

**THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN FAMILIES WITH DISABLED CHILDREN AT THE
LEVEL OF BIHOR COUNTY – ASPECTS REGARDING THE MATERIAL
SITUATION AND HABITATION**

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Abstract

The development of common approach of the quality of life applicable to social groups and to the total population is extremely important. Such an approach must be multidimensional and it must reflect complex aspects of the human life. The measurement of life conditions (objective evaluation), the subjective evaluations about life and personal values are relevant in this process. Life conditions and satisfaction of life vary according to the individuals in every social group. Considering these reasons, the present work brings forward the results of the evaluation on the perceived quality of life of members of families with disabled children from Bihor County, emphasizing the aspects regarding the material situation and habitation.

Key words: Indicators, quality of life, habitation, family, disabled children

INTRODUCTION

The quality of family life constitutes an important element of life in general (Racoceanu et al, 2009), one of the relevant dimensions in this context, besides the social environment, the quality of work life, the physical environment and so on being the family. The situation of the family, the success or failure of its members, the material state, the state of health and so on are just some of the aspects that can accurately reproduce the daily lives of the families. At European level, the preoccupation for the evaluation of the quality of family life is continuous. The initiation of measures that would contribute to the increase of the quality of life is made through studies realized by institutions with attributions in the field. The year 2001 marks the inclusion of the preoccupations for the quality of life on the agenda of the European Union, this being the year in which the field of quality of life becomes of „official major interest” by launching the research and monitoring program of the quality of life (2001-2004) initiated by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) (Racoceanu et al, 2009, p. 22).

The fields that are subjected to evaluation: health, work place, incomes, education, family, social participation, habitation, environment, transportation,

security, spare time, satisfaction with life. These key fields are viewed both objectively and subjectively. The results of the realized studies contribute to the improvement of the social politics in the field, the objective of the European Union being that of offering people the possibilities to “realize their own goals in the society they live in” (Pop, 2007, p. 166), by stimulating social cohesion and reduction of inequalities between states.

In Romania, the Research Institute for Quality of Life (ICCV) has a special contribution regarding the research of quality of life. The studies regarding the diagnosis of the quality of life realized in the period 1990-2006 brought more information in the field. To these studies are added those made by the National Statistics Institute, which by initiating inquiries regarding life conditions, family budget, contributes to the outlining of an overview regarding the quality of life in Romania (Racoceanu et al, 2009). The research realized so far in our country regarding the quality of life have investigated general aspects concerning the quality of life related to the Romanian population (Quality of Life Diagnosis 2006, coordinator Ioan Mărginean or The First European Study Concerning the Quality of Life – Quality of Life in Bulgaria and Romania, elaborated by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2006), but it has not reached aspects related specifically to the quality of life in the families where there is a disabled person. The researches developed in other countries, that refer to the quality of life in the families where there is a disabled child, on one hand show there are breakdowns in the families in which children have this type of disability, compared to the families where the children are healthy (for example the studies made by Raina in 2005), and on the other hand they show us that there are no differences concerning the quality of life in families with children that have neuro-motor conditions in comparison to families where there are no health problems (for example the study made by Bottos in 2001). Besides, the specialty literature identifies some limits of these researches by the fact that they do not bring information regarding the way problems are perceived by the siblings in families where there is a child with a neuro-motor condition. The results of the researches in other countries cannot be extrapolated to the Romanian population considering that as it results from the report of The First European Study Concerning the Quality of Life – Quality of Life in Bulgaria and Romania, the Romanian citizens have a lower life standard in comparison to the citizens in other more developed countries.

This research will bring more information concerning among the families in which there is a disabled child.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The proper research is based on the studies concerning the quality of life in Romania coordinated by Ioan Mărginean, realized within the framework of the program „ Quality of Life Diagnosis” developed by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life, but also the researches made by other countries, which investigate the quality of life in the general population, in comparison to the quality of life in the families where there is a disabled child. The instrument used for gathering the data is the **questionnaire**. The elaboration of the questions that make up the questionnaire was a complex process. At the base of the questionnaire were the pieces of information obtained in the framework of an initial study, the utilized methods being the semi-structured individual interview and the focus group interview (the participants at the study being parents of children with neuro-motor disabilities from the urban and rural environment – county of Bihor). To the obtained pieces of information were added those resulted from the empiric studies in the field (the scales used in the researches that pointed the quality of life within the family: Diagnosis questionnaire – elaborated by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life; Family Quality of Life Survey (FQOLS) – elaborated by Brown et al; Measuring the impact of positive behavior support – elaborated by Kincaid et al; Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice – elaborated by Dunst et al; European Value Survey (EVS); European Social Survey (ESS); Barometer of Public Opinion (BPO). All of these were necessary because the construction of the questionnaire began with a clear specification of the issue to be researched. The problems which the subjects of the study are facing are complex therefore their breakdown in several dimensions was necessary. The dimensions were transposed in indicators, the latter being rendered as questions which made up the questionnaire (Rotariu and Iluț, 1999). Thus, we find 7 dimensions in the questionnaire with their pertaining indicators: family, habitation, incomes, health, education, intra and extra-familiar relationships, spear timer.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was realized in the period June 2010-January 2011 and pointed to the application of 100 questionnaires to parents of children with neuro-motor disabilities at the level of the county of Bihor.

