

INFLUENCES OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF STUDIES ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE

Scientific researcher III, Ph D, Sevastian BLENDEA
“Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu-Jiu
sebib2005@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT. Because many of the factors influencing quality of life have both a transnational dimension and a national one in recent years studies take into account quality of life and economic crisis influence on the phenomenon. The dimensions of quality of life are examined in light of developments in economic indicators during the years of crisis and in terms of perception of quality of life of individuals in the economic crisis. The main consequence of the economic crisis in studies on quality of life refers to the fact that they are designed to best respond to new market requirements on economic recovery and individual wellness needs. This article highlights case studies of changes in quality of life due to the influence of the economic crisis. The analysis is made on research objectives, metrics to measure, how to review research findings and the methodology of its realization.

KEY WORDS: quality of life; economic crisis; welfare: the level of satisfaction; sampling.

1. Introduction

The current economic crisis facing the entire population of the globe is considered to be the most severe since the Great Depression of the 1930s until today. If at first it was considered a credit crisis, as its effects have become more visible macroeconomic specialists have given due consideration, researching the influence of the crisis in all fields.

The economic and financial crisis has manifested globally since the second half of 2007, when US investors have lost confidence in the mortgage secured, which led to a liquidity crisis. The immediate reaction was substantial injection of capital from the American Federal Reserve, Bank of England and European Central Bank [1]. The effect of the crisis was manifested by the collapse of numerous scholarships or recording a significant period of instability at their level, leading to the bankruptcy of many banks, lenders and insurance companies.

The consequences of the crisis severe enough on national economies, but also on every individual, prompted governments and various international bodies to take a number of measures for economic recovery.

Because many of the factors influencing quality of life have both a transnational and national one, the EU institutions have a special responsibility in terms of promoting the quality of life in the Member States. The financial and economic crisis represents a new opportunity for the EU to prove its effectiveness in this area in a time of economic hardship felt internationally.

Since the current crisis affecting the entire European market, EU institutions and national governments are pressed further to act.

In Romania, although neither the beginning nor the end of the crisis are not easy to locate while it is clear that it affected almost the entire population and was felt differently by various groups.

If the summer of 2009 the economic crisis was perceived as being "only on TV" in the autumn has become how can the 'real', and by spring 2010 a "kneeling" a large part of the population, associated with a deterioration in the quality of life close.

As we see, the crisis is reflected not only in the concrete conditions of life of the people but also in studies on quality of life.

2. Researches regarding the influence of the economic crisis on quality of life

In an economic recovery strategy first step is the design and conduct scientific research that can provide answers to questions such as: why the crisis occurred, which were its factors triggers that are its effects on society as influenced crisis standard of living of the population that recovery measures could be taken and which one is best suited to the needs of both economic society and at the sociological of the individual.

Many of the questions above have a direct connection with quality of life and welfare. In these circumstances there is a need of a thorough study of the influence of the economic crisis on the quality level of life. Thus, since 2009 it was conducted a series of studies of this kind, with a dual role: to find solutions to improve the quality of life in times of crisis, and to readjust science to new economic context by identifying the most significant assessment criteria and the most efficient measure.

An example in this direction is the Commission's report Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP), known as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission (named after the three specialists who have formed it). This committee was established in 2008 at the request of French President Nicholas Sarkozy, who was dissatisfied with the level and quality of statistical information relating to the economy and society. Setting up a committee aimed at overcoming the limits of GDP as an indicator for assessing economic performance and social progress and identification of socio-economic indicators more relevant under the new economic and financial crisis.

Following Stiglitz report is the study conducted in 2010 at the request of the Council of Ministers Franco-German - "Monitoring economic performance, quality of life and sustainability." The study presents the results of implementing the recommendations of the Stiglitz Report in France, by the Council of Economic Analysis, and Germany, through the German Council of Economic Experts.

There are also smaller studies in terms of applicability or because it targets only one country, either because they refer to the influence of the crisis on certain dimensions of quality of life.

