their own and that this relation shows characteristics of a strong personal engagement<sup>41</sup>. In his study on life satisfaction and happiness of sport fans A. Shuv-Ami also referred to the strong identification of supporters with their beloved club. Referring to works of E. Diener and M. Seligman he wrote that a happy person is the one who often experiences positive emotions: "The stronger supporters feel connected to the team, the more life satisfaction and happiness they feel."<sup>42</sup>

The present study attempts to evaluate the level of life satisfaction of Polish football fans who actively support their teams and determine differences regarding life satisfaction between particular groups of supporters.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research uses the indirect method of a diagnostic survey – online survey. The e-questionnaire was aimed at people who declared as football fans and who attend matches on a regular basis. It was posted on Facebook and uploaded to portals of football supporters:

"12zawodnik.pl", "Polscy Kibice", "Fanaticycki", "Jestem Dumny z Bycia Kibicem", "Kibice". The authors' own questionnaire contained exclusively closed-ended single- or multiple-choice questions. Apart from the survey, the research implemented the Polish adaptation of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)<sup>43</sup> which displayed good psychometric properties in the study. The scale is used to evaluate the subjective well-being composed of: positive emotions, lack of negative emotions and a life satisfaction level. The scale consists of 5 statements evaluated in the 0-7 scale where a higher score refers to a higher life satisfaction level<sup>44</sup>.

The research was conducted among 775 people who declared to be football fans and actively participate in sports events. The sample included 148 women and 627 men. Although

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<sup>39</sup>J. Dudala, *Fani-Chuligani*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, Warszawa 2004, p. 115-116.

<sup>40</sup>Cz. Matuszewicz, *Widowisko sportowe. Analiza psychospoleczna*, AWF, Warszawa 1990.

<sup>41</sup>R. Cialdini, *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi: teoria i praktyka*. Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 1996; Op. cit. J. Dudala...2004, p. 115-116.

<sup>42</sup>A. Shuv-Ami, *Happiness, Life Satisfaction and Sport Fan*. Wydawnictwo Academic Star Publishing Company, Izrael 2014, p. 824; Diener, E., Seligman, M. (2004). Beyond Money: Toward an Economy of Well-Being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 5 (1), p. 1-31.

<sup>43</sup>E. Diener, R.A. Emmons, R.J. Larsen, S.Griffin, The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 1985, 49: p. 71–75; Z. Juczyński, *Narzędzia pomiaru w promocji i psychologii zdrowia*. Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych Polskiego Towarzystwa Psychologicznego, Warszawa, 2001, p.123–127.

<sup>44</sup>Op. cit. Z. Juczyński...2001, p. 123–127; op. cit. E. Kasprzak, *Poczucie...* 2013, p. 125.

the respondents' age varies, the majority of them (91.5%) are single (89.90%) young people up to 30 years of age.

Over a half of respondents (53.7%) have graduated from a high school, only 15.7% of them hold a university degree, the remaining ones have finished elementary or vocational schools. As many as 83.5% of the supporters live in a city.

The respondents were divided into 4 groups depending on their declaration of membership in a supporters' group: Supporters (so called "Pikniki" or Picnicking Fans), Ultras, Hooligans and Hardcore Football Fans (Kibole).

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The life satisfaction level (LS) of Polish football fans divided into groups is presented in the Table 1 below.

**Tab. 1.** The life satisfaction level of different supporters' groups as measured by SWLS scale

Supporters groups	Ultras		Hooligans		Kibol (Hardcore Fan)		Piknik (Supporter)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>High</b>	82	35.6%	43	39.8%	142	35.5%	12	32.4%	279	36%
<b>Medium</b>	126	54.8%	52	48.2%	223	55.8%	20	54.1%	421	54.3%
<b>Low</b>	22	9.6%	13	12%	35	8.7%	5	13.5%	75	9.7%
<b>Total</b>	230	100%	108	100%	400	100%	37	100%	775	100%

Chi-squared test  $p > 0.05$

*Source: own research*

Over a half of football fans (54.3%) enjoy a medium-level life satisfaction, 36% display a high LS level, and only 9.7% of supporters have a low level of life satisfaction. The medium level prevails across all groups of supporters, and although some differences are observed as far as the numbers and proportions are concerned they are statistically non-significant ( $p=0.801$ ). Within the group of Ultras over a half of supporters (54.8%) show a medium level of satisfaction with life, while 35.6% of the group members have a high level of life satisfaction. A low life satisfaction level is displayed by a few members of the group. A slightly smaller divergence is observed within the group of Hooligans. The people of medium level of life satisfaction constitute 48.2%, while those with a high level – 39.8%. Hooligans with a low level of life satisfaction are within the remaining 12% of respondents in that group. In the most numerous of the surveyed groups, namely Kibole (Hardcore Fans), 55.8% have a high level of life satisfaction, 35.5% - a high level, and 8.7% - a low one. The findings for the smallest group of supporters in the research, Pikniki who are just



ordinary supporters, are similar: a medium level-54.1%, a high level-32.4%; a low level-13.5%. The results of overall life satisfaction level study for women were similar (Tab.2).

