

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AREA OF RESIDENCE - URBAN AND RURAL – ON FAMILY LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND FAMILY COOKING IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *This study aimed to analyze the leisure activities of people, to analyze the place and role of families' cooking activity in the urban and rural areas of Romania according to the specificity of families in the urban and rural area of Romania. The research, based on the goal setting theory, was conducted on a sample of 1,067 respondents aged at least 14. The sample was stratified on all sizes characteristic to the area of residence. An important factor which shapes the respondents' options is the residence area that generates some specific patterns.*

Key words: *extended families, family cooking, family leisure, leisure activities, rural and urban area.*

1. Introduction

The topic of this paper focuses on the comparative analysis of leisure activities for families – family cooking - residing in the urban areas and also for families living in the rural areas of Romania.

Referring to the motivation that made us focus on the study of this topic, we will mention first the topicality of this subject, considering the fact that if we make a brief research in the viral environment, we can casually observe available information on how people relate to leisure, how they

spend it, what they are doing or what they would like to do, what budget is allocated for leisure activities, how satisfied they are with the offer of activities in their city / community, and also the way they interact with family members, friends, buddies, colleagues etc., during leisure, what are these interactions concretely, their frequency etc. Nowadays, in Romania, family members tend to spend an increasing amount of time together and are trying to find resources to make this time more pleasant. One of the current forms of leisure time is the preparation of food and

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dining in the family surrounded by friends and loved people.

The current context, one in which care for health and family is more important, determined the development of new ways of leisure, time which becomes more precious. Thus, the main role in family leisure is again held by the woman - mother, wife, girlfriend, the woman who manifests her family's overprotection through the care and attention she gives to finding and preparing the meal. The preparation stage of a meal is based on the selection and procurement of food, with a preference for little processed food, and lack of food additives, derived from organic agriculture, foods that maintain and improve the health of the family. Since ancient times, meal preparation was the manner in which, in general, women manifested their care and love for their families, cooking was a way of expressing feelings. Today, in addition to the past situation, cooking in the family is a way to protect and improve the health of family members, to develop a sense of belonging, to break the communication barriers in its midst and, last but not least, to save time and financial resources.

Given the degree of investigation of the issues addressed, at a first glance, we can appreciate that at an international level, the study of leisure time is a thoroughly debated / analyzed topic, as the numerous conferences on the subject (but also on other specific adjacent topics) amply prove it; the interest in this topic was reflected in the multiple perspectives of analysis, that have been investigated by numerous researchers over time.

Thus, Aslan used a theoretical framework of the family systems to examine the relationship between basic and balanced involvement in family leisure time on the one hand, and satisfaction with family life, on the other hand [2]; the author studied 70 Turkish families,

focusing on parents, youth, and their families, the study started with the importance of leisure time spent together by the family members, which helps supporting the family ties and satisfaction within it. Following the study conducted, the author observed that urban Turkish families with a traditional structure, with strong family ties, the involvement in leisure time explains to some extent the measure of family satisfaction, both in terms of parents and the young. The study results showed that the level of involvement and satisfaction of leisure time by the family is, generally, rather low, and the level of satisfaction regarding the family life is a high one, a conclusion that was determined by their own culture regarding family life [2].

Poff, Zabriskie & Townsend through the study conducted wanted to begin the development / improvement of a comprehensive model that could examine the relationships in terms of family involvement in leisure, family functioning, and communication within the family, family leisure satisfaction, and the satisfaction felt in family life. Research conducted by these authors focused on parents and young people from 898 families and hasn't revealed completely different aspects from other studies initiated by that date, small differences occurred in the parents' vision as compared to that of the young family members, stressing the need to examine the variables found with these families, but within the families, from different perspectives [16].

Zabriskie & McCormick have examined on a group of 179 families, the ratio between the involvement in leisure time by the family on the one hand, and satisfaction of family life, on the other hand; they found that in terms of parental involvement, the implication in family leisure time is the strongest multi-varied predictor of family satisfaction, an

insignificant aspect for the children. On all three levels subjected to research - parents, children, family, a negative character of a multi-varied predictor was determined regarding family satisfaction, namely divorce [28].

Furthermore, Agate, Zabriskie, Agate & Poff examined the relationship between satisfaction regarding the leisure time spent by the family, respectively the satisfaction of family life, conducting research on a group of 898 families from which it resulted that there is a causal link between all the variables of the two elements analyzed; they also observed that with parents, the young, and their family's level, the satisfaction degree regarding the way to actually spend family leisure time is correlated with family life satisfaction [1].

