

ROMANIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMIGRATION

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Abstract

The present paper analyzes the Romanians attitude towards emigration and Romanian emigrants. The sample consists of 1376 participants, and the variables taken into consideration are: gender, age, level of education and area of residence. The instrument built and used is the scale of attitudes towards emigration. First of all, the paper identifies the hierarchy of 10 components of the attitude towards emigration, in the perception of respondents. The second step of this study was to group the attitude towards emigration in: positive and negative. Interesting differences appear in attitudes according to the demographic variables.

Keywords: emigration, Romanians, positive and negative attitudes, the scale of attitudes towards emigration

Theoretical aspects

The present paper is focused on Romanians attitude towards emigration. The emigration and its mechanisms represent a theme of high topic, in national or international context. Today, it seems that emigration to Romanians is more than a life strategy. Being motivated mostly by a better living than the one from home, the Romanians build strategies for them and their family.

Migration can be defined as a geographical mobility of people moving from one territory to another, from one country to another, alone, in groups or in mass, leaving the residence temporarily or permanently. From the perspective of departure – destination relationship, we can speak of these two

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types of migration:

Emigration – is characteristic to those people who leave their homeland to settle in another country. This name is given from the population's perspective that they belonged to until the migration. Emigration means "exit", to leave a population, therefore it expresses the act of leaving a country, definitively or temporarily.

Immigration – is characteristic to those people who left their home temporarily or permanently, in order to settle in a foreign country. This name is given from the perspective of people who received them.

Currently, there are more papers on attitudes towards immigration than on attitudes towards emigration (e.g. Sandu, 2000; Dustmann & Preston, 2001; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001; Kessler, 2001; Mayda, 2004). These studies are focused mostly on the effects of immigration upon the economy of the host country. We identified the need for approaching a topic of real interest to social psychology and cross-cultural psychology.

Objective

The goal was to structure the respondents' attitudes towards emigration, meaning by that identifying the hierarchy of attitude's components towards emigration and presenting the differences in attitudes according to demographic variables.

Method

The main method used in this research is the questionnaire-based survey and the instrument built and used is the scale of attitudes towards emigration (Timofti, 2010).

Participants

The sample consists of 1376 participants, and the variables I took into consideration are: gender, age, level of education and area of residence. Table no. 1 shows all details regarding the research sample.

Table 1. The research sample

Sample		25-35 years		36-45 years		over 46 years	
		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
High school	<i>Urban</i>	66	54	57	67	67	66
	<i>Rural</i>	76	57	66	60	68	51
University	<i>U</i>	62	78	61	67	37	52
	<i>R</i>	27	33	18	40	15	15
Post-graduate	<i>U</i>	12	32	18	26	9	7
	<i>R</i>	2	6	2	1	1	0

Procedure

This research was conducted in Romania (in several localities in the counties of Bacău, Neamț, and Dolj) during the first months of 2010. Participants were asked to go over the statements of the scale of attitudes towards emigration and to check one value from 1 (total disagreement) to 6 (total agreement). The anonymity was kept in the idea of facilitating their sincerity.

The scale was built after pre-testing the opinion of a group of experts regarding emigration and Romanian emigrants. This way, I identified the following bipolar categories of attitudes, which define the structure of the respondents' attitude towards emigration, in this specific research:

1. Self-realization
2. Social recognition
3. Activation of existence
4. Financial status
5. Psychological state
6. Belonging
7. Adaptation
8. Courage
9. Freedom
10. Work

The final scale has 20 statements, and includes 10 positive and 10 negative items. Of course, it was mandatory to recode the negative statements at the entry in the SPSS database (Albu, 2000).

Results

Initially, I calculated the means for each element from the 10 components of the attitude towards emigration and I introduced these values in the database, in order to see which of them occupy the first places, in the respondents' opinion. On the means values basis, I made a hierarchy of the 10 categories from attitude's structure.

Table 2. Hierarchy of categories from the attitudes towards emigration

Self-realization	Social recognition	Activation of existence	Financial status	Psychological state	Belonging	Adaptation	Courage	Freedom	Work
3.62	4.34	3.44	3.45	3.20	3.39	3.49	3.84	2.78	3.81
7	10	4	5	2	3	6	9	1	8

Table no. 2 illustrates these values. In order to make easier the identification of the most important categories for the participants, these values have been transposed in a new table (see table 3).