**Tab. 2.** Life satisfaction level (LS) of women from different groups of supporters (SWLS)

Supporters groups	Ultras		Hooligans		Kibol (Hardcore Fan)		Piknik (Supporter)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>High</b>	19	41.3%	5	83.3%	32	36.8%	2	22.2%	58	39.2%
<b>Medium</b>	23	50%	0	0%	47	54%	6	66.7%	76	51.4%
<b>Low</b>	4	8.7%	1	16.7%	8	9.2%	1	11.1%	14	9.4%
<b>Total</b>	46	100%	6	100%	87	100%	9	100%	148	100%

Chi-squared test  $p > 0,05$

*Source: own research*

Over a half of all female fans (51.4%) show a medium level of life satisfaction; the high level is characteristic of 39.2% women, and the low one of 9.4%. The observed differences in proportions within particular groups are statistically non-significant ( $p=0.25$ ). In the group of Ultras, where women constitute 31.1% of members, 41.3% women declared a high life satisfaction level, 50% - medium and 8.7% - low. In the group comprising fewer women, namely Hooligans, there were no women with medium-level life satisfaction. The majority, namely 5 out of 6 women in the group, enjoy a high level of life satisfaction, while only 1 person points to the low level. In the most numerous (58.8%) group of supporters in the study, Kibole (Hardcore Fans), over a half of women-fans have a medium level of life satisfaction, 36.8% - high, and 9.2% - a low level. The majority of "Piknik" female supporters (66.7%) have a medium LS level, 22.2% a high level and only one woman declares a low level of life satisfaction (Tab. 2). Some differences can be observed when the findings for male supporters are considered. (Tab. 3).

**Tab.3.** Life satisfaction level (LS) of men from different groups of supporters (SWLS)

Supporters groups	Ultras		Hooligans		Kibol (Hardcore Fan)		Piknik (Supporter)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>High</b>	63	34.2%	38	37.2%	110	35.2%	10	35.7%	221	35.3%
<b>Medium</b>	103	56%	52	51%	176	56.2%	14	50%	345	55%
<b>Low</b>	18	9.8%	12	11.8%	27	8.6%	4	14.3%	61	9.7%
<b>Total</b>	184	100%	102	100%	313	100%	28	100%	627	100%

Chi-squared test  $p > 0,05$

*Source: own research*

The life satisfaction level characteristic for men, who constitute 80.9% of all surveyed football fans, is medium (55%) or high (35.3%). Only 9.7% men display low levels of life satisfaction. The percentage distributions for all supporters' groups are similar and thus, the differences are statistically non-significant ( $p=0.906$ ). The highest percentage of Ultras (56%) are the men of medium satisfaction level, those showing the high level account for 34.2%, and the low one only for 9.8%. Similarly, in the group of Hooligans 51% men show a medium level, 37.2% - high and 11.8% - a low level of life satisfaction. Among members of Kibole (Hardcore Fans) group there are most people satisfied with their lives on a medium level (56.2%), 35.2% of them show a high level of life satisfaction and 8.6% - a low one. The smallest group of Supporters (Piknik fans) includes people with medium (50%) or high (35.7%) life satisfaction level. The percentage of people with a low satisfaction level in this group was the highest, namely 14.3% but, as already mentioned above, the differences are statistically non-significant.

## DISCUSSION

Until the present day in Poland there have not been any such detailed studies on life satisfaction of particular supporters' groups. Therefore, the authors feel obliged to refer first to results from other research on life satisfaction levels of supporters that referred to the community of Polish football fans as a whole or to supporters of particular clubs. What makes it difficult is the fact that other researchers gathered data using methods different from those implemented in the authors' own research. However, an attempt has been made at contrasting and comparing data obtained in the present study and those in the research of J. Dudała<sup>45</sup>.

