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## ***Married life happiness of soldiers returning from peace-keeping missions***

### **Introduction**

Happiness is the value everyone achieves in a different way. "A happy man, capable of joy, is not only in a better situation, but is also himself more able and leads a better life."<sup>1</sup> One of prerequisites for successful and happy life is marriage that, despite the ongoing social, cultural and economic changes, is the most universal relation for two people living together. The two people are bound in marriage not only by dedication, passion, intimacy but they share also disappointment and tragedies and that all finds its reflection in their general feeling of quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Marriage satisfaction is thus a unique network of interrelations between partners. Achieving the high level of satisfaction in marriage depends not only on gender roles, support<sup>3</sup> and evaluation but also on the level of reference i.e. the balance expected from the relationship.<sup>4</sup> Marriage is created by two people bound by a network of relations. M. Plopa calls the interrelation of gender and marriage satisfaction a transactional network of dependencies.<sup>5</sup> One of the factors introducing changes into those relations is parting. Separation of spouses changes the previously assumed social roles and is also of importance for the scheme of relations between the partners as well as the fact that life and health of one of the spouses is in danger. The present article includes a description of a unique situation of soldiers returning from missions. US has launched much research into social effects of soldiers' going on stabilisation missions. Soldiers going to Iraq and Afghanistan are a special group. Though Poland and US are different in many respects, it turns out that social effects of soldiers' participation in military missions are similar.

### **Chosen aspects of happiness**

A few pages are not enough to describe the concept of human happiness that the greatest theorists of science and art: philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, educationalists and poets have pondered upon. Below I present some approaches to the concept of happiness. To explain it, one should present the idea within the system of coexisting notions, the most general of which is quality of life. Subjectively, a quality of life level is revealed by mental states of a person during the process of satisfying his/her needs; the states resulting from a cognitive evaluation of relations between the person and the environment, own achievements, failures

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<sup>1</sup> K. Obuchowski, Wprowadzenie do książki M.E.P. Seligman, *Prawdziwe szczęście*, Media Rodzina Poznań 2005, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> M. Plopa, *Psychologia rodziny. Teoria i badania*. IMPULS. Kraków 2005, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> B. Hołtyń, *Małżeństwo i wsparcie*. Bydgoszcz 2009, UKW, p. 119,

<sup>4</sup> E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R. M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna*. Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 1997, p. 427.

<sup>5</sup> M. Plopa, *Psychologia rodziny*. op.cit. p. 113.

and opportunities to pursue his/her aspirations, desires and goals in life.<sup>6</sup> While studying subjective quality of life one should refer to the following concepts: happiness, positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, subjective well-being and the perceived quality of life.<sup>7</sup> Happiness is subjective in its very essence as all individuals themselves determine their own happiness. Scholarly literature does not contain a uniform approach towards happiness, though the majority of scholars use the term *subjective well-being*. Happiness means “experiencing joy and satisfaction combined with the feeling that own life is good, meaningful and valuable”<sup>8</sup> (own translation). The standpoint stresses the subjective approach towards happiness. R. E. Lane (1991, 2000) presents both a subjective and an objective perspective where quality of life depends on happiness with respect to perfectionism. R.E. Lane defines quality of life as a relation between subjective and objective circumstances. Subjective elements pointing to the high life quality of an individual include 1) capability of enjoying life, 2) cognitive complexity, 3) feeling of autonomy, 4) self-knowledge, 5) self-assessment, 6) ease in interpersonal relations, 7) ethical orientation, 8) personality integration, 9) orientation towards productivity. The author at the same time acknowledges the fact that the set of elements cited above not only describes a mental condition of an individual but also constitutes characteristics of mental health and social responsibility and therefore calls it an individual’s quality. The objective elements, on the other hand, reflect the quality of environmental conditions providing an opportunity for an individual to achieve the individual’s quality and include 1) appropriate material support, 2) physical safety and security, 3) available support from friends and the society, 4) chances to express and receive love, 5) opportunities for a challenging job, 6) leisure opportunities with an additional element of creativity and relax, 7) an available set of moral values that can make life meaningful, 8) opportunities for development, 9) a system of justice managed by impartial and competent parties. Quality of life follows from activity of the individual’s quality and its environmental conditions.<sup>9</sup> Life satisfaction results from the activity of micro- and macro-environment. Lane distinguishes many features that directly or indirectly influence a person. It should be noted that the wide approach involves many aspects influencing happiness, both objective and subjective ones. R.E. Lane, similarly to E. Diener, analyses happiness in relation to general life satisfaction determining satisfaction in different life spheres. Indexes include those referring to the affective and cognitive spheres.

Many authors define life satisfaction as recognition of own happiness. It is perceived as a “cognitive” conceptualization of the idea of happiness or subjective well-being, thus, the concept may contain evaluation of fulfilled needs, goals and wishes. Ed. Diener describes life satisfaction as a cognitive process of evaluation following from the comparison of an individual’s own conditions and what is recognised as proper standards. The smaller the

<sup>6</sup> A. Chudzicka, Subiektywny obraz świata i obraz siebie jako kategorie pomiaru jakości życia bezrobotnych oraz ich oczekiwania wobec Klubu Pracy [in:] A. Banka, R. Derbis (ed.) Pomiar i poczucie jakości życia u aktywnych zawodowo oraz bezrobotnych. Poznań -Częstochowa 1995, p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> B. Zbiona, op. cit. p. 12

<sup>8</sup> B. Wojciszke, Psychologia Społeczna. WN Scholar, Warszawa 2011, p. 250