Hebblethwaite & Norris, starting from the model of ambivalence between generations, tried, through their glossarial study, to understand the role of intergenerational ambivalence regarding their experience of spending leisure time with grandparents and grandchildren; interviewing 14 pairs of grandparents and adult grandchildren, the authors revealed the role that intergenerational ambivalence plays in spending leisure time within families, suggesting, therefore, that this ambivalence model is useful in the study of leisure time spending across different generations [8].

From the research undertaken by Sirakoulis & Deffner it was revealed that, despite appearances, Americans enjoy more hours a day for leisure, 45 more minutes a day as compared to 40 years ago; also from their research we can see that interviewees consider that they still seem to have less leisure time, this given that, on average 2.5 hours per day are allocated to watching various TV programs, preferring to spend leisure time and less to participate in the activities of a

literary club, play beach volleyball or invite family members or friends over, the statistics showing that only 38% of Americans spend quality time with family or friends at least once a year [20].

White has, as starting point, the idea according to which the economic recession that marks the last years will affect the entire world including leisure time, and given these conditions people will no longer be willing to spend too much. The author considers that the economical organization of life and the budget from this period of economic crisis will affect both the way and the resources that people assign to leisure, purchasing less expensive products for such activities, one of the solutions found in this regard being the improvement of the relationships with family and friends, which allows longer stays at home and therefore spending less money [23].

In Romania the studies that relate primarily to the use of time have been performed since 1990 in various university research centers, also concerned with this issue, and researchers from the Institute for the Quality of Life.

As a result, the analysis of time use must be regarded as a necessity especially since the need for research in this field comes to cover a relatively small area in the specialty literature in Romania.

The Time Use Survey (TUS) registers to the general coordinates of a large program, started in 1990 by the Statistics Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT). The Time Use Survey (TUS) in Romania provides the information necessary to consider ways of using time by the population aged 10 and over, for carrying out different activities: personal care, economic activity (primary and secondary) education and training, care activities and family management, caring relationships, cultural activities - recreation and sports, social relations, and association activities,

etc. The information collected allowed for the measuring of the time used for different activities as well as a gender and age group comparative analysis according to residence areas, socioeconomic status, education level and marital status. However, one can measure the specific pace of working days per week, and that of weekends (Saturday and Sunday). The survey results can be used to substantiate flexible working programs, improved transport of programs, coherent policies on the use of time in cultural activities and leisure. The resulting data are internationally comparable, the survey organized in Romania being harmonized with similar surveys within the European Union countries in terms of the method of organization on the field and data collection, of the concepts, definitions and classifications used, as well as the survey plan [18].

Based on these considerations, the paper requires an interdisciplinary study to provide much more insight expanded on what leisure means for a family in Romania (whether we relate to an urban and / or rural environment).

2. Research

Scope: Establishing the importance of cooking for people living in urban and rural areas of Romania.

Objective: The analysis of the place and role of the cooking activity within families from urban and rural areas of Romania according to the specificity of the respective family.

2.1. Theoretical Approach

Abraham Maslow's approach to human motivation was, since the twentieth century until today, an important reference point for understanding attitudes, behaviour and human actions. The most representative

works of psychologist Abraham Maslow are: *Motivation and Personality* (1954), *Toward a Psychology of Being* [1968](1999).

In the theory of the hierarchy of needs, Maslow considers that there is a hierarchy of human needs which are grouped into five categories: the first level - physiological needs, the second level - safety needs, the third level - needs for belonging and love, the fourth level - needs of esteem and the fifth level which includes the needs of self-realization. [3]

2.2. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The area of residence influences the frequency of family cooking.

Hypothesis 2: If people live with the extended family, then the opportunity to dine within the household increases.

2.3. Research Area and Sampling

The area of research on which the results will be generalized is the population of Romania. The analysis or the research unit is performed on the people who have reached the age of 16, and the sampling unit is represented by the household from which the respondents / subjects are selected.

2.4. Choosing the Research Methodology

The research is fundamental as it is goal oriented, it is explanatory given that it is based on set objectives, quantitative based on methodology, basic according to a composite criterion.

The research is accomplished through the sociological questionnaire survey, the interview technique. The instrument used will be the structured questionnaire, and the application process for gathering data is achieved through the interviewers. If

several authors are part of the same organization, then its name may be written once and the authors will be marked with the same figure.

2.5. Sampling and Determining the Sample

Because it is desired to extend the research results to the investigated area, the probabilistic/random sampling which is proportionally stratified was chosen.

This method increases the representativeness by lowering the probable sampling error as the respondents will be selected from homogeneous layers. Therefore uniformity is ensured by population stratification after the specificity of the area of residence (urban high, medium, small, rural high, small), and the heterogeneity between Euro-regions that include counties with similar characteristics will emerge. To ensure sample heterogeneity according to age, the person in the household to celebrate their birthday first will be chosen.

