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**GLOBALIZATION AND LIFE SATISFACTION  
OF THE POLISH POPULATION.  
BEFORE AND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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*The main objective of the present research was to examine whether the attitude towards globalization and life satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic differs from the one observed beforehand. An additional goal was to find out whether the attitude to globalization during the pandemic can serve as a predictor of life satisfaction. On the basis of data obtained by Folk Theory of Social Change, we assume that the attitudes towards globalization and their correlation with life satisfaction are shaped by personal experiences with globalization. The survey was carried out on two independent sample groups of Poles: Sample 1 consisted of individuals tested in 2017 ( $n = 455$ ), while Sample 2 involved individuals tested during the COVID-19 pandemics ( $n = 300$ ). The mean level of life satisfaction and an accepting attitude towards globalization is lower in Sample 2 than in Sample 1. The analysis results of this reversion suggest that during the COVID-19 pandemic the Polish population's anxious attitude towards globalization is the predictor of life satisfaction  $\beta = -.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95 % CI  $(-.35, -.10)$ . The results confirm the assumptions of the FTSC in the matter of shaping attitudes towards globalization in developed countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, life satisfaction is influenced by an anxious attitude triggered by a sense of vulnerability to the threats posed by globalization.*

**Keywords:** *attitudes towards globalization, life satisfaction, COVID-19.*

**Globalization and Life Satisfaction of the Polish Population. Before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The spread of the coronavirus disease caused a global crisis. The negative impact of the pandemic on the healthcare system (Tanne *et al.* 2020) and business (Reeves *et al.* 2020) is often quoted as its most serious effect. The current global situation also has an influence on psychological condition and wellbeing (González-Sangiuno *et al.* 2020). Representatives of social sciences emphasize that the course of the pandemic is closely related to the mechanisms of globalization (Niewiadomski 2020). Psychological research hitherto conducted reveals a significant correlation between the experience of the pandemic in a social context and such aspects of mental health as anxiety, stress, and depression (Brooks *et al.* 2020; Pappa *et al.* 2020). So far, there has not been any publi-

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cation on the correlation of attitudes towards globalization during the COVID-19 pandemic and life satisfaction in Poland.

In Poland, the first case of infection with the virus SARS-CoV-2 was identified on March 4, 2020. Until the point when the present research was completed (April 30, 2020), 12,877 infection cases were reported in Poland, including 644 fatalities (according to General Sanitary Inspectorate [GIS], 2020). According to official data, Poland placed 26<sup>th</sup> among the European Union countries in terms of the number of infections (26.77) and deaths (1.12) per 100,000 inhabitants.

The main goal of the current research is to examine whether the level of life satisfaction and the attitude towards globalization at the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic differs from the one registered in 2017. An additional objective is to find out whether the attitude towards globalization (independent variable) could be a predictor of life satisfaction (dependent variable).

### **Attitudes towards Globalization, Life Satisfaction, and COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Folk Theory of Social Change (Kashima *et al.* 2011) suggests that globalization introduces the change of life conditions, which can be accepted or rejected. A positive attitude towards globalization depends on the evaluation of its consequences as beneficial for the individual – fostering wellbeing and providing answers to existential questions. Globalization, like any other social change, stirs up a sense of insecurity, which is reduced on the basis of direct life experience. When the experience is positive, globalization is accepted, while in the case of a negative evaluation, it is rejected.

In reference to the concepts mentioned above, the Model of Attitudes Towards Globalization (Senejko and Łoś 2016) was established, which suggests that the individual assumes specific attitudes towards globalization. These attitudes result from a cognitive interpretation of phenomena related to global order perceived by the individual as consequential. The authors of the model emphasize that the attitudes towards globalization refer to the existing and currently experienced global conditions, rather than the desired ones. Consequently, these attitudes undergo changes over the course of time. The Model of Attitudes towards Globalization distinguishes three basic attitudes: accepting, critical, and anxious. The present study has examined two of these attitudes chosen according to the highest theoretical and empirical accuracy:

1) Accepting attitude is characterized by openness to global reality, a trustful approach to occurring changes, and exploration as well as active use of opportunities offered by globalization;

2) Anxious attitude is characterized by mistrust towards globalization resulting from a sense of threat related to the phenomenon, as well as a sense of insecurity regarding whether the individual will deal with the challenges posed by the world transformed by globalization.