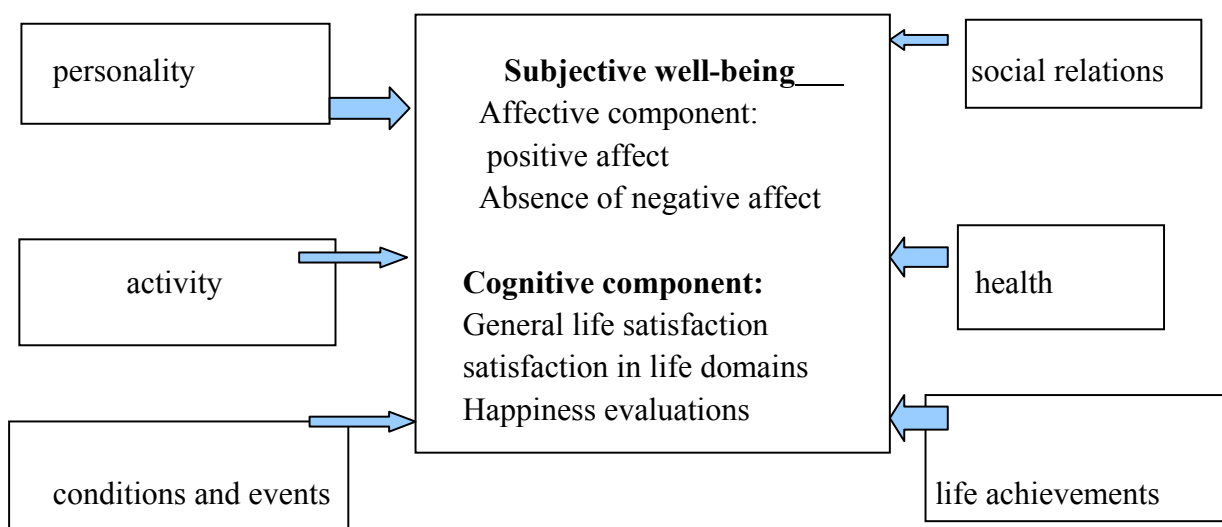
<sup>9</sup> Lane R.E. (1991), The market experience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Lane R.E. (2000), The loss of happiness in market democracies. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press in: J. Sirgy (2002), op. cit. p. 6.

discrepancy between the observations concerning life achievements and the standards, the higher life satisfaction.<sup>10</sup> Satisfaction is a concept with numerous meanings that have evolved over centuries. Nowadays, it is understood as meaning “being pleased”. Life satisfaction is characterised by more cognitive components, while happiness involves more affective (emotional) elements. Thus, satisfaction results from the general assessment of life or reflects the comparison of the perceived discrepancy between aspirations and achievements. However, satisfaction refers only to a certain period of time.<sup>11</sup> Satisfaction is a result of an individual’s happiness. It is an evaluation done by the individual over a specified period of time. Thus, the time factor is significant here, as life quality includes universal assessment while life satisfaction only an isolated period of time. Therefore, the proposition described above characterizes happiness as an area of affective components.

Bogdan Wojcieszke puts forward happiness components presented below in Figure 1.<sup>12</sup>

**determinants of well-being**

**consequences of well-being**



**Figure 1. Components of happiness (subjective well-being), its determinants and consequences**

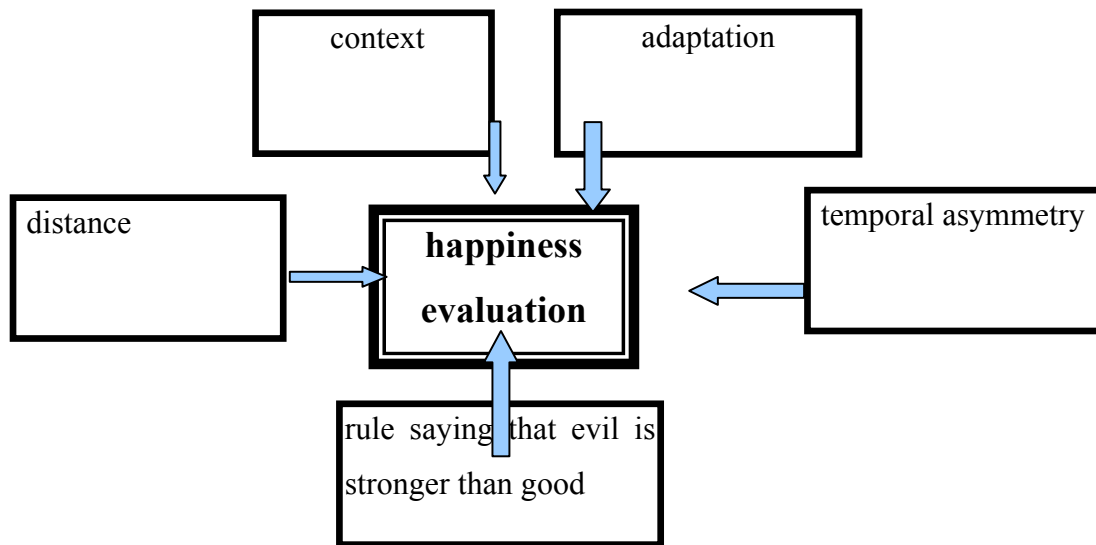
Despite the fact that reflections on the above concepts stress objectivism, subjective assessments are considered to play an important role. It follows from the fact that evaluation depends on the person perceiving the event and his/her state of mind. The objective value of particular events is of little importance for experiencing happiness. The actual significance for happiness assessment depends on “some regularities controlling the process of evaluating events including the major rules of context, adaptation, distance, temporal asymmetry and the rule saying that evil is stronger than good” (own translation).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Diener, E, Emmons R.A., Larsen R.J. & Griffin S (1985) The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, pp. 71-75.

<sup>11</sup> M. Halicka (2004). *Satysfakcja życiowa ludzi starych*. Białystok, Akademia Medyczna, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> B. Wojcieszke, *Psychologia Społeczna*. WN Scholar, Warszawa 2011, p. 251

