

~ EDITORIAL ~

PUBLIC OPINION DURING CRISES

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There are many areas of scientific research that can help solve contemporary crises caused by various reasons. Whether we are talking about a security or ecological crisis, sociological research, by surveying populations, helps to develop solutions for a potential resolution of the crisis.

Public opinion polling can be important in economic crises because it can provide valuable information to governments, financial institutions and other important actors about how the crisis is perceived by the public and how it affects people's lives. This information can help to make informed decisions and develop crisis management strategies that take into account the needs and concerns of citizens.

The most handy tool is the questionnaire. We will not go into detail on the scientific aspects of the questionnaire method, choosing only to present the usefulness of such a method.

With the start of the war in Ukraine, I conducted, together with some colleagues, a study (Mărcău et al., 2022c) on the impact of a potentially escalating war on the population of a state in its immediate vicinity. Thus, on the basis of a questionnaire, we demonstrated that the fear generated by the possibility of war spreading to Romania also significantly affects the quality of life of citizens. This study benefited from the WHOQoL-Bref measurement tool which allowed us to determine the quality of life of the participants in order to make comparisons between people who had an increased fear of war compared to those who did not.

Other research based on population surveys was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic (Mărcău et al., 2022a; Mărcău et al., 2022b; Fedele et al., 2021; Hudson et al., 2021), the authors aimed to extract the reasons why people choose to vaccinate/not vaccinate against SARS-CoV-2, thus showing that "fake news" information found in the public space (physical or online) is responsible for influencing people's decisions not to vaccinate (Mărcău et al., 2022a; Mărcău et al., 2022b). This time no official measurement instrument was used, but one made by the authors. The information obtained allowed us to demonstrate that the research participants believe in conspiracy-type information and therefore chose not to inoculate themselves with one of the vaccines approved in Romania. Such studies should have been carried out by the institutions in charge of managing the vaccination campaign against Covid-19.

In addition to the above examples, the questionnaire method can be used successfully in various scientific researches involving the study of the behaviour of groups of people (Peptan and Mărcău,

2021a). Surveying public opinion can show what people's priorities and concerns are during a crisis (Peptan and Peptan, 2021; Mărcău and Peptan, 2021b), such as keeping jobs, ensuring access to health services, satisfaction with government leadership, quality of democracy, etc. On the basis of this information, governments and various institutions can develop support programmes that respond to the real needs of the population and contribute to effective crisis management.

In the case of Romania, such studies are few or, in some areas, lacking. Perhaps a significant increase in the funds allocated to the institutions in charge of scientific research and, especially, for EDUCATION, would solve part of the problem because, at this moment, underfunding is a real problem of our state, and the negative impact will be felt especially in the years to come.

“Man can only become man through education. He is nothing but what education makes him” ~ Immanuel Kant

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