Life satisfaction results from cognitive evaluation based on the comparison of own life circumstances with the generally accepted standards. The level of life satisfaction depends on the degree to which these standards have been achieved (Jeb *et al.* 2020). The accepting attitude characterized by a positive evaluation of globalization's impact on one's own life may increase in direct proportion to life satisfaction, while anxious attitude characterized by a negative evaluation of global life conditions can increase in

reverse proportion. The understanding of the relationship between globalization and cognition as well as human behavior is one of the main research problems in modern psychology (Janssens *et al.* 2019). Empirical study of the correlation between attitudes towards globalization and life satisfaction comprise an important part of challenges posed to social sciences. The studies that have been hitherto conducted suggest a correlation between the experience of pandemic and predictors of a diminished life satisfaction: psychological stress, anxiety, and insomnia (Casagrande *et al.* 2020). This justifies the inquiry into whether the circumstances of pandemic are related to different kinds of attitudes towards globalization and the level of life satisfaction, and whether attitudes towards globalization during a pandemic can serve as predictors of life satisfaction.

According to Folk Theory of Social Change, if the changes related to globalization are evaluated as positive, the attitude towards globalization will be accepting, while a negative evaluation of globalization results in an anxious attitude. The circumstances of a pandemic are perceived as closely related to globalization (Sułkowski 2020). It is possible that the attitudes towards globalization depend on the assessment of how far the spread of the pandemic was influenced by the globalization processes. If this is the case, then the accepting attitude should be lower among the sample group during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the anxious attitude should be higher. The theoretical assumptions provide the basis for the following hypotheses:

H1. The accepting attitude towards globalization is lower in the sample group during the COVID-19 pandemic than in the sample group surveyed before it.

H2. The anxious attitude towards globalization is higher in the sample group during the COVID-19 pandemic than in the sample group surveyed before it.

Globalization can have an impact on shaping life satisfaction because it creates conditions in which individuals are able to fulfill their needs, acquire resources, and proceed to the next stage of development. Globalization may be one of the most important features of the modern world, towards which the individual needs to assume specific attitudes (Reese *et al.* 2019). Earlier research shows that there is no direct correlation between attitudes towards globalization and life satisfaction (Jasiński *et al.* 2019), while most recent studies indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic is inversely related to life satisfaction (Yang and Ma 2020). It is possible that the new circumstances resulting from the global threat posed by an infectious disease intensified the correlation between the evaluation of globalization and life satisfaction. On this basis we have put forward the following hypotheses:

H3. The level of life satisfaction is lower among individuals surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic than among individuals surveyed before the pandemic.

H4. The accepting attitude towards globalization is a predictor of life satisfaction among individuals surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

H5. The anxious attitude towards globalization is a predictor of life satisfaction among individuals surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

The research project was conducted in two stages, on two independent samples. The first stage took place between March and June 2017. The data were collected by means

of a ‘paper-pencil’ method in the premises of the universities of Opole and Wrocław as well as the local government headquarters of Opole Voivodeship. The first sample amounted to  $n = 455$  (57.1 % female) with a mean age of 28.01 ( $SD = 14.77$ ). During the second stage, the data collection began on April 20, 2020, precisely a month after the state of epidemic had been announced in Poland, and a day after the highest daily number of coronavirus infections had been noted. The data collection was carried out by means of online questionnaires and finished on April 30, 2020. The second sample comprised  $n = 300$  (85.3 % female) with a mean age of 41.27 ( $SD = 21.88$ ). The participants of both surveys were the inhabitants of South-Western Poland who responded to the invitation of participation. The participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous; all participants consciously expressed their consent for participation. The demographic data of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic data for Sample 1 and Sample 2

	Sample 1 $n = 455$		Sample 2 $n = 300$	
<b>Age</b>	$M = 28.01, SD = 14.77$		$M = 41.27, SD = 21.88$	
<b>Sex %</b>	Female 57.1	Male 42.9	Female 85.3	Male 14.7
<b>Place of residence %</b>				
Village	28.4		23.7	
Town (to 50,000 inhabitants)	32.6		28	
Town (to 100,000 inhabitants)	4.7		10.3	
City (above 100,000 inhabitants)	34.3		38	
<b>Average net income PLN/Euro</b>				
Until 1000/225.73	31		26	
Until 1500/338.60	15		19	
Until 2000/451.46	20		19	
Until 2500/564.33	12		11	
Until 3000/677.20	10		8	
Higher than 3000/677.20	12		17	
<b>Marital status %</b>				
Single	46.8		32.3	
Non-formal relationship	28		25	
Marriage	21.4		27.7	
Divorce	3.2		6	
Widowhood	.6		9	
<b>Education %</b>				

Table 1 (continued)

Until Middle School	15.8	20
High School	50.3	36.8
Graduate	24.9	34.6
Master's degree	9	8.6

### Measures

In both stages, the surveyed filled in a demographic data sheet and two questionnaires: Questionnaire World-I and Questionnaire SWLS. The indicators of accuracy  $\alpha$  according to Cronbach are presented in Table 2.