Table 3. The hierarchy of attitude's components towards emigration

Crt.	<i>Attitude's category</i>	Mean
1	Freedom	2,78
2	Psychological state	3,20
3	Belonging	3,39
4	Activation of existence	3,44
5	Financial status	3,45
6	Adaptation	3,49
7	Self realization	3,62
8	Work	3,81
9	Courage	3,84
10	Social recognition	4,34

It seems that freedom, psychological state, belonging, existence's activation and financial status are most valuable to participants in their attitude towards emigration. Therefore, respondents consider that Romanians who emigrate are really free people but at the same time they are forced to obey the new social rules, even if they don't approve them. In other words, they have

admiration for the courage and determination of Romanians that chose as solution leaving the country of origin. They also believe that emigrants feel better in the new country but they eventually will feel estranged. Even if emigration involves sacrifices, the final result is worthy, believe the respondents. As for belonging, it seems that Romanians think that our emigrants grow easily roots in the new society, even if they have a strong feeling of uprooting. The participants think that emigration covers the need for adventure and for enriching the life experience of persons that chose to leave, even if it is really hard for them in the new country, which is so different from Romanian life style. Also, respondents believe that Romanian emigrants make huge efforts for financial earnings in the new country and many of them follow rapid material gains. We can find in Romanians perception the idea that individuals who emigrate are motivated by immediate material gains, and this perception changes for those who chose to leave as well.

The second step of this study was to group the attitudes towards emigration in: positive and negative. At this point, we were interested to know if there are differences in attitudes between women and men, young and mature people, respondents with high school, undergraduate or master's degree, in urban or rural people. Thus, if we consider the criterion of gender, it seems that women have a positive view of migration as compared to men, who tend to have a negative attitude. Explanation would be that women think of all needs for family members, wishing to make sure of their wellbeing especially of their children' optimal educational conditions (Bayart, 2005; Berry, 2008). Concerning the criterion of age, young people have a clear positive attitude towards emigration, while people over 46 years are quite reluctant to leave the country of origin. It is absolutely natural to be this way, since young people want a better life and they have more chances of success in other socio-cultural spaces, having the age advantage. Also, people with high school seem unwilling to embrace the idea of emigration, while those with graduate education have an open attitude in this regard. Studies give a person an asset in addition and usually those who chose another destination are persons interested in development and professional capitalization. Respondents in urban areas have a positive attitude towards emigration, while those in rural areas have a restrained position. The reason may be similar to that previously exposed: persons that are residents in the urban environment are more interested in professional evolution than those from the rural environment. In addition,

respondents from the urban environment have access to different information and documentation, they socialize more and have the possibility to change opinions with those who have settled abroad. This way, they make comparisons between their situation and the emigrants' situation regarding work and salary conditions, the security and the inner balance offered by respecting the laws, lack of corruption, or civic spirit of the society who adopts them. The frequency table helps to identify easier the participants answers according to demographic variables (see table 4).

Table 4. Positive or negative attitudes according to demographic variables

Attitudes	gender		age			studies			residence	
	masc.	fem.	25-35	36-45	over 46	high school	univ.	master	urban	rural
	Group Attitude Emigration									
	count	count	count	count	count	count	count	count	count	count
neg. attitude	315	316	212	215	204	366	220	45	367	264
pos. attitude	290	346	250	236	150	320	253	63	410	226

Conclusions

The present study proves that respondents are aware of the sacrifices made by Romanian emigrants and at the same time they are capable to identify the motives for which Romanians do emigrate. The motivations for leaving are related to a better life and a more inclusive society as well. Existence in nowadays Romania may be quite challenging, and not in a good positive way. Romanians have escaped former communism, therefore we can not speak about political reasons for leaving the country of origin. Current times are really hard challenged, this is why people are determined to choose the path of migration or retraining. If a society does not really provide support, then the only "saving solution" comes from individuals. An informed man is a man capable of making choice for himself. Unfortunately, this struggle of each individual entails negative feedback among the group or the society: even in Romania we can observe an extreme individualism, this being a general problem in the workplace or, worse, inside family. Also, the host societies promote anti-immigrant slogans, and this limits the employment opportunities of those who

emigrate (Algini & Lugones, 1999). We are seeing manifestations of xenophobia in societies, which we consider extremely civilized and advanced, and these impulses are politically founded for years. Many emigrants are forced by circumstances to opt for working positions that are well below their level of training. For this reason, the trend of the labor market is geared towards creating an “ethnic underclass” of emigrants - as employees, unemployed or self-employees.

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