

The Ability of Romanian Citizens of Roma Ethnicity to Delay Gratification

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Abstract- Within a program for integration and non-discrimination, social inclusion and poverty reduction whose main purpose is to increase the quality of life, we have carried out a study in order to find out if the Roma people face discrimination in relation to employment and if they have the ability to delay gratification. For this purpose, we used a social group discrimination questionnaire, applied online, to which 150 Romanian citizens of different ethnic groups replied, and a group interview applied on a sample of 20 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity, who live in a marginalized community in the municipality of Codlea, Braşov county, considered a Disadvantaged Mountain Area. The conclusions of the study show that Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity do not face discrimination in relation to employment and that they do not have the ability to delay gratification.

Keywords – delay gratification, Roma, employment discrimination

I. INTRODUCTION

The Roma people, also known as Gypsies, are a population at high risk of poverty and social exclusion. Prejudices and discriminatory practices dominate the contacts between Roma and Romanians in everyday life.

The characteristic of social exclusion in the Roma population was the existence of some sources of exclusion which do not exist for the rest of the population. The vulnerability of the Roma population on the labor market, poor education and even social self-exclusion cause many Roma to remain captive in a restricted social environment: family and community (Moldoveanu R., p.26).

Thus, the basic needs of Maslow's pyramid such as food, water, hygiene, and the safety needs related to home and family security (Rita L. Atkinson et al., 2002., p. 639) are difficult to reach in the poorest communities, areas disadvantaged due to the natural conditions specific to Romania. Unfortunately, even without these disadvantaged areas, Romania is still ranked among the last places in terms of economic well-being.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Within a Human Capital Operational Program – Labour, Assumption, Legality for Integration and Non-Discrimination (MALIN) – of social inclusion and poverty reduction, whose main purpose is to increase the quality of life for citizens living in the marginalized community in the municipality of Codlea, Braşov county, it has been found that the Roma do not apply for a job, generally preferring an easier way to earn money. This happens either because they do not have school, they are not qualified or, they say, they face discrimination in relation to employment.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As a result of an analysis undertaken within the program for integration and non-discrimination, we found that the Roma who studied up to the 10th or even 12th grade, who could have benefited from the training organized by this project for which they would have received a higher qualification and more money, signed up for shorter courses, less money and a lower qualification. We asked ourselves the following questions: why don't the Roma want more money and a higher qualification, which in time could bring them other benefits such as: being promoted at work, a cleaner and better paid job, the security of having a life with fewer worries? Are the Roma discriminated against during employment?

IV. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the study was to find out if the Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity face discrimination in relation to employment and if they have the ability to delay gratification.

V. METHOD

An online questionnaire was applied,

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_mDmM0CSKTB0oVfiJp4r8CS0tyg8r7F9yKBzPDv9meA/edit#responses

and a group interview.

VI. FINDINGS

To the questionnaire applied online, 150 people over 18 years answered. The answers were confidential and anonymous, and the information was entered in the database using a code, not using names. The question was a direct one: You can hire someone at the company you work for. Among the people participating in the job interview there is a Roma person. This person is doing better than all the other participants. What are you doing? Are you hiring this person?

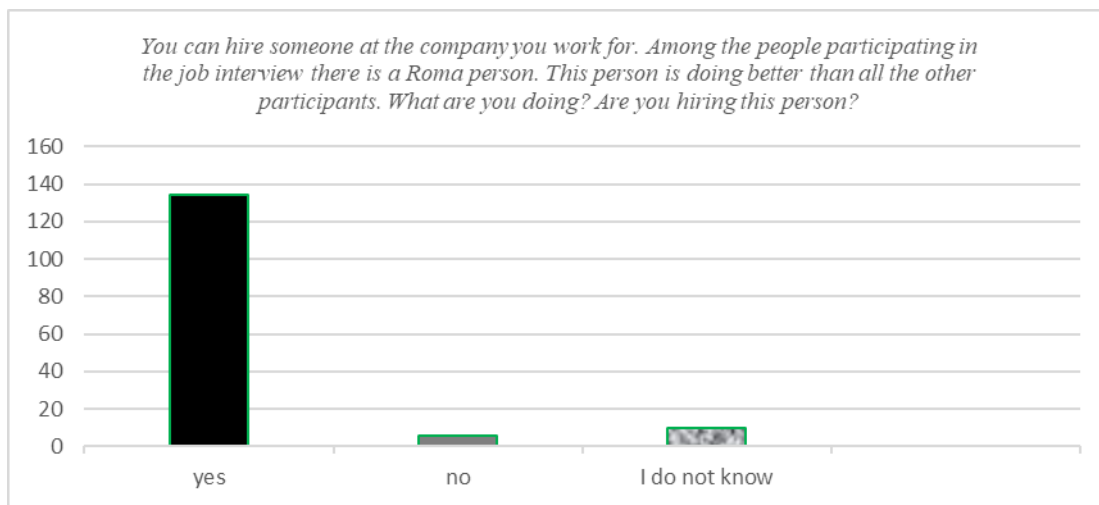


Figure 1. You can hire someone at the company you work for. Among the people participating in the job interview there is a Roma person. This person is doing better than all the other participants. What are you doing? Are you hiring this person?

Figure 1. shows that, out of a total of 150 respondents, 134 people responded with YES, meaning that 89.3% will hire that person, 6 people said NO, i.e. 4.0% will not employ that person, and 10 people gave the answer 'I don't know', respectively 6.7%.