#### Questionnaire World-I

This tool serves to assess attitudes towards globalization (Senejko and Łoś 2016). The questionnaire consists of 35 statements describing the individual's attitude to the phenomenon of globalization. The answers are arranged on the scale from 4 (*Yes*) to 1 (*No*). The increase in a specific attitude is inferred on the basis of a total amount of points obtained from each of the subscales. Therefore, the higher the total number of points, the stronger the attitude.

#### Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The tool developed by Diener *et al.* (1985) serves to assess the cognitive aspect of life satisfaction. It consists of five statements regarding an individual's own life. The answers are arranged on the scale from 1 (*I totally disagree*) to 7 (*I totally agree*). The higher the total number of points, the higher the life satisfaction. The survey used a Polish version of the SWLS (Juczyński 2012).

### Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out by the IBM SPSS 21. First, the distribution and uniformity of variables was assessed. In order to verify hypotheses H1 and H2 with regard to the differences between Sample 1 and Sample 2, the Student's *t*-test was conducted. The result of the test *t* confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of the level of life satisfaction and attitudes towards globalization. In order to assess the role of attitudes towards globalization as the predictor of life satisfaction, an analysis of multivariate regression was carried out. Before the model of regression was built, the test of collinearity was conducted. On the basis of the assessment of tolerance and VIF indicators, it can be assumed that the predictors included in the model are not collinear.

### Results

The results of correlation analysis indicate that there was no significant correlation between attitudes towards globalization and life satisfaction in Sample 1. Meanwhile, in Sample 2 a significant negative correlation was noted between the anxious attitude towards globalization and life satisfaction  $r = -.21, p < .001$ . Additionally, in both samples a significant negative correlation was observed between the mean age of the surveyed and the accepting attitude towards globalization.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and r-Pearson's correlation coefficients for sample 1 (n = 455)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Age</b>	28.01	14.77	–			
<b>2. Accepting attitude towards globalization</b>	17.77	4.43	-.15 <i>p</i> = .001	-		
<b>3. Anxious attitude towards globalization</b>	19.19	4.43	.12 <i>p</i> = .007	-.20 <i>p</i> < .001	-	
<b>4. Life satisfaction</b>	22.57	5.09	.04 <i>ns</i>	.02 <i>ns</i>	.01 <i>ns</i>	–

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and r-Pearson's correlation coefficients for sample 2 (n = 300)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Age</b>	41.27	21.88	–			
<b>2. Accepting attitude towards globalization</b>	17.07	4.98	-.44 <i>p</i> < .001	-		
<b>3. Anxious attitude towards globalization</b>	18.92	4.63	-.08 <i>ns</i>	-.19 <i>p</i> = .001	-	
<b>4. Life satisfaction</b>	20.67	5.19	.08 <i>ns</i>	.08 <i>ns</i>	-.21 <i>p</i> < .001	-

The mean level of the accepting attitude towards globalization was lower in Sample 2 ( $M = 17.07$ ,  $SD = 4.98$ ) than in Sample 1 ( $M = 17.77$ ,  $SD = 4.43$ ). The analysis of results showed that this difference was statistically significant  $t(586.48) = 1.97$ ,  $p = .04$ , Cohen's  $d = .14$ . In line with hypothesis H1, the acceptance of globalization was lower in the situation of the pandemic COVID-19. Thus the hypothesis H1 has been confirmed.

The mean level of the anxious attitude towards globalization was lower in Sample 2 ( $M = 18.92$ ,  $SD = 4.63$ ) than in Sample 1 ( $M = 19.19$ ,  $SD = 4.43$ ). The difference, however, was statistically insignificant. The level of anxiety towards globalization during the COVID-19 pandemic was not higher than it was before. Therefore hypothesis H2 has been rejected.

The mean level of life satisfaction in Sample 2 ( $M = 20.67$ ,  $SD = 5.19$ ) was lower than in Sample 1 ( $M = 22.57$ ,  $SD = 5.09$ ). This difference was statistically significant:  $t(753) = 4.97$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = .36$ . Life satisfaction in Sample 2, which was surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic, was lower. Thus, hypothesis H3 has been confirmed.

Table 4

## Results of t-tests comparing sample 1 and sample 2 on the study variables

	Sample 1			Sample 2			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	Before COVID-19 pandemic ( <i>n</i> = 455)			During COVID-19 pandemic ( <i>n</i> = 300)					
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>			
<b>Accepting attitude towards globalization</b>	17.77	4.43	.68	17.07	4.98	.81	1.97	.04	.14
<b>Anxious attitude towards globalization</b>	19.19	4.43	.65	18.92	4.63	.76	.79	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	22.57	5.09	.78	20.67	5.19	.78	4.97	< .001	.36

The analysis of results suggests that the accepting attitude towards globalization in Sample 2 is not a predictor of life satisfaction,  $\beta = -.04$ , *ns*, 95 % CI (-.07, .16). Hence hypothesis H4 has been rejected. The anxious attitude towards globalization was a significant predictor of life satisfaction in Sample 2,  $\beta = -.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95 % CI (-.35, -.10). As such, hypothesis H5 has been confirmed: in Sample 2 the level of the anxious attitude towards globalization is a significant predictor of life satisfaction.

The results of regression analysis, in which life satisfaction was the dependent variable while the attitudes towards globalization the independent variable, indicated that the regression model was relevant for the data:  $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(2, 297) = 7.36$ ,  $p = .001$ . The tested model explained the 4 % variance in life satisfaction.

## Discussion

The main goal of the comprehensive research was to establish whether the level of life satisfaction and attitudes towards globalization during the COVID-19 pandemic differ from those experienced before its outbreak. The secondary aim of the research was to provide an answer to the question of whether the conditions brought on by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic impact the intensity of the correlation between attitudes towards globalization and life satisfaction.

It was found that the level of life satisfaction and accepting attitude towards globalization was lower in Sample 2 surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is consistent with the theoretical framework and results of previous studies which attested to a significant correlation between the pandemic and decline of psychological welfare (Favieri *et al.* 2020). In comparison to the aforementioned research conducted in Italy, the connection between the gender of the surveyed and tested variables has not been observed in Poland. In the Polish population, the correlation between age and life satisfaction was significant, but in contrast to the Italian sample, this relationship was positive.

In comparison to earlier research, the current study is the first to suggest a significant correlation between the anxious attitude towards globalization and life satisfaction. As previously predicted, this correlation occurs only in the case of Sample 2. On this basis, it is possible to put forward a tentative assumption that the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic intensified the correlation between the anxiety evoked by globalization and life satisfaction. This conclusion suggests that, even though the mean

level of anxious attitude towards globalization is similar in both samples, on account of the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the negative assessment of globalization may be considered the predictor of life satisfaction. At the same time, it should be noted that the intensity of this effect is low, hence its predictive value is limited. However, granted that the model of regression explains the low percentage of variance, it can be concluded that globalization and related processes have a minor impact on the level of life satisfaction.

The lack of significant correlation between the accepting attitude towards globalization and life satisfaction both before and during the pandemic may suggest that the fear of globalization and the acceptance of changes caused by it played a more significant role in shaping life satisfaction. This is explained by the Folk Theory of Social Change which points out that in the developed countries the mechanisms of globalization tend to be more negatively assessed as the ones related to financial crises and the spread of unknown infectious diseases. In Poland, only the anxious attitude was related to life satisfaction during the pandemic, as inhabitants of developed countries discern more threats resulting from globalization. The strife to identify these threats is stronger and more significant for the sake of life satisfaction than the perception of globalization's positive aspects (Derbis *et al.* 2018).

### Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of the presented research is its comprehensive and correlational character. On account of the chosen methodology, it is not possible to come to any conclusions with regard to the occurrence of cause and effect correlations in this respect.

The results of this research are relevant only for the Polish population, and even so to a limited extent. It is, furthermore, hardly possible to generalize them. The observed correlations may be treated as suggestions for further research. Given a significant negative correlation between the age of the surveyed and accepting attitude towards globalization in both samples, the future research should take into consideration a representative group of elderly adults.

A further limitation of this project is the reduction of the concept of wellbeing to a cognitive aspect of psychological welfare. The negative correlation of the COVID-19 pandemic with an emotional aspect of welfare is attested to by a Chinese sample (Quin *et al.* 2020), thus the future research on the Polish sample should account for both the cognitive and affective component of the subjective sense of welfare. The method of data collection might also have had limitations, as this method differed in the case of Sample 1 (in person) and Sample 2 (online). The method of data collection of Sample 2 was dictated by the restriction on assembly and free movement during the pandemic.

### Conclusions

It has been noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the life satisfaction of the Polish population was lower than in 2017. In Poland during the pandemic, the anxious attitude towards globalization significantly negatively correlated with the level of life satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic was not related to the level of anxiety towards globali-



zation but it may provide a social context which intensifies the correlation between the anxious attitude towards globalization and life satisfaction.

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