
QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Romania is one of the countries that came out of the communist regime relatively recently and tried to make a new way by adopting a democratic regime. In the context of this regime change, an analysis of the Romanians' living has become a necessary initiative. The paper tries to analyze the changes over the last 20 years with access to studies on living conditions since the 1990s just after the fall of communism. It is interesting to analyze how the Romanian society has changed in the 20 years of democracy, and it is possible to clearly observe in the statistical data how influence factors such as economic crises have affected the quality of life.

The paper presents a series of data that leads to a correlation between the welfare of the individual that comes from a good economic status and the quality of life. This work focuses on data such as the subjective perception of people on the level of quality of life, as it can be seen how these perceptions vary in the context of periods of well-being and in times of economic crisis. Another part presents comparisons between the perception of the quality of life before 1989 and the present, while at the same time it can be noticed how different social categories perceive the changes brought about by a new political and economic system.

Keywords

financial crises, quality of life, income, saving

JEL Classification

G01, D15

Introduction

Lately, the quality of life in Romania has been influenced by the emergence of the financial crisis. Recent studies show deterioration in quality of life for a number of indicators, comotive with existing statistics up to the year 2000. Among the elements indicating a low percentage of quality of life, we can enumerate the population's concern about insufficient veins, lack of jobs, as well as rising prices and rising taxation (Baltatescu, 2009).

The chapters where Romania is better positioned are those such as relations with neighbors, home and family. Income is one of the chapters in which people are bad, with 1/3 of the population believing that their earnings strictly meet their basic needs (Zamfir, C., 1984). A significant percentage of the population, 46% think they can not cover their expenses each month. In the context of the economic crisis, 2010 reveals the impact that the crisis has had

on the population, considering that the living conditions worsened compared to the previous year in a percentage of 74%.

As far as education is concerned, 32% of the population thinks the educational system is bad, while 31% think it is good. For example, in 2006, the education-related trend towards people's satisfaction is depressing, and this can also be caused by constant changes to the education system. It is estimated that, in addition to legislative changes and elements such as the quality of teaching staff, and the deterioration of school buildings, they have affected people's perceptions of this area (Baltatescu, 2003).

In the health-related chapter, 46% of respondents believe that their health is good and very good, while another 28% find it satisfactory, and 26% consider it bad and very bad. The statistics thus indicate that a considerable number of people have health problems. This is also due to the lack of prevention, few people questioned saying they go to regular checks (43%). An overwhelming percentage of the population reaches the doctor only when faced with signs of illness (55%).

The most important indicator of the life of the Romanians, related to the quality of life, is that of the family. When it comes to satisfaction, it seems that the family offers the highest degree of satisfaction with their life. In very high percentages, the country's population thinks that relationships within their families are positive, so this chapter is an important source of stability for people (Marginean and Balasa, 2002).

At the social media level, the Romans predict this chapter largely negatively. They are not satisfied with the trust in other people and also when it comes to safety. Another element worthy of mention here is related to the negative perception that people have about the changes that occurred after the revolution. Thus, at the level of 2010, a significant percentage of people, 54%, considered that the changes that occurred after the revolution are negative, compared to only 13% who consider that the Romanian society has evolved in a positive way after the revolution.

Paper Body

1. Estimated earned income households

Chapter on income is, overall, one of those areas with negative impact on living standards in Romania. When it comes to citizens' perception of their level of satisfaction with household income, the vast majority, 35%, think family income is bad and very poor, while only 24% are satisfied with the level of income, considering them good and very good.

Also, when it comes to meeting needs with existing income, the vast majority of people say that in the best case the acquired resources cover the basic needs: 34% think income only covers basic needs, while 31% are that income does not cover even the basic needs. Unfortunately, the trend of recent years shows that the income of the population has not increased considerably compared to the basic needs considered. Thus, achieving a high level of perceived well-being is a hard target for people. 2003 is considered as the year when more people began to declare that their income covers a reasonable life.

Unfortunately, the percentage of 31% corresponding to the option where incomes are not enough to meet basic needs is relatively unchanged compared to the level reported in the mid-1990s. So the subjective threshold of poverty remains unchanged. Although it is quite possible that people's expectations have increased with the passage of time.