The authors' own research concluded that over a half of football supporters (approx. 55% men and 51% women) have medium-level life satisfaction and nearly 40% (approx. 35% men and 39% women) – a high level. Results of the research conducted by J. Dudała also indicate that supporters consider themselves happy people<sup>46</sup>. The latter research included a survey conducted among 31 supporters of the sports club Zagłębie Sosnowiec. The respondents were asked if they consider themselves happy and the majority of them stated they are quite happy (128 people, i.e. over 40%) or definitely happy (100 people, i.e. over 30%)<sup>47</sup>. Assuming that supporters of Zagłębie Sosnowiec who consider themselves happy people are counterparts of the supporters displaying a medium and high level of life satisfaction in our research, the results should be similar. However, one should note that the research done among fans

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<sup>45</sup>Op. cit. J. Dudała, *Fani-Chuligani...*, p. 188.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

of Zagłębie Sosowiec did not use the SWLS test but was based on one question asked in a survey.

In a detailed analysis of the data, the life satisfaction study points out to the fact that the prevailing percentage of people in particular groups enjoys a medium-level life satisfaction. Nonetheless, it could be noted, in spite of the absence of statistically significant differences between particular groups of supporters (both men and women), that the percentage of fans declaring high satisfaction with life varies. What is particularly interesting, the highest percentage of people with a high level of life satisfaction was observed in the groups of Hooligans, particularly women (as high as 83.3%), while the lowest one in the group of Supporters (Pikniki). In the case of the latter group the results showed the highest percentage of low satisfaction (13.5%). Thus, an interesting question arises. How is it possible that the group of Hooligans, the most aggressive supporters, are the people who can potentially be also the happiest ones?

Particular groups of the researched supporters include people showing different extents of emotional commitment to the club. Probably among Hooligans there is the biggest group of people strongly connected to the club, what can affect their life satisfaction level. That seems to find confirmation in an Israeli study of 1329 football supporters which proved that the more a person is emotionally committed to the club, the bigger probability of a higher life satisfaction level or happiness<sup>48</sup>. Thus, it seems that the more football supports are emotionally connected with “their” team, the happier they feel.

Conversely, the life satisfaction study results may lead to a question about the causes of similarities concerning life satisfaction in particular groups of supporters (absence of statistically significant differences) and differences in their behaviour. Although there may be many possible reasons, some issues should be noted as they may pave the way for further research.

One of many causes for supporters’ aggression is their strong identification with the club<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, over the last years psychologists have been describing many kinds of passion understood not as an intense desire or enthusiasm for something, but as a strong drive for activity channelled in a certain direction, investing one’s own time and energy<sup>50</sup>,

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<sup>48</sup>Shuv-Ami A., Happiness.... 2014, p. 823-827.

<sup>49</sup>T. Janus, *Zjawisko agresji w widowiskach sportowych. Charakterystyka i ocena*. Rozprawa doktorska. Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie. Warszawa 2012. [<http://www.sportnaukowo.pl/2014/01/zjawisko-agresji-w-widowiskach.html#.W9l-BsKWzIU>]

<sup>50</sup>R.J. Vallerand, C. Blanchard, G.A. Mageau, R. Koestner, C. Ratelle, M. Leonard et al., Les passions de l’ame: On obsessive and harmonious passion, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2003, vol. 85, p.756–767.

as being the determinant of one's identity<sup>51</sup>. The theory referred to as the Dualistic Model of Passion distinguishes two kinds of passion: harmonious and obsessive<sup>52</sup>. Within this paradigm people engage in activities hoping for their basic psychological needs to be met<sup>53</sup>. People whose psychological needs are not appropriately met more often than not reflect it in their obsessive passion that functions as a compensation in their lives. This obsessive passion results in an increased level of life satisfaction<sup>54</sup>. It has been also noted that unsatisfied psychological needs may result in aggression.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast, within the theory of self-determination, satisfying elementary psychological needs is the major determinant of life satisfaction<sup>56</sup>. The group of aggressive supporters, Hooligans, consists mainly of people whose psychological needs have not been satisfactorily met what contributes to their obsessive passion and excessive addiction to their team. That, in turn, leads to aggressive behaviour but is also a certain substitute and, in a way, satisfies their psychological needs. To some extent these issues find confirmation in results of research conducted as long ago as 1980s. It was found then that a group of supporters is a community where an individual satisfies his/her need for identification and belonging, the need which had not been satisfied in their natural environment<sup>57</sup>, for example a family which frequently suffered from violence-related issues<sup>58</sup>. In such a situation negative experiences resulting from the failure to satisfy the needs accumulate<sup>59</sup> and lead to frustration which is the most frequent cause of aggressive behaviour<sup>60</sup>. Additionally, what finds its confirmation in interviews with supporters who regularly participate in fights, Hooligans enjoy aggression, particularly when they detest fans of the other, much hated football club. Papers on "orthodox" football supporters quote fans who compare their emotions during fights to orgasm, they sometimes even consider their aggressive behaviour as more pleasant and more intense than a sexual act<sup>61</sup>. Aggressive supporters may find life satisfying also because