The sampling frame that allows the selection of this type of sampling is represented by the report from the National Institute of Statistics on the structure of the population of Romania on Euro-regions according to the following grouping: The North-East Development Region (Moldavia), The South-East Development Region (Dobrogea), The South Development Region (Muntenia), The South-West Development Region (Oltenia), The West Development Region (Banat), The North - West Development Region (Crişana), The Center Development Region (Transylvania), The Bucureşti and Ilfov Development Region.

The sample size of 1067 is calculated for a $P=95\%$, a E^2 = the admissible maximum error $\pm 3\%$, and a $p = 50\%$.

3. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

3.1. Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: The area of residence influences the frequency of family cooking.

The application of the Chi Square test indicates a value equal to 513.10 for 6 degrees of liberty and $p=0.00$, which means that there is an association between the residential area and the frequency of family cooking. The analysis of the values that the Adjusted Residual records, reflects that rural people cook “often,” “very often” or “always” as compared to people living in urban areas where cooking is done „rarely” or „very rarely”.

The leisure activities that are common in urban areas are: reading; socialization that is rather done "very often"; outdoor walking, practicing sports, weekend breaks, holidays / vacations, cultural activities, personal care activities, practicing a hobby, going shopping.

In rural areas, the leisure activities that are encountered to a significantly greater extent under Adjusted Residual include: cooking, painting, watching TV, housekeeping and participation in religious activities.

3.2. Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: If people live with the extended family, then the opportunity to dine within the members of the household increases.

Following the statistical processing, the value of $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = 407.690$ for 4 degrees of freedom and a level of significance of $p=0.00$. The value of χ^2_{critical} for 4 degrees of freedom = 9.49. We can observe that $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$ is higher than χ^2_{critical} . Therefore hypothesis H_0 is rejected and the H_1 hypothesis is accepted. The hypothesis is confirmed, so we can say

there is an association between the habit to eat at home and the fact that respondents live only with their own family or the extended family.

To identify the specifics of the families where home meals are served, the Gamma coefficient was calculated between the variable that measures the frequency with which they cook in the family that measures how often meals are served at home.

The value of the Gamma coefficient is 0.64, indicating a strong relationship between variables. The positive value indicates a directly proportional relationship between variables. Therefore the more often they cook in the family the more they have dinners at home.

4. Conclusions

Research regarding the activity of cooking in Romania revealed that in rural areas, the hierarchy of needs reaches the top three corresponding levels of Abraham Maslow's theory of needs. Physiological needs (first level), safety needs (second level), needs for belonging and love (third level) are priorities for rural families. The characteristic of rural families to be extended (a new family lives with parents / in-laws depending on the degree of kinship of the member from the new couple) reflects the need for belonging and love as a priority need. Compared to rural areas it is found that in urban areas the needs according to Maslow's theory reach a very high degree of levels III and IV, levels which correspond to the need for esteem or self-realization. The analysis and interpretation of data confirmed our hypothesis showing that residential areas influence the choice of objectives that people had established early in life is connected to what they are going to do throughout life.

It is noticed that the specific Romanian

rural family is the extended type because of the limited financial possibilities; the type of leisure activities is different than those in urban areas. If in urban areas reading, long walks, practicing sports, traveling on weekends, holidays, cultural activities and personal care, entertaining a hobby and going shopping holds high positions, in rural areas the activities which do not require financial resources and specific requirements for leisure activities prevail. In this regard we have identified that rural people perform leisure activities, such as cooking, watching TV, housekeeping, and largely, participation in religious activities.

To identify the specificity of the families where meals are served with the family we built the hypothesis that verifies the presence or absence of the association between the characteristics of living in an extended family and the frequency of eating in the household. After processing, the hypothesis was confirmed.

An important leisure activity for families in Romania is the preparation activities and / or having dinner, this being one of the preferred means of socialization. From the statistical analysis we can notice that there is a directly proportional relationship between the habit of cooking and serving dinner in the family. For people living in urban areas there is a decreased tendency to dine at home than with people living in rural areas for whom the habit of dining at home is widely spread.

The data show that urban people want to achieve higher positions: the need for self-esteem and self-realization, which also provide financial comfort. The preference for tourism activities and dining outside the home increases in direct proportion to the level of achieved needs and financial capital holding.

From the perspective of psychosociology, home cooking and family dining meet the needs of belonging and

love, namely the third level of needs according to Maslow's theory. Cooking and dining at home represents an opportunity to save money and increase the quality of life through this practice. This research has opened new horizons of research to analyze the types of foods and dishes which are preferred by urban and rural residents, from the perspective of nutrition and health sociology.

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