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem

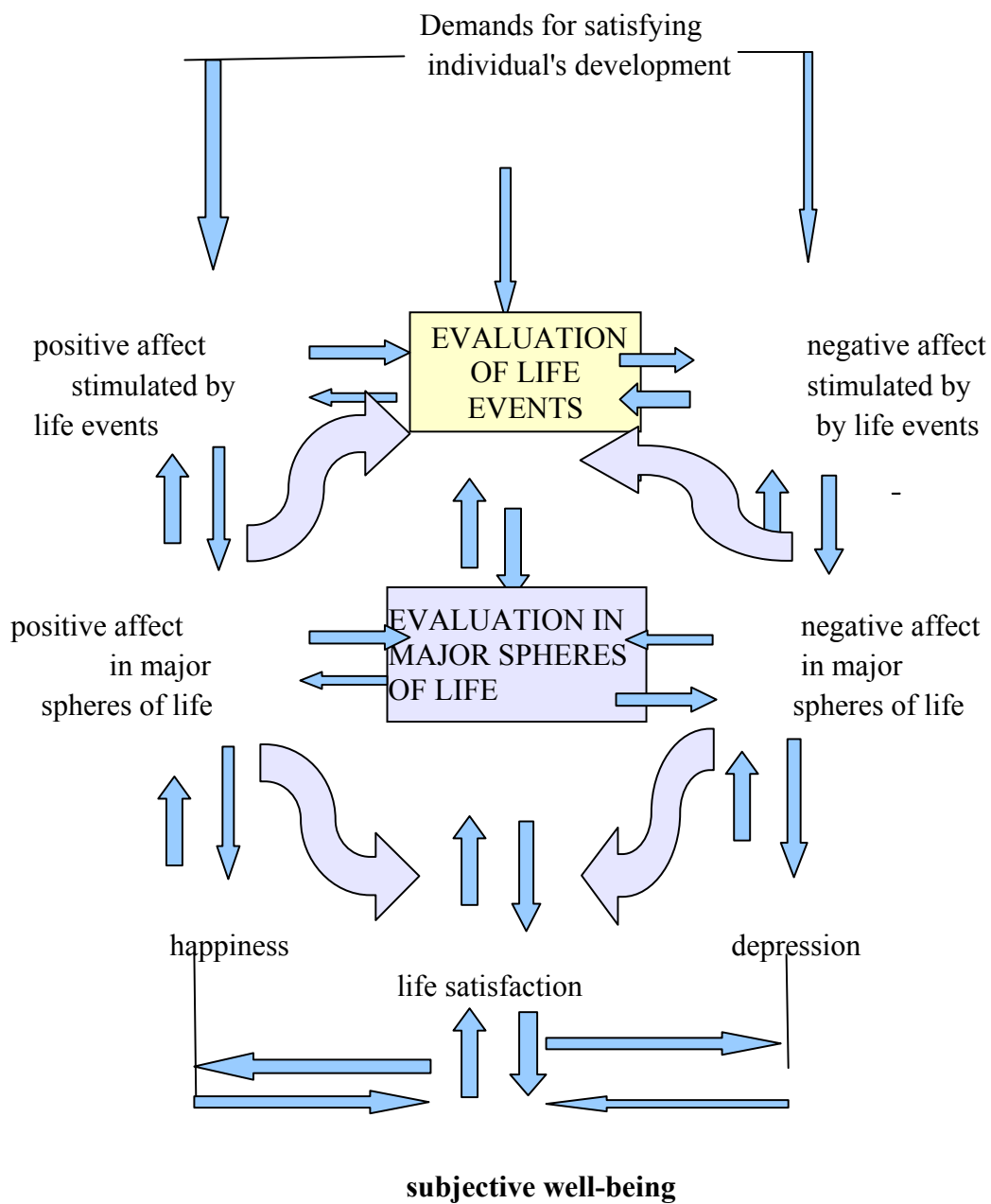


**Figure 2. Factors influencing happiness evaluation. Own study based on B. Wojciszke.<sup>14</sup>**

Publications on happiness by Ed. Diener (1985), R.E. Lane (1995), J. Sirgy (2002), Ed. Diener, R. Biswas-Diener (2010), B. Wojciszke (2011) allow an attempt to systemise the approaches which divide the subjective well-being concept into two parts. One concerns life satisfaction perceived as a cognitive element of subjective well-being, the other one involves happiness, i.e. the affective domain of subjective well-being. The cognitive and affective spheres are interrelated in respect to absolute values.<sup>15</sup> The interrelations are explained in the outline put forward by J. Sirgy (2002). Subjective well-being is considered from the perspective of evaluation of events. J. Sirgy points out to relations decisive for subjective well-being. The arrangement of the interrelations is presented in Figure 3 below.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, pp. 250-257

<sup>15</sup> J. Sirgy (2002), *The psychology of quality of life*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/ Boston/ London, p. 6



**Figure 3. Subjective well-being: its elements**<sup>16</sup>

Figure 3 presents the model of well-being with three core elements determined by specific factors. Experiencing happiness by an individual is determined by the sum of pleasant emotions (e.g. joy, attachment, pride) felt for a period of time in major spheres of life in which every pleasant feelings results from a positive life event. Correspondingly, depression is experienced as a result of a sum of unpleasant emotions (e.g. sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, shame) felt over a period of time in major life events. In that case every unpleasant felling is also determined by a negative life event. The third key element, namely life satisfaction, refers to the cognitive evaluation of the general quality of life and the most important spheres of life.

<sup>16</sup> J. Sirgy (2002), *The psychology of quality of life*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/ Boston/ London, p. 13

That assessment of own life is determined by a sum of evaluations of positive and negative life events in major spheres of life (e.g. leisure, work, family life, life within a community, social life and sexual life) or by reminiscing about such evaluations. Assessment of every sphere of life is determined by the individual doing the evaluation of life events in the specific sphere or simply by evaluating positive and negative affects in the area.<sup>17</sup>

The specified three elements of subjective well-being are states lasting over a relatively stable period of time. As it has been described before, they are affective states following from a total amount of short-term affect experienced over time. Such approach to the problem is compatible with studies of Kozma and Stones (1992).<sup>18</sup> The three elements and interrelations between them as well as the determining factors stand for three differentiations present in literature: (1) the difference between cognitive and affective aspects of subjective well-being, (2) the difference between the positive and the negative affect of subjective well-being and (3) the difference between short- and long-term affective states of subjective well-being. Moreover, the importance of satisfying developmental needs of an individual should be stressed as people experience both positive and negative affects as a direct action depending on the extent to which life events satisfy developmental demands of an individual (e.g. biological, safety, social, assessment, self-actualization needs). Satisfying demands influences and controls the cognitive assessment of events in an individual's life.<sup>19</sup> J. Sirgy's approach best reflects the sphere of research of the present study.