There was an optional question where respondents were asked to motivate their answer.

Thus, 84 respondents had different motivations. Those who would hire the Roma gave the following explanations: the fact that only professionalism and skills matter, and ethnicity and / or colour have nothing to do with the capabilities and qualities of a human being; competent people deserve a chance; ethnicity is not related to a job; the employees' skills and competences are those that offer benefits to the company I run, their ethnicity does not reveal their professionalism and devotion; regardless of ethnicity, all people have equal rights; we should not judge people by ethnicity; I hire people according to their skills, because I am correct; I am not racist; ethnicity does not matter, we are all people and we have the same rights; we are all equal and deserve a chance to integrate; because they are people first of all.

Those who would not hire the Roma gave the following answers: 'I think the Gypsies are sub-people; in general, the Roma people do not behave in an appropriate way, having a tendency to use bad language with staff and to steal; I do not like Gypsies because they smell bad and steal'.

Of the six respondents who answered *No* to this question, one respondent is of Hungarian nationality, while the others are of Romanian nationality.

What those who *do not know if they would hire a person of Roma ethnicity* say, 'We work with generally large and somewhat demanding clients, and if hiring such a person would affect my company's image, I do not think I would take this step'; 'I wrote "I do not know", because it is possible to be surprised by the interviewee so much that I

would omit the aspects written before'; 'It also depends on this person's past. If he is a respectable person, arranged and honest then "Yes"; 'In general, the Roma people do not behave properly, having a tendency to talk inappropriately to staff and steal'; 'I would call this person to take a practical test to see him/her in several contexts, not just during the interview'.

The respondents belong to the following ethnic groups:



Figure 2. Ethnicity of the respondents

Figure 2 presents the ethnic groups of the respondents to our online questionnaire: 92.7% of the respondents are Romanian, namely 139 respondents; 4.7% are Hungarian, namely 7 respondents; 1.3% are German, meaning two respondents; 0.7% – Moldovan, i.e. one respondent and one respondent is half Roma and half Romanian, i.e. 0.7%.

The population sample is random because the questionnaire was applied online.

The Roma or Gypsies are one of the largest minority ethnic groups in Romania, after the Hungarians. According to a recent census, 16.79 million ethnic Romanians (88.9%) live in Romania and 1.22 million Hungarians (6.5%) and 621,600 Roma or Gypsies (3.3%) form the principal minorities in Romania; about one third of the Roma population is represented by children between 0 and 14 years old.

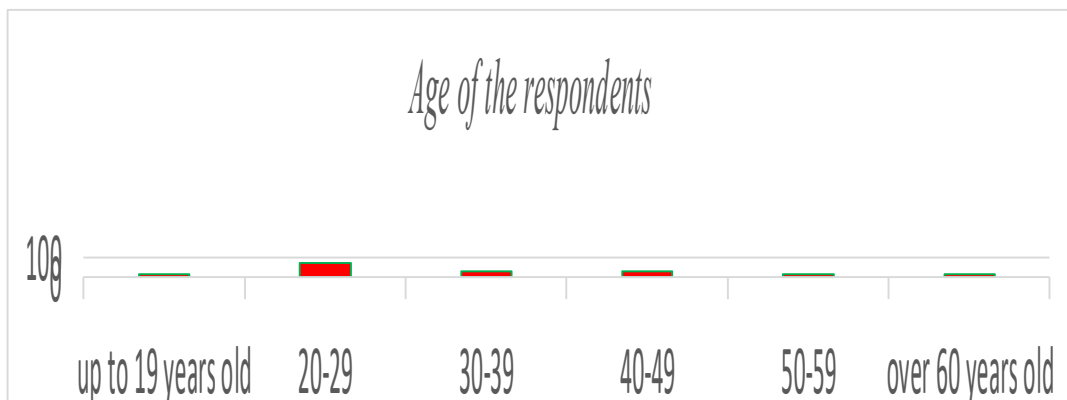


Figure 3. Age of respondents

Figure 3 shows that the majority of the respondents are young. 108 respondents are up to 39 years old, representing 72%, and 42 respondents are over 40 years old, representing 28%.

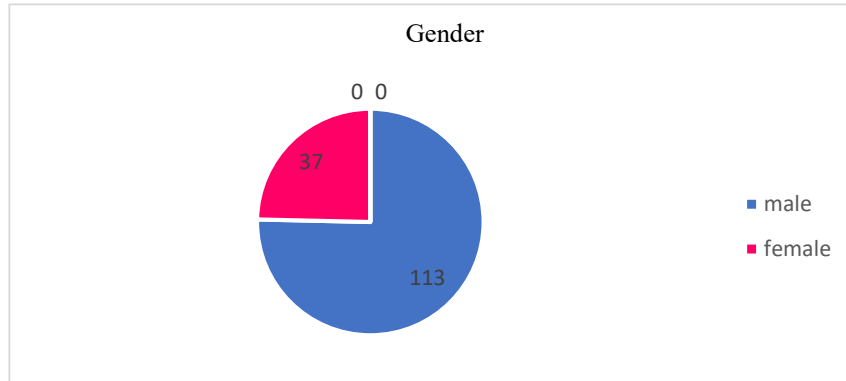


Figure 4. gender of the respondents

Figure 4 shows that the majority of the respondents are of female gender, respectively 113 people, representing 75.3% of the respondents, and 37 persons are male, representing 24.7%.