While in the 1990s people were not very well aware of the living standards of citizens in developed countries, recent studies indicate reporting the subject of a number of people who have begun to see their living standards in Western countries as a result greater openness and increased information. It is quite possible that people who now feel dissatisfied with the level of income that does not provide their basic needs have now more satisfied needs than in the 1990s. That is why these studies must be interpreted with this in mind, since the expectations people are a subjective factor that evolves over time as a result of the evolution

of a society and the level of openness in formation and globalization it reaches (Laertions, 1998).

It is noteworthy that people claiming that the income they receive is not enough to meet minimum living needs, most often they are people with a rather low level of education, namely persons who have never attended school or who have at most completed primary education, 1-8 classes. There is also a close correlation between the level of education and the level of satisfaction with the income / needs ratio: as the interviewed subjects had more years of active education, their financial situation was better and they could afford to meet have more needs. Thus, those who are able to acquire more expensive but hard work products are people who have at least post-secondary studies or have higher education. People with the lowest living standard seem to be retirees and farmers. Of the people who consider that their income does not even cover their basic needs; most of them are pensioners and farmers: 26% of those who said this are retirees and 35% are farmers.

This situation once again reveals that for a considerable number of pensioners the pension is not enough. This situation is most common among pensioners who, during the communist era, worked in the Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CAPs), and they have low levels of retirement. As far as farmers are concerned, this is an area where you can hardly get decent earnings. Turning agriculture into a business is a difficult thing, as long as there is no association between landowners. Profitable agriculture can be done only if there is a significant area of land, which also has a high degree of compaction. So, if farmers continue to be in the current state of organization, it is hard to believe that their income will evolve.

2. Savings (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

Savings have been on a downward trend since the 1990s, a trend that continued until 2010. It is worth noting the steep fall in the savings rate between 2006-2010, the most likely cause being the increased financial resources that were needed in the context of the economic crisis. This decline can be generated either by a loss of work for people who in the past were accustomed to saving (they cannot save), but it can equally be an increase in credit, which may have urged its people spends more, the monthly installments then pushing on their monthly income.

If we report to people who have failed to save, 46% of them said they could not cope with the previous month's expenses. This is worrying, evoking either heavier living conditions, or a lack of proper management of existing resources, which is also correlated with poor financial education (Rebedeu and Zamfir, 1982).

3. Poor-rich scale (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

Another interesting way of seeing how Romanians are valued on the basis of material welfare is confronting a scale of 1 to 10, from which they are asked to choose the value that suits them best when it comes to the level of financial satisfaction, defined here by the poor-rich scale. When asked where you are placed on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means poor, and 10 rich, 45% chose grades up to 4 inclusive, 31% (the largest group) chose 5 and the rest 22 % chose grades starting from 6 up including (2% of people did not respond).

It is worth mentioning that in the study the two extremes. Both rich and poor, may not be adequately represented, so a generalization of the country's population should be made with this observation (Zamfir, E., 1997). As a result of this chart, we can interpret the fact that most of the respondents consider neither the poor nor the rich, with the 5 most votes (31%).

It is worrying and the evolution of the population group that has chosen grades 1 and 2, cumulating 14%. Thus, according to their own subjective assessment, they have a very low standard of living.

By comparing the situation in 2010 with that of other years, we can see that the percentage of grades 1-4, which indicates poverty, has been on a downward trend since the 2000s.

Thus, people who chose scores between 1 and 4 were 43 % in 1994, in 1999 they grew aggressively to 58%, in 2006 they were 47% and in 2010 45%.

Again it is surprising the percentage recorded in the period immediately after the revolution, when 43% of the population think it's rather poor, a percentage that has not been achieved yet in the 2010 assessment. This may also be due to the scale of values, in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, there is no awareness, as now, of living standards in developed countries (Zamfir, E., 1997). It is possible that the stock scale also has changed since 1994. But these considerations are more valid for those who have chosen grades 3 and 4, notes 1 and 2 representing more extreme cases of poverty. Otherwise, the percentages indicate a decrease in those who are rather poor (range 1-4) and a continuous appreciation especially reported at 58% in 1999. Indicators that represent more extreme poverty, grades 1 and 2, had a level of 10% in 1994, 20% in 1999, 15% in 2006 and 14% in 2010.