### **Purpose and method of research**

The purpose of the research was to determine married life happiness of men – professional soldiers. For the sake of the present article, and because of space limitations, I am going to focus on one chosen research problem following from the question: *Is there a difference between the soldiers' opinion on their marriage satisfaction level and the general evaluation of their lives so far?*

The research was carried out using the diagnostic poll method, a survey by a questionnaire. The participants were asked to rate on a scale of 7-1 what they considered their satisfaction level to be and to complete a questionnaire of married life happiness in a K. Poszpil' method for evaluation of marriage satisfaction level and M. Plopa's Well-Matched Marriage Questionnaire (KDM). The research included professional soldiers divided into two groups: one formed of soldiers who had been to missions to Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Syria, Kosovo, and the other one including soldiers doing service in Poland. Soldiers that have been on missions call themselves "missionaries"; another nickname refers to soldiers depending on the country where they served, e.g. "an Afghan".

The research included the total of 152 married soldiers – 96 (63.16%) soldiers returned from stabilisation missions and 56 (36.84%) stationed in Poland. The ratio of "missionaries" to soldiers staying within the native country has been continuously decreasing as the group of soldiers that have not gone on missions is lower. Analysis of the data included in the table

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<sup>17</sup> Ibidem p. 10

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem p. 15

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem p. 13

below (Table 1) shows that the biggest number of respondents (105 soldiers) are at the age of young adulthood, i.e. up to 35 years of age, while 47 of them are at the age of middle adulthood. The data in Table 1 below indicate that 1/3 of participants in both groups, the one comprising soldiers that have been on missions and the other one with those who have not, are in their middle adulthood.

**Table 1. Age of research participants**

Adulthood	Soldiers after missions		Soldiers serving in Poland		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Young adulthood, up to 34 years of age	68	70.83	37	66.07	105	69.08
Middle stage of adulthood, over 35 years of age	28	29.17	19	33.93	47	30.92
Total	96	100	56	100	152	100

Soldiers taking part in the research are not only a young group but also the biggest number of them are the lowest rank as 53% of the group in question are privates or privates 1<sup>st</sup> Class. It should also be noted that the group of soldiers going on missions includes more privates 1<sup>st</sup> Class. Professional privates have replaced the mandatory military service. The corps of career privates is a new service established to make positions formerly assigned to draftees professional. Soldiers of the privates' corps are employed as junior specialists, drivers, riflemen, cooks<sup>20</sup>. *Positions within army structures are connected with its stratification, in other word the structures of hierarchy and prestige, consisting of many hierarchically interrelated strata. The layers, making up the hierarchy, determine relatively constant distances between each other as categories of career structure*<sup>21</sup>. The lowest layer is the corps of career privates. Although the service is contractual the soldiers can count on promotion and training. Another issue is the number of missions the soldiers go on as presented in Table 3.

<sup>20</sup> J. Maciejewski, *Zawodowy szeregowy w Wojsku Polskim – sukces czy porażka? Zawód profesjonalizacja i kariera*. [in:] *Szeregowcy w grupach dyspozycyjnych. Socjologiczna analiza zawodu i jego roli w społeczeństwie*, (ed.) J. Maciejewski, A. Krasowska-Marut, A. Rusak, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2009, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> W. Chojnacki, *Profesjonalizacja wojska w teorii i badaniach socjologicznych*, Wyd. Akademii Obrony Narodowej. Warszawa 2008, p.165 cyt. cited in: J. Maciejewski, *Zawodowy szeregowy w Wojsku Polskim – sukces czy porażka? Zawód profesjonalizacja i kariera*, [in:] *Szeregowcy w grupach dyspozycyjnych. Socjologiczna analiza zawodu i jego roli w społeczeństwie*, (ed.) J. Maciejewski, A. Krasowska-Marut, A. Rusak, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2009, p. 25.

**Table 2. Ranks of the research participants**

Rank	Soldiers after missions		Soldiers doing service in Poland		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
private	8	8.33	17	30.36	25	16.45
private 1 <sup>st</sup> class	39	40.63	17	6.25	56	36.84
lance corporal	9	9.38	3	5.36	12	7.89
corporal	3	3.13	0	0	3	1.97
first warrant officer	1	1.04	0	0	1	0.66
warrant officer class 2	6	6.25	1	1.79	7	4.61
warrant officer class 1	2	2.08	0	0	2	1.32
sergeant	3	3.13	2	3.57	5	3.29
staff sergeant	2	2.08	1	1.79	3	1.97
lieutenant	6	6.25	2	3.57	8	5.26
captain	4	4.17	3	5.36	7	4.61
major	0	0	1	1.79	1	0.66
no rank specified	13	13.54	9	16.07	22	14.47
total	96	100	56	100	152	100

The largest number of soldiers go on missions only once. The second biggest group, accounting for 27.08%, includes soldiers taking part in missions twice. A considerable number of research participants, i.e. 14 of them (14.58%), have been on four missions; only one soldier took part in five. Studies of April 2013 indicate that there are soldiers who have been on 6 or 7 missions.



**Table 3. Number of stabilisation missions the research participants have taken part in**

Number of missions	No.	%
1	45	46.88
2	26	27.08
3	10	10.41
4	14	14.58
5	1	1.04
Total	96	100

The conducted surveys have shown the uncomfortable situation concerning employment as the sole number of missions poses risk to soldiers that there might be no vacant positions on their return. However, the service on missions is no guarantee of permanent job either. Taking into account the time span of one mission amounting to 6 months, a soldier stays away from his country for over three years and such a long separation from his family cannot be without impact for relations between family members.

### Research results

Statistical analysis of the research material involves the following indexes: number, arithmetic mean (M), standard deviation (SD), statistical significance of differences between groups estimated on the basis of the Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA and the Mann-Whitney's U test.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is used to examine the strength of relations. In the research on differences between strength of relations all results fulfilling the  $p < .05$  condition are accepted as significant.