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<sup>51</sup>R.J. Vallerand, On the Psychology of Passion: In Search of What Makes People's Lives Most Worth Living, *Canadian Psychological Association*, 2008, vol. 49, 1, p.1–13.

<sup>52</sup>Op. cit. R.J. Vallerand, et al.. 2003, s.756–767, op.cit. R.J. Vallerand, On the Psychology... 2008, 1–13; G.A. Mageau, J. Carpentier, R.J. Vallerand, The role of self-esteem contingencies in the distinction between obsessive and harmonious passion, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 2011, vol. 41, p.720–729.

<sup>53</sup>Kunat B., Entuzjazm, zaangażowanie, żar, konik, a może bzik... w poszukiwaniu znaczeń kategorii „pasja", *Rocznik Pedagogiczny* 38, 2015, p.155-165.

<sup>54</sup>D.R. Lalande, R.J. Vallerand, M-A. Lafreniere, J. Verner-Filion, F-A. Laurent, J. Forest, Y. Paquet, Obsessive passion: A compensatory response to unsatisfied needs. *Journal of Personality*, 2011, p.1-16.

<sup>55</sup>A.A.Panasiuk–Chodnicka, B. Panasiuk, Przemoc i agresja w relacjach interpersonalnych. Uwarunkowania psychologiczne i pedagogiczne, *Studia Gdańskie. Wzję i rzeczywistość*, 2009, p. 54-71.

<sup>56</sup>Op. cit. E. Kasprzak E. op., *Poczucie...* 2013, p.74

<sup>57</sup>C. Colaers, L. Walgrave, K. van Limbergen, *The Societal and Psycho-Sociological Background of Football Hooliganism*. [w:] *Current Psychology*. volume 8. number 1, 1989, p. 4-14.

<sup>58</sup>Op. cit. R. Piotrowski, *Szalikowcy. O zachowaniach...* 2000, p. 59-60.

<sup>59</sup>Op. cit. C. Colaers....1989, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup>Op. cit. Janus... p. 128

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

thanks to the fights they overcome boredom<sup>62</sup> and vanquish fear<sup>63</sup> and, as far as men are concerned, confirm their masculinity<sup>64</sup> and consequently boost their self-esteem. These may be the reasons why findings of the present study mention a slightly higher percentage of Hooligans with a high level of life satisfaction than within other groups of fans and a slightly lower percentage of Hooligans unsatisfied with their lives.

## CONCLUSIONS

The level of life satisfaction among Polish football supporters has been found to be on the medium and high levels across all fan groups, namely: Supporters (so called “Pikniki” or Picnicking Fans), Ultras, Hooligans and Hardcore Football Fans (Kibole). Only few football supporters are not satisfied with their lives.

The highest percentage of people enjoying a high level of life satisfaction is observed within the group of Hooligans, the most aggressive fans of football.

That may follow from a number of factors, e.g. their fanatical commitment to the club, bordering on obsessive passion, pleasure derived from aggressive behaviour or the need to increase their self-esteem.

Life satisfaction across particular supporters’ groups is on a similar level. As there are no statistically significant differences between the groups, it seems that some determinants of happiness of major importance for the group of Hooligans as fanatics of football and their “own” football club may be characteristic also for other football supporters.

Issues recommended for further analysis include the changing preferences of football fans, the type of the passion associated with supporting a club they identify themselves with, the level of satisfying their psychological needs and self-esteem and its causes. Those factors may modify the life satisfaction level and have some impact on decisions connected with their supporters’ behaviour in the stadiums.

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<sup>62</sup>Op. cit. C. Colaers...1989, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup>R. Spaaij, *Understanding Football Hooliganism: A Comparison of Six Western European Football Clubs*. Amsterdam University Press. Amsterdam, 2006, p. 316.

<sup>64</sup>D. Hobbs, D. Robins, The boy done good: football violence, changes and continues [w:] *Sociological Review*. volume 39. issue 3 1991, p. 551-579.

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