Although these percentages have fallen in 2010 compared to 1999, it is noteworthy that 10% of people who consider themselves to be in a state of extreme poverty in 1994 are low. This is somewhat surprising since the inception of the 1990s was characterized by instability and inflation reaching very high levels. When it comes to identifying with a certain social class, 43% of people think they are part of the working class, 33% said they belonged to the middle class and 22% said they were part of the peasantry. A percentage of 1% said it was part of the upper class.

4. Health services and health (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

Statistics show that Romanians appreciate that their health level on a scale of 1 to 5, the average of the results is 2-3, 46% of the population consider it good and very good health, 28% consider it satisfactory, and 26% think it bad and very bad. Those 26% who consider their health condition to be bad and very poor, most likely are mostly in the most vulnerable categories of health degradation: the elderly, the smoker. Prevention also plays an important role. People who seem unsatisfied with their health are most likely among those who have not adopted a prevention attitude. Prevention is only adopted by 43% of the population; they say they are going to routine controls, compared to 55% of people who reach the doctor only when they think they are sick.

There are also gender differences when it comes to assessing health: 21% of men feel that their health is bad or very bad, while 30% of women say the same thing.

Health is a second part of the quality of life that is conditioned by education. As noted in the above-mentioned statistics, people with higher education say they are most satisfied with their health - 70% have good health and good health, while 22% consider it satisfactory. This is because of greater access to resources, allowing them to take more care of their health. Also, educated people better understand the risks they are exposed to and are more prone to adopt prevention strategies.

A person with higher education is also characterized by greater appetite for information about healthy lifestyle, or eating habits. As a matter of fact, the habit of education in the profession and in the faculty is also reflected in the field of health, and they also develop a series of basic knowledge in this field, accessing various medical information.

In comparison, people with unfinished general school accuse the greatest health deficiencies: only 17% say they have good health and very good health, while 67% of them think their health is bad and very bad. The very large differences between two close categories, namely those who did not complete a general school and those who finished school, reveal the importance and impact of basic knowledge (biology, health education) on health. As for age, there is a close correlation between aging and health. Health has a significant decline especially for people over 65 years of age. This is especially true for people who have not been on prevention and have not had a healthy lifestyle.

5. Primary social insurance (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

Overall, feeling about primary care is positive. In addition to the fact that in 2010 84% of the respondents qualified as a minimum satisfactory level of healthcare, we can also see an upward trend in our good and very good opinion, in increasing growth since 1990. Also, the number of people say dissatisfied is on the downside.

The only notable differences when it comes to assessing health care occur when we compare the views of the country's residents with those in the city. Those in the rural area appreciate these services in a higher percentage. This is most likely due to the lower expectations of rural people. This growing positive sense of healthcare can be attributed to the evolution of technology and new technologies, diseases and drugs, as well as the diversification of services and the emergence and development of pharmacies and private hospitals.

6. Unemployment and employment (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

A stable job is a desideratum for many of the Romanians. Work is seen as an element of stability for them. Unfortunately, the crises that have hit the Romanesque society over time have also had a major impact on the employment rate. After the 2007 financial crisis began to feel in Romania, the unemployment rate began to rise immediately. The financial crisis began to be felt in Romania in 2009, when unemployment reached 6.29%, after four consecutive years of continuous decrease in unemployment. 2010 was the peak in terms of the impact of the economic crisis on the unemployment rate. Unemployment rate reached in 2010 to 7.6% unseen in Romania since 2003. Fortunately, 2011 was the year that signaled the return to better conditions, the unemployment rate dropping to lower values, 5.38%, respectively. That in 2013 it will reach 5.21%.

In absolute terms, the number of unemployed reported in December 2013 is higher than the numbers for the similar period of 2011 and 2012. The number of unemployed in December 2013 was 512333, up from the level of 461013 in December 2011 and 493775 in December 2012.