As P. Glińska writes "Some soldiers paid the price of a divorce for their stay in Iraq and Afghanistan and, although there is no research in the problem in Poland, it can be concluded that missions result in slackening family bonds."<sup>22</sup> (own translation)

Searching for the most adequate definition for marriage quality I assumed it to be a subjective evaluation of "a relation of a married couple taking into account some measures and estimates"<sup>23</sup> (own translation). As follows, marriage quality involves to some extent: marital adjustment, satisfaction, success, happiness, constancy, integration and communication. Marriage and life satisfaction and life satisfaction levels have been analysed to verify the relationship between different domains decisive for marriage. The present article attempts to show results of life and marriage satisfaction analyses. Soldiers answered a number of questions concerning their marriage achieving as a result a certain score. K. Pospiszyl's studies have shown that if the score is lower than 80 the couple is referred to undergo a therapy. Three marriage satisfaction levels have been determined, i.e. high, moderate and low. Results of the research are presented in Table 4 below. Soldiers showing high married life happiness level are the largest group. There are no significant differences between the

<sup>22</sup> P. Glińska, M.Kowalska-Sendek (2012), Czas próby, Polska Zbrojna 22.05.2012 09:42 [http://polska-zbrojna.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=15832:czas-proby&catid=133:armia&Itemid=157](http://polska-zbrojna.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15832:czas-proby&catid=133:armia&Itemid=157)

<sup>23</sup> J. Rostowski (1987). Zarys psychologii małżeństwa. Warszawa . PWN, p. 25 cited in:T. Rostowska (2008). Małżeństwo, rodzina, praca a jakość życia. Impuls. Kraków, p. 46.

participants. Soldiers that have not been on missions and that display the high level of marriage happiness constitute 60.71% of the group, while those that have been on missions – 55.21%. Thus, it can be concluded that soldiers doing their service in Poland are happier. The moderate level of married life happiness is shown by 30.21% soldiers participating in military missions and by 21.43% of those that have not taken part in them. The comparison thus shows that there are more soldiers after missions who are moderately satisfied with their marriage. The low level, suggesting the need for therapy, has been observed with 14.58% of soldiers after missions and 17.86% of soldiers staying in Poland. The Mann-Whitney U test with a variable: a group, in which results are significant with  $p < ,05000$  shows as follows: Sum of ranks - Group 1 = 4069 Sum of ranks - Group 2 = 7407,  $U=2529$ ,  $Z= -0.43$ ,  $p=0.67$ . The results provide evidence as to the absence of statistically significant differences between the groups in the study.

**Table 4. Marriage satisfaction level of the soldiers in the study**

Marriage satisfaction level	Soldiers serving in Poland		soldiers after missions		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
high, over 110	34	60.71	53	55.21	87	57.24
moderate, 83- 109	12	21.43	29	30.21	41	26.97
low 0-82	10	17.86	14	14.58	24	15.79
total	56	100	96	100	152	100

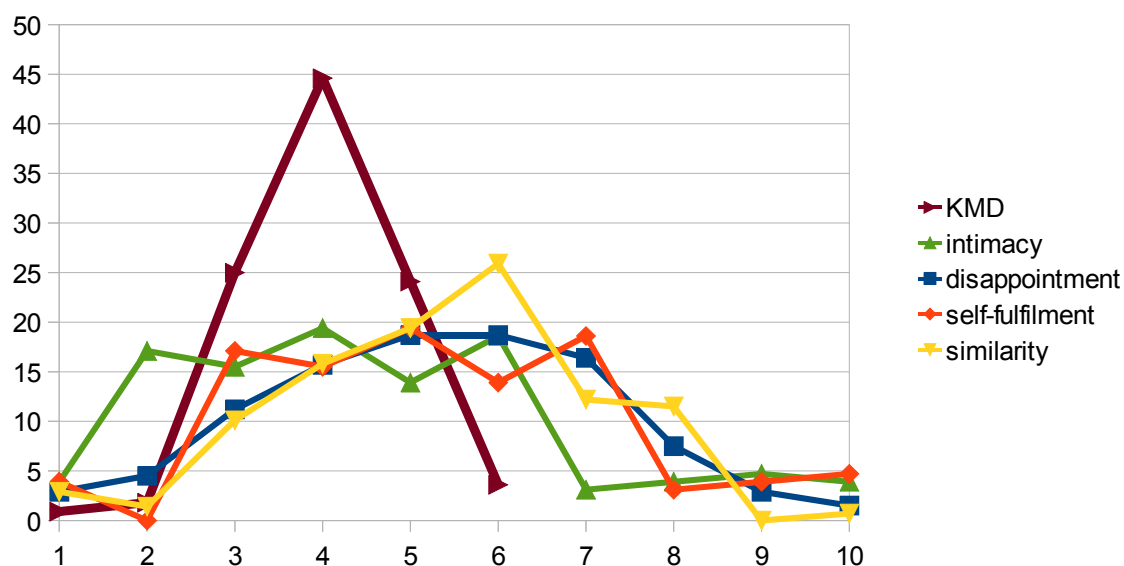
Source: own study

Other presented results of the research concerned marriage satisfaction in relation to intimacy, disappointment, self-fulfilment and similarity. The measures analysed in each of the groups have shown the lowest assessment for disappointment, followed by similarity and intimacy, with the highest level for self-fulfilment. Analyses of particular results point out that soldiers doing their service in Poland display slightly lower scores for intimacy and similarity, higher level of disappointment, while their self-fulfilment is on the same level as with the other group. The slightly higher general level of marriage satisfaction is observed among soldiers on missions. Standard variation in both groups in the research is nearly identical. The results may be compared with the “general” population (sten scores) what is graphically presented in Figures 4, 5 and 6. In the case of scales the results distribution does not differ from that for the general population, while it should be noted that for the whole Well-Matched Marriage Questionnaire (referred to as KDM in the table below) there are practically no high scores.

**Table 5. Differences between soldiers with respect to marriage satisfaction**

Measures/scores KDM-2	Soldiers after missions		Soldiers serving in Poland		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
intimacy	31.44	5.7	30.32	5.97	30.71	5.88
disappointment	19.5	7.16	20.7	6.98	20.31	7.03
self-fulfilment	37.84	4.26	37.21	4.34	37.42	4.31
similarity	27.71	3.89	26.62	3.87	27.01	3.9
KDM	115,3	8,59	114,93	9,07	115,05	8,88

Source: own study



**Figure 4. Frequency for particular marriage satisfaction dimensions in the group in research in relation to sten scores within the same group.**