In the present work we will analyze the aspects related to habitation in correlation with the material situation of the families included in the study, families which have a disabled child as a component.

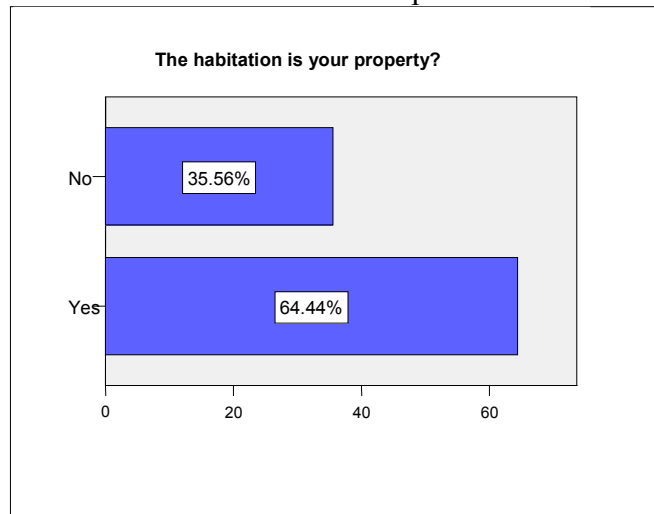


Fig. 1. Habitation property

In 64.4% of the cases the habitation is personal property and in 35, 56% it is not personal property of the respondent.

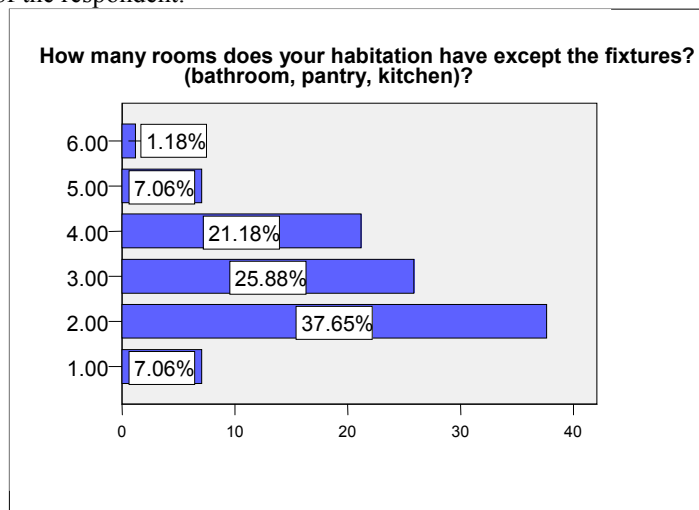


Fig. 2. Habitation structure

The number of rooms existent in the habitation varies from one to six. Thus, most of the respondents have a habitation of 2 rooms - 37, 6%, followed by those who own a habitation with three rooms – 25, 88%. 21, 18% of the respondents own 4 rooms, lower values are registered in the case of those with one, five or six rooms. The long utilization goods that exist in a household indicate the material base of the family.

The respondents were asked is they own certain apparatus /equipments/household appliances.

Table 1. Apparatus /equipments/household appliances

	Yes	No		Yes	No
1. refrigerator (deep freezer)	90.6	8.2	11. personal computer	36.5	61.2
2. gas cooker	87.1	8.2	12. internet connection	25.9	71.8
3. automatic washing machine	72.9	24.7	13. bicycle	41.2	56.5
4. vacuum cleaner	67.1	30.6	14. automobile	35.3	62.4
5. radio	55.3	42.4	15. motorcycle	2.4	95.3
7. television set	92.9	4.7	16. art objects, paintings, sculptures	5.9	91.8
8. telephone	42.4	54.1	17. library with at least 100 volumes	12.9	84.7
9. cellular phone	83.5	14.1	18. a quiet place where the child/children does/ do homework	44.7	45.9
10. DVD player or VCR	43.5	51.8	19. a place set up for the child's recuperative exercises	29.4	65.9

Most of the responders answered positively to the question regarding the existence in their household of a refrigerator, gas cooker, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, radio, television set, and cellular phone. Less than half own a telephone, personal computer, internet connection, bicycle, a quiet place for the child/children to do homework, set up place for the child's recuperative exercises, automobile and library with at least 100 volumes.