Age groups that are most likely exposed to an increased unemployment rate are those between 40 and 50 years of age, with 137337 unemployed, followed by the 30-40 year group by 110955. The lowest unemployment rate is registered in the age group 25-30 years: 38086.

Despite this data, unemployment is not exactly the most relevant tool by which we can see the deficiencies in the labor force. The problem with unemployment is that only those who have filed for unemployment are registered in these statistics, after a period of one year they are taken out of statistics. Thus, even if a social problem remains, unemployment data may reveal something else. On the contrary, data relating to people without employment and lacking the most basic income, or unemployment, would be very interesting to analyze.

When it comes to the structure of the fields of activity, agriculture dominates the ranking by 28%. This number is well above the European Union average of 4.7% of people engaged in agriculture in 2009.

7. The family (INS, 2018; Eurostat, 2018)

The family is considered by the Romans as the most important source of stability and also the most relevant domain. Although the classic model of cohabitation, coupled with children is the most common, single parent families and consensual unions are increasingly common ladies. The appeal to the classical family system is also relevant to the percentage of 2/3 of the population who is married. The average family size was estimated in 2010 at 3.29 people, with 50% of families being made up of 2 or 3 people.

When it comes to children, Romanians most often have one child. This is also due to the financial stability that every family perceives. Heavier living conditions can only encourage a family to be limited to one child. Over 50% of families have no children under 16 years of

age, around 25% of families have one dependent child, while 15% have two children in their care and only 4% have 3 or more dependent children. Poverty cases are more common in families with 2 or more children.

When it comes to people's satisfaction with family relationships, it has remained constant over the years, with very small variations. Only 1999 saw a 7% decrease in the average of 87% (1991) people who consider good and very good relationships, most likely due to the economic challenges that have affected the well-being of families and lead to creating tensions. The happiest of family life are married people and those who have never been married. In this case, the level of education is also a good indicator for satisfying family relationships: 44% of people with higher education consider family relationships as very good compared to those without school or with unfinished primary school which in percentage only 20% declare family relationships as very good.

Young people are the ones who evaluate the most positive family relationships, while the elderly are the ones who offer the most negative evaluations. Young people aged 18-24 in 40% consider very good family relationships, compared to 18% of over 65.

Conclusions

Romania faced many difficulties during the transition from a closed, socialist, communist regime to a market economy. The major differences in the two philosophies of thinking have put their mark on the way in which this passage has been made in Romania. It has been difficult for the Romans to adapt to this new system, which puts even more emphasis on economic development, added value, competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

The study reveals to great extent dissatisfaction among the people when it comes to the quality of life. Several indicators have reached the level of 1999, while others have fallen below these values. If we refer to indicators with the highest positive values (where the positive answers are over 50%), we can conclude that the positive factors for the Romanians are represented by indicators such as family, housing and relations with neighbors. Instead, the Romanians' biggest fears are related to insufficient incomes, low accessibility of jobs and tax fears and rising prices.

Another very important conclusion that results in this work is related to the place where education is concerned when it comes to people's satisfaction with the quality of life. Education is closely correlated with higher incomes, with higher optimism, better health, and assimilation of economic principles such as saving; therefore the level of education is one of the best indicators when it comes to predicting the satisfaction of an individual with his or her life.

Even if many of the Romans are skeptical about the future of our country and how this new democratic system is superior to the Communist, these people will be able to see with time the effects of economic growth and rising living standards on the quality of their lives. The current study shows, not to forget, the subjective estimates of people. And as many of them are still nostalgic after the communist era, we can also think if this nostalgia is real. Are the challenges that we are now facing are not they exaggerated, in the way that the difficulties in the communist era are forgotten too easily and only the positive memories of the socialist era are left?

Certainly, the Romanians have gained one thing that is freedom of speech. By comparing with the past, we can now see through clear data the way people look at society, with good and evil. In the past, when criticism was not allowed, we now have a clear starting base through which we know the things we have done and are good in our society, and we also know our weaknesses where we need to work on which we need to improve.

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