An example is the 2009 survey by the University of Torino [2] which aimed to identify factors that contribute to maintaining the level of satisfaction with life during the crisis. The research focused on three aspects of life: socio-demographic characteristics, psychological variables and employment.

Another study that focused on crisis influence on quality of life only in certain countries was conducted by the Observatory for Human Security in Portugal in 2010. The research aimed at developing countries and the problems it brings economic and financial crisis for the quality of life in these countries: poverty, hunger, pollution, increases in food prices along with declining purchasing power etc. Given that the economic slowdown affecting developing countries and economies of the conclusion of the study refers to the need for international cooperation to implement a number of strategies for sustainable development in these countries.

Speakers and research that focuses on the economic crisis on the quality of life in a single category of population. In this regard, for example, it can be given MDShapiro study by the University of Michigan, on the effect of the financial crisis on the welfare of older people in the United States [3]. The research was a longitudinal type, with a first phase in 2008, followed by one in 2009 to assess changes with the economic crisis and its negative effects on the appearance of the first population.

Another longitudinal study type was conducted on the Canadian market, to assess how one of the main effects of the crisis - unemployment - affect the psychological wellbeing of the individual [4]. The research highlights the importance that nonpecuniare costs due to loss of employment, having a main conclusion the strategic role that policy makers have in lowering these costs by creating new jobs.

Proceeding from that the main dimension of quality of life is influenced by employment crisis, there are numerous studies that deal with this issue either in terms of layoffs and unemployment, either in terms of stress at work. The first category may be given thesis of M. Aceleanu [5], which aims implications of the financial crisis on the policies of the labor market, drawing a parallel between Romania and the situation in the European Union. The second category includes, for example, research conducted by I.Suciu [6], who studied how stress at work induced by the economic crisis affecting the harmony in the family.

There is also research that focused on the influence of the economic crisis on education as another dimension of quality of life, considering the fact that this dimension is reflected in double situation in relation to crisis: as a victim - the negative effects of the crisis It brings in terms of investment in education [7] or adjustment factor in the economic - through ideas and solutions that can be identified by the major economic schools of the world.

Between research aimed at economic crisis influence on quality of life in Romania, it is noted that achieved in 2009 under the coordination of TNS Opinion & Social at the request of the European Commission, and is part of the Eurobarometer 72 - Public Opinion in the European Union [8]. The research was based on a survey that measure people opinion on the crisis, confidence in national and European institutions and satisfaction with life in general.

This category of studies, we can give the example and study initiated and supported by UNICEF in collaboration with the Department of Social Development of the World Bank dedicated to monitoring the impact of the economic crisis in Romania, especially in the field of employment. The study was initiated in June 2009 and continued until December 2010, when the economic and financial crisis reached its peak. Key findings of the study show that in 2009-2010, in Romania, the economic crisis has had negative effects on both employment and revenue for both public sector employees and the private sector, both employees of formal sector and informal sector workers. Reduction in the rate of employment in non-agricultural sector (employees) was much greater than the decline in GDP. The number of employees decreased

emphasized much more than in other European countries. The economic crisis has led to loss of jobs, but also increase the number of overtime for fear of losing their jobs. Paid job opportunities have decreased considerably, especially for workers with low levels of education (unskilled Roma, etc.).

One of the most detailed and statistically based research on the influence of the crisis on quality of life was achieved in 2011 in the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). The present study is based on the results of longitudinal research conducted by Gallup from January 2008 to examine the evolution of six indicators: the index of physical health index of employment index affordability index assessing life index emotional health and Index healthy behavior for identify how these indexes and values have changed with the advent and evolution of the financial crisis [9].

The studies presented highlight how the crisis has influenced studies on quality of life, leading to conceptual changes on the assessment of quality of life and goals for research, changes of the importance given to the different dimensions, in particular the sampling and the analysis.

Following are the changes, showing how they are helping to better assess quality of life.

3. Conceptual and methodological changes in study about quality of life

a) changes regarding the objectives targeted in the study of quality of life.