Table 2. Habitation facilities

DOT. Your habitation has the following facilities?	Yes	No		Yes	No
Running water	76.5	22.4	Separate kitchen	80	15.3
Hot running water	47.1	51.8	Electricity	96.5	2.4
Bathroom with shower	49.4	49.9	Central heating	37.6	51.8
Indoor toilet	52.9	45.9	Stove heating	63.5	30.6
Bathroom facilities for accessibility	21.2	71.8	Access ramp at the habitation entrance and inside, brackets for assistance	3.5	88.2

The existing facilities in the respondents' habitation assume the coupling to the electricity network, separate kitchen, running water, stove heating, indoor toilet, hot running water, central heating, bathroom facilities for and access ramp at the habitation entrance and inside, brackets for assistance.

Table 3. Income destination

You spend most of your incomes on:	
viands	69%
rent, up keeping	3%
installments, interests and other taxes	13%
household goods	1%
health care (recuperation, treatments and so on)	8%
Total	94%

Table 4. Households' material situation

How do you appreciate your households' material situation?	
The money does not suffice even for the strictly necessary needs.	36%
The money suffices only for the strictly necessary needs.	44%
The money suffices for a decent living, but we cannot afford to buy more expensive goods.	17%
We manage to buy some more expensive goods, but with restrictions in other fields.	2%
We manage to have everything we need without having to restrict from anything.	1%
Total	100%

The distribution of the needs says a lot about the respondents. If a group of people assign very much of their budget for covering their basic needs they have a lower satisfaction with life. In the selected sample, more than half of the incomes are being spent on viands - 69%, followed by installments, interests and other taxes - 13%, health care - 8%, rent and upkeep - 3% and household goods - 1%.

As we expected, most of the respondents are discontented with the financial situation of their family in general, 35,79% are pretty discontented, 33,68% are content and 28,42% are very discontented (one third); we can affirm that most of them are discontented and very discontented with their financial situation (64,21).

Given the enclosed situation, the majority of the respondents affirm that the money suffices only "for the strictly necessary needs" – 44%, and 36% affirm that "the money does not suffice even for the strictly necessary needs". The money is enough for a decent living for 17% of the respondents and only 2% say they manage to buy more expensive things or 1% says that they manage to have everything they need.

There is an association between the gender of the respondent and the satisfaction towards habitation, the value of the significance test is 0,033, in this sense, women tend to be more content with the habitation conditions than men. A possible explanation would be that women spend more time at home in comparison to men and perceive their home as being more important. There is an association between the last graduated school of the respondent and the way he perceives the habitation conditions.

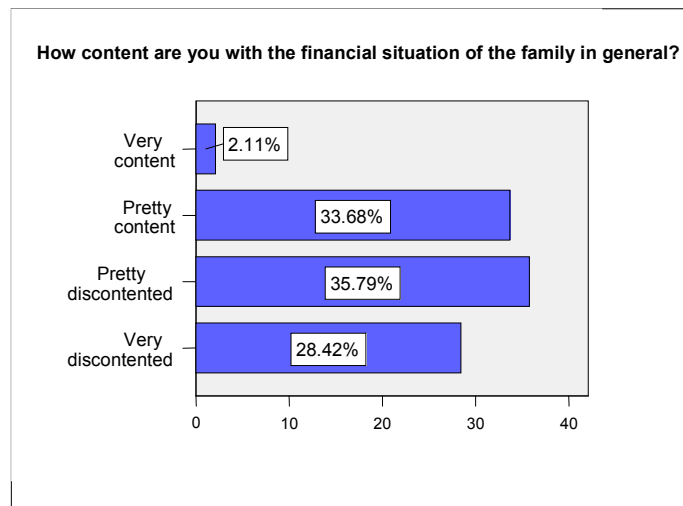


Fig. 3. Financial content

The association test is 0,001, those who have lower educational levels tend to be more content with the habitation conditions compared to those who have reached higher educational levels, and this is explainable because it is known that those who have superior studies tend to have higher reference standards than the other. Even if it would be expected, hypothetically there is no association between the way of possession of the habitation and the appreciation concerning the satisfaction towards it, we expected that those who owned the habitation be more content by the habitation conditions compared to those who do not own a habitation (value of the significance test is 0,732).

CONCLUSIONS

The studies regarding the quality of life need a broader approach oriented both towards the investigation of the objective life conditions and towards the way people perceive and appreciate the conditions they live in. The conclusion that tears off from the results of the study is that life satisfaction and living conditions vary according to the gender of the individuals, the material conditions and level of education. The habitation conditions and the incomes of the families that have a disabled member constitute a problem identified by a great part of the subjects included in the study.

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