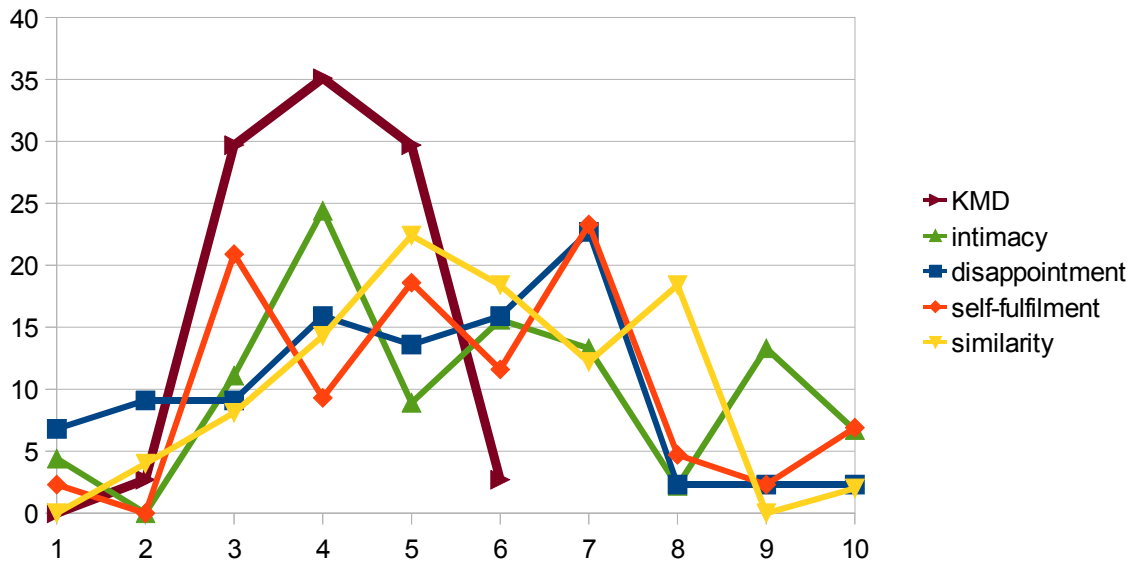


Figure 5. Frequency for particular marriage satisfaction dimensions in the group of soldiers doing their service in Poland in relation to sten scores within the studied group.

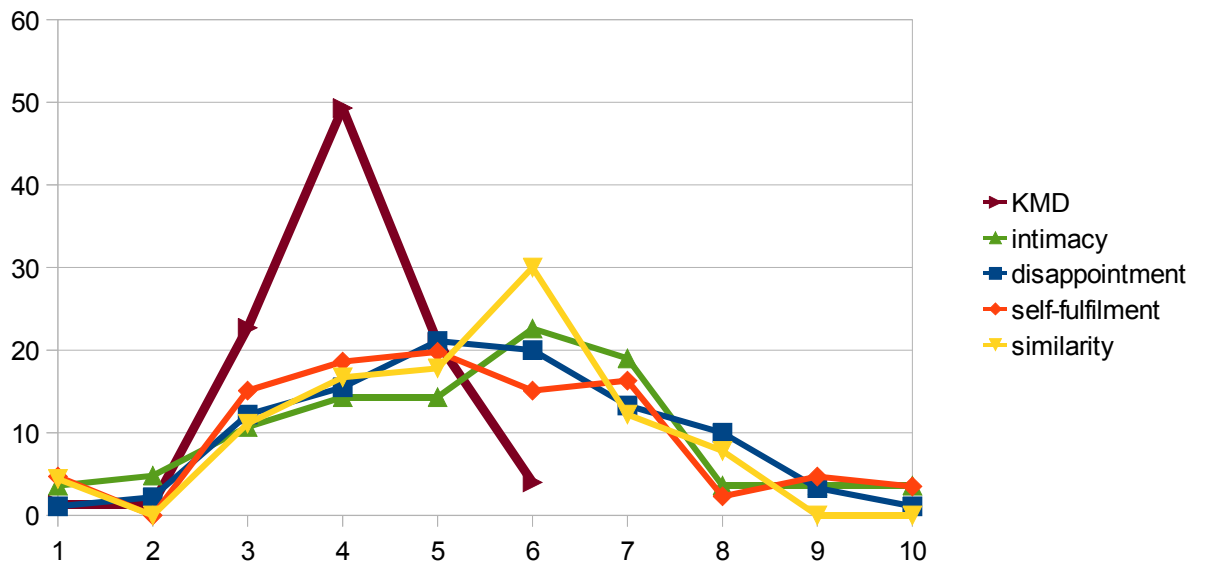


Figure 6. Frequency for particular marriage satisfaction dimensions in the group of soldiers that have been on missions in relation to sten scores within the studied group.

Judith A. Lyons writes that “there is no clinical magic that could possibly erase the influence of separation and war experiences”<sup>24</sup> (own translation) between the spouses but still some clinical methods are available and functional. Participation in combat changes not only the participant but may also result in changes in partners, children and other relatives, including soldier’s parents. Scientists have reported more and more frequent divorces, alcohol addiction, aggression and violence and suicides.

**Table 6. Determination of differences in the domain of good marriage with soldiers in the study. Mann-Whitney U Test with a variable: a group**

KDM	Sum of ranks – soldiers – mission	Sum of ranks – no soldiers - mission	U	Z	p
Intimacy	3085.5	5299.5	1729.5	0.79	0.43
disappointment	2771.5	6273.5	1781.5	-0.94	0.35
self-fulfilment	2926.5	5458.5	1717.5	0.65	0.51
similarity	3749.5	5980.5	1885.5	1.41	0.16
KDM	2112	4216	1366	0.13	0.9
intimacy sten	3023	5362	1792	0.48	0.63
disappointment sten	2766	6279	1776	-0.96	0.33
self-fulfilment sten	2947.5	5437.5	1696.5	0.76	0.45
similarity sten	3686.5	6043.5	1948.5	1.13	0.26
KDM sten	2085	4243	1382	-0.03	0.98

Results in Table 6. indicate the absence of significant differences in the scales, the total result or the relation to sten scores between soldiers going on missions and those doing service at home. In both cases the higher level of good matching in marriage results in a higher marriage happiness level. However, what is characteristic, the lower matching level, the higher uniformity of happiness level (the diversity of results concerning happiness in case of not very well matched couples is much lower). As it is often pointed out in articles married men are more satisfied with their life than women<sup>25</sup>.

Results of another study, using Cantril’s Ladder are presented in Table 7 below. The data comprise evaluation of life in retrospect, assessment of current life and estimation of future satisfaction in 5 years. Comments of soldiers that have been on missions show a high satisfaction level before leaving on mission (M=7.16) that has decreased during the mission (M=6.38). At present the level is slightly higher than at the time of their return to Poland (M=7.45). The future satisfaction prospects are lower than the present satisfaction level (M=7.28). Apart from the stay on the mission the satisfaction level has not significantly

<sup>24</sup> J.A. Lyons, Powracający wojownik: rady dla rodzin i przyjaciół. In: Stres bojowy. (ed.) Ch. R. Figley, W.P. Nash. (Polish edition ed.) S. Ilnicki, PWN, WIM, Warszawa 2010, p.369

<sup>25</sup> L. Brannon , Psychologia rodzaju. Gdańsk 2002, GWP

changed over time. Soldiers doing their service in Poland evaluate their current life and their future higher (M=7.82 and M=7.9). Standard deviation in both groups in the study is shows similar values. It could thus be stated that evaluation of life in relation to time periods shows little if any alternation. Soldiers after missions show a lower satisfaction level in every period in the study, they also have lower future expectations than their colleagues serving in Poland. Analyses do not show however any statistically significant difference between the groups. Since the soldiers after stabilisation missions included in the research show lower satisfaction evaluation, it seems that a larger group of soldiers should be examined in that respect. However, determination of factors decisive for the lowered satisfaction levels seems most important.

**Table 7. Differences between life satisfaction evaluation – temporal perspective**

Mean	before mission		on mission		at present		in 5 years	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
soldiers	-		-		7.82	1.34	7.9	1.76
soldiers after missions	7.16	1.94	6.38	2.1	7.45	1.75	7.28	2.63
soldiers total	-	-	-	-	7.55	1.65	7.43	2.45

Life satisfaction evaluation does not differentiate the soldiers in the study (Table 9). Particular categories rated on a scale of 1-to-5, apart from satisfaction evaluation, range from 3.58 – 3.88 for soldiers serving in Poland to 3.61-3.78 for soldiers with mission experiences. Differences between the groups are insignificant. (Table 8)

**Table 8. Soldiers' life satisfaction**

No.	Happiness	Soldiers	
		Service in Poland	on mission
1	in many respects my life is close to ideal	3.88	3.78
2	My life conditions are perfect	3.75	3.91
3	I am satisfied with my life	4.6	4.56
4	I have achieved the most important things I wanted in life	3.77	3.79
5	If I could live my life once again, I would not like to change nearly anything.	3.58	3.61

The general satisfaction evaluation confirms that the satisfaction level is slightly higher among soldiers working in Poland. The things achieved so far are rated similarly, while the lowest evaluation was given to their experiences so far. Such assessment suggests that they would

like to change their life to some extent. Life conditions are rated only slightly better by soldiers that have been on missions. In comparison of pays in both groups in the research the differences seem to be insignificant. As S. H. Filipp and D. Ferring claim, objective life conditions do not show any considerable connection with evaluation of happiness in life. "Taking into account objective life conditions (favourable and unfavourable) and the subjective evaluation of life (positive and negative) four types of life quality according to S. H. Filipp and D. Ferring 1991 might be determined."<sup>26</sup>

- justified satisfaction – an individual living in objectively favourable conditions perceives life in positive categories and, as a result, has a feeling of high life quality.
- dissatisfaction dilemma – an individual living in objectively favourable conditions perceives life in negative categories and, as a result, has a feeling of low life quality.
- satisfaction paradox - an individual living in objectively unfavourable conditions perceives life in positive categories and, as a result, has a feeling of high life quality.
- justified dissatisfaction - an individual living in objectively unfavourable conditions perceives life in negative categories and, as a result, has a feeling of low life quality.”  
(own translation)

**Table 9. Objective and subjective (understood as an effect of experiencing and learning) aspect of defining life quality according to S. H. Filipp and D. Ferring**

Objective life conditions	Subjective evaluation of own life quality	
	positive	negative
favourable	justified satisfaction	dissatisfaction dilemma
unfavourable	satisfaction paradox	justified dissatisfaction

Source: cf. Pasikowski, Sęk, 1994, Quality of Life, Health Experiences and Sense of Coherence, [in:] J. Rodriquez-Martin (ed.) Proceedings of the 8th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, p. 111.

The collected evidence provide the basis for a claim that there is a variety of factors influencing happiness. Scholars report that happiness depends on character traits, communication, and relations at work.

The assumption that a well-matched marriage guarantees satisfaction has been confirmed regarding the question of general life satisfaction. The research participants evaluated their satisfaction in a few perspectives. The first one was Cantril's Ladder satisfaction evaluation where they were to take into account reflection on the past, present and future (Table 7). The evaluation evolved over the changing periods. Another evaluation was carried out in Ed. Diener's life satisfaction study (Table 8). The third one concerns general life satisfaction and its results as presented in Tables 10 and 11. Comparison of the results in Tables 10 and 11

<sup>26</sup> T. Pasikowski, H. Sęk (1994),. Quality of Life, Health Experiences and Sense of Coherence, [in:] J. Rodriquez-Martin (ed.) Proceedings of the 8 th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society (77-87) Cite in: Dziurawicz-Kozłowska A. (2002), Wokół pojęcia jakości życia. „Psychologia jakości życia” ACADEMICA wydawnictwo SWPS, Warszawa, Volume 1, no. 2, p. 86, J. Daszkowska, (2007), Jakość życia w perspektywie pedagogicznej, Kraków, p. 74.

shows that soldiers in the study estimate life satisfaction on similar level. Soldiers are a group believing that they deserve more than they get from life. It is the lowest evaluation in the study. The happiness level over the latest period is rated higher, similarly to general satisfaction. Scholarly research has shown that life satisfaction increases at a slower pace than expectations. As a consequence of reduced support the soldiers in question are more satisfied.<sup>27</sup>

The feeling of happiness results from received positive reinforcements. A man feels happy as a result of a variety of stimuli. The short-lasting happiness is explained by habituation. “the whole happiness system is oriented towards discovering new events and, after adaptation to them, the subjective well-being returns to its usual level.”<sup>28</sup> (own translation) The process is called habituation, i.e. automatic decreasing reaction to a repeated stimulus. It is positive for people as thanks to that they are able to retain the ability to react to new stimuli. Habituation is accompanied by higher processes called URWA<sup>29</sup> which is an acronym for Polish words: uwaga (attention) – reakcja (reaction) – wyjaśnianie (explanation) – adaptacja (adaptation). Particular processes consist in the fact that when people pay attention they ascribe more meaning to incomprehensible events concerning themselves personally. As a consequence, the events stimulate stronger emotional reactions; the individuals attempt to explain and comprehend the situation thus reaching the last stage of adaptation. Owing to explanation people can adapt to what is perceived as comprehensible and obvious. What is comprehensible and adopted does not make people happier.<sup>30</sup> (only in case of uncertainty unhappiness can continue for a longer period, e.g. a person does not know if she/he has the gene due to which a disease can develop. “Uncertainty might be worse than misfortune.”<sup>31</sup>) (own translation)

**Table 10. Life evaluation among soldiers in the study.**

life evaluation	Soldiers in Poland		Soldiers after missions		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
happiness level over the last days	4.45	0.95	4.89	1.22	4.81	1.15
life is adequate to what he deserves	3.42	1.18	3.63	1.22	3.64	1,21
general life satisfaction	4.65	1.31	5.12	0.81	4.99	0.9

Considering all what has happened over the last years soldiers that have been on missions rated their happiness at M= 4.89 on a 1-7 scale, while those staying in Poland at M= 4.45. Answering the question if the current life standard is adequate to what they deserve the soldiers after missions rated it slightly lower M=3.63. The same tendency was observed with ratings given by soldiers serving in Poland who estimated it at a lower, i.e. M=3.42, level.

<sup>27</sup> B. Hołtyń, *Małżeństwo i wsparcie*. Bydgoszcz 2009, UKW, p. 119

<sup>28</sup> B. Wojciszke, *Psychologia Społeczna*. WN Scholar, Warszawa 2011, p. 253

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem , p. 254

<sup>30</sup> B. Wojciszke, *Psychologia Społeczna*. WN Scholar, Warszawa 2011, p. 254,

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem



General life satisfaction is at the level of  $M=4.65$ , in case of soldiers participating in missions at 5.12. Life is highly valued by soldiers – at  $M=6.16$ , and by soldiers after missions – at  $M=6.32$ . To verify whether differences between the groups are significant the Mann-Whitney U test has been carried out and its results are included in Table 11 below.

**Table 11. Mann-Whitney U Test variable: a group; results in bold are  $p < .05000$  significant**

Life evaluation	Sum of ranks - Group 1	Sum of ranks - Group 2	U	Z	p
happiness level over the last days	4535	6491	1931	2.34	0.02
life is adequate to what he deserves	4184	7292	2636	0.01	0.99
own life satisfaction	4445	7031	2375	1.02	0.31



It is the happiness level over the last days that differentiates both groups in question. The median in both cases is similar but the answer distribution has changed. Soldiers doing their service in Poland most often gave answers at the 5-6 levels, though extreme results of 7-3 have been recorded as well. On the other hand, the group including soldiers after missions gave rates one-point lower, i.e. 4-5.5. The wide span of results ranged from unhappy people to very happy ones. Literature on the subject of marriage satisfaction presents studies establishing relations between its intensity and character traits and situational variables<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the research should be continued taking into account issues of personality features. Studies point to some other important factors resulting in lower life quality. A study carried out on a group of American soldiers completed in 2010 included 233 soldiers-veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan missions. Veterans who screened positive for combat-related concussion and persistent postconcussive symptoms were more likely than those who did not to report direct combat exposure ( $\chi^2 = 15.46, P < .001$ ) and alcohol use problems ( $\chi^2 = 11.62, P < .01$ ); 57.3% of veterans who screened positive for combat-related concussion and persistent postconcussive symptoms screened positive for PTSD. In bivariate analyses, combat-related concussion and persistent postconcussive symptoms were associated with lower scores on measures of physical and mental health-related quality of life ( $r = -0.27$  to  $-0.45, P < .001$ ).<sup>33</sup> Another study analysed data including 1588 soldiers – veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan missions. The results have shown that the probability of depression-related disorders, post-concussion stress disorders and traumatic brain injury were connected with financial problems. Irrespective of the diagnosis the veterans reported to have money to cover for their basic needs, were considerably less prone to transgress social and legal norms (e.g. arrests, homelessness, addictions, suicidal tendencies and aggression). Statistical analyses show also that poor money management (e.g. considerable debts) was connected with maladjustment, even among veterans with higher incomes. Considering the results, actions aiming at improving finance management skills and promoting employment may have a considerable impact on increasing results and improving life quality in the group of veterans.<sup>34</sup>

### **Conclusions:**

- Soldiers in the study show quite a high level of marriage satisfaction. Soldiers doing service in Poland are happier. The better matched marriage the higher general satisfaction.
- Disappointment of soldiers is at the lowest level, it is followed by similarity, intimacy and self-fulfilment. Those staying in Poland show lower intimacy and similarity levels,

<sup>32</sup> P.T. Costa, R.R. McCrae, Personality continuity and the changes of adult life. In: M. Storandt G.R. VandenBos (ed.) *The adult years: Continuity and change*. Washington DC: American Psychological

<sup>33</sup> Tsai J; Whealin JM; Scott JC; Harpaz-Rotem I; Pietrzak RH Examining the relation between combat-related concussion, a novel 5-factor model of posttraumatic stress symptoms, and health-related quality of life in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. *The Journal Of Clinical Psychiatry* 2012 Aug; Vol. 73 (8), pp. 1110-8. Date of Electronic Publication: 2012 Jun 26.

<sup>34</sup> Eric B. Eibogen, PhD\*; CAPTSaiiy C. Johnson, USPHS (Ret)\*; H. Ryan Wagner, PhD; Virginia M. Newton, PhD\*; Jean C. Beckham, PhD; Financial Well-Being and Postdeployment Adjustment Among Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans *MILITARY MEDICINE*, 177, 6:669, 2012

a higher level of disappointment and self-fulfilment almost on the same level. However, it should be noted that there are no high results.

- On the standard sten scale the higher marriage matching level is connected with the higher satisfaction within the last days, however, on the Cantrill's scale the tendency is just the reverse.
- The assumption that a well-matched marriage guarantees satisfaction has been confirmed for the question of general life satisfaction.
- The lower marriage matching level the bigger uniformity of happiness level.
- There are some statistically significant differences between the groups of soldiers in the study.

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