In this sense, it is the importance of research orientation towards other indicators of evaluation:

- *identify factors that contribute to maintaining satisfaction on the quality of life in times of crisis.* This places an emphasis on psychological variables such as optimism or the need for cognitive closure (Need for Cognitive Closure - NFCC). NFCC concept was identified by AW Kruglanski in 1989 and refers to the way in which individuals form their approaches and knowledge of the social environment. In general, people with high levels of NFCC is characterized by preference for structure, predictability, speed decision making, rigidity and low tolerance for ambiguity thinking. NFCC is determined based on five criteria: preference for order preference for predictability, discomfort with ambiguity, limited horizons of thought, judgment. The concept we refer to influences how individuals interpret and respond to the emergence of the economic crisis [10];

- people's confidence in the institutions responsible for economic recovery. The study must cover a comparative analysis between trust in national and European institutions (such as the European Parliament, European Commission, Council of the European Union or the European Central Bank);

- individual perception on the impact the crisis had on its income. [11] This objective should be related to available statistical indicators at national level on income developments, research to eliminate errors due to erroneous perception of respondents in respect of that impact;

- solutions to the crisis that citizens consider as priority issues and actions taken by each individual to face the crisis, in particular the changes in consumer behavior;

- how the economic recovery actions influenced quality of life. It is a subjective approach, in terms of the perception of any changes in his life with government decisions to take measures to combat the economic crisis. This is the main argument of those who recommends addressing the subjective quality of life compared to that objective - it can not conclude that a country has a

level of quality of life raised only to policies of economic recovery have effect at the national level, as long as such measures often involve financial sacrifice of some sectors or certain categories of the population, which affects adversely automatically wellbeing of individuals linked to those sectors or categories of population.

If we refer, for example, initiated and supported by UNICEF study in Romania during 2009-2010, to which we referred above, this study was oriented indicators such as people's confidence in the institutions responsible for recovery economic perception of the individual impact that the economic crisis had on his income and that citizens consider solutions to the crisis priority.

From this point of view, the study findings were: 1) the support provided by institutions, especially government was weak and rather ineffective, leading to mistrust people in these institutions; 2) individuals perception is that with the economic crisis intervened erosion of all types of income, labor income downwards, changing the eligibility criteria, the calculation method, reducing, or even eliminating late payment of social benefits; 3) solutions which citizens as their priority adaptation strategies to the crisis, is to reduce the consumption of food and nonfood goods and the purchase of cheap and second-hand products.

b) Changes to the quality of life dimensions

Quality of Life Assessment Systems is based in most cases on a number of indices compounds. The calculation of these indices involves evaluating various dimensions of quality of life, and then weighting them according to importance attributed by society and every individual, respective sizes.

The economic crisis has brought a number of changes in respect of the share that each dimension has in the global index of quality of life, placing more emphasis on elements that have been affected by economic and financial crisis: employment and unemployment, availability of products and services The purchasing power. The study conducted in Romania in 2009-2010, initiated and supported by UNICEF, for example, prove those shown being focused mainly on the economic crisis in employment.

What is observed is that measuring quality of life is changing according to the needs of individuals and society. Unlike the period before 2008, when they were priority needs higher-order now returns to the base of Maslow's pyramid, taking into account the fact that individuals have decreased to some extent standards for assessing quality of life (in developing countries, to have a decent life is to have a job, housing and money for daily food consumption).

c) changes in methods of analysis

In this regard, we have to do with the fact that there are multivariate analyzes:

- correlating increase household incomes by household type according to detainee income to determine the effect of the crisis on heritage; Heritage is an indicator proposed by Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission to describe more accurately welfare;

- correlation between knowledge of crisis, demographic factors (such as residential areas, home ownership and education) and interest in the political environment. It is assumed that the level of satisfaction with the quality of life in a crisis depends on the awareness of the crisis, the factors that led to her ways out of the crisis and economic recovery actions.

d) changes the sampling

In recent years one of the studies on quality of life concerns relate to identifying population groups that have been affected by economic and financial crisis. Such concern may find relevant and statistically representative answered only if changes are made regarding the size and structure of the sample on which research is carried out:

- sample size. European Quality of Life Surveys have usually national replications between 1000 and 2000 people. Such a sample size permits analysis of intergroup only for those social categories well represented, given that segmentation too deep would create groups of people with under-represented in the sample, such that the data obtained from them not They can be considered representative of the entire community investigated. Increasing the number of respondents would lead to segmentation can sample multiple layers, in which subsequently can be a pertinent analysis of the influence of the crisis on the quality of life;
- structure of the sample. Some socio-demographic categories are not represented enough in quality of life surveys (eg single mothers or immigrants), and others are not represented at all (the homeless). Unfortunately, they are categories among which the financial and economic crisis has left its mark, so that changes to the structure of the sample, coupled with an increase in its size, could provide pertinent information from all relevant socio-demographic categories.

4. Conclusions

Because many of the factors influencing quality of life have both a transnational dimension and a national one in recent years aimed at quality of life studies take into account the influence of the financial crisis over this phenomenon.

The influence of the economic crisis is assessed both through objective approach on quality of life, and the subjective. The dimensions of quality of life are analyzed from the perspective of the evolution of economic indicators during the years of crisis and in terms of perception of quality of life of individuals in the economic crisis.

Changes in the assessment of quality of life are found both in the objectives targeted research (by including new indicators to assess or change the importance given particle size) and the methodology for its (by changing the size and structure of the sample). These changes lead to the design of research as adapted to the new requirements of the market (economic recovery), and individual needs of each person (keeping a balance between the drastic measures to end the crisis and personal welfare).

Most of the changes in the economic crisis have already been implemented successfully in studies on quality of life, but there are some chapters that are still shortcomings persist, such as building a representative sample for research that aims to identify social strata affected most from the crisis. For this situation it is recommended increasing the number of respondents and deepening sampling methods so that research to include representatives from all relevant socio-demographic.

REFERENCES

- [1] Șerbănică, D., Constantinescu, M., Căescu, Ș.C., (2009) „The influence of the Global Economic Crisis on the Strategic Marketing Instruments Used by Companies on the Romanian”, în *Transformations in Business & Economics*, Vol. 8, nr. 3, supplement A, pp. 44-59;
- [2] Rollero, C., Tartaglia, S., (2009), „Preserving life satisfaction during the economic crisis. Which factors can help?”, *Political Psychology*, no. 39, pp.75-87;
- [3] Shapiro, MD, (2010) *The effect of the financial crisis on the welfare of older persons in the United States: Evidence from Cognitive Economics Study*, University of Michigan Retirement Research Center;
- [4] Latif, E., (2010), „Crisis, Unemployment and Psychological Wellbeing in Canada”, în *Journal of Policy Modeling*, Vol. 32, pp. 520-530;
- [5] Aceleanu, M., (2011), „Implication of the Financial Crisis on the Employment Policies in Romania and EU Countries”, publicat în *Journal of International Scientific Publications*, Vol. 5., pp. 4-13;
- [6] Suci, I., (2010), "The economic crisis and stress at work - new challenges in family harmony" ,Conference *Rebuilding the social. New Risks and solidarity*, organized by sociologist Society of Romania 2-4 December 2010, Cluj-Napoca;
- [7] Badea, L., (2011), „Economic crisis and education. Case study: the Romanian educational system”, in *Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy*, Vol. 6, pp.71-84;
- [8] Eurobarometer 72/2009, "Public opinion in the European Union, Romania National Report", European Commission;
- [9] Askatas, N., Zimmermann, K., (2011) *Health and Well-Being in the Crisis*, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn;
- [10] Kossowska, M., Kruglanski, A. W., (2002), „The need for cognitive closure scale: Structure, cross-cultural invariance, and comparison of mean ratings between European American and East Asian Samples”, in *Psychologica Belgica*, nr. 42, pp. 267-286;
- [11] Rova, L., Mano, R., (2009), „The impact of financial crisis on the quality of life ", in *Journal Applied Quantitative Methods*, vol. 4, pp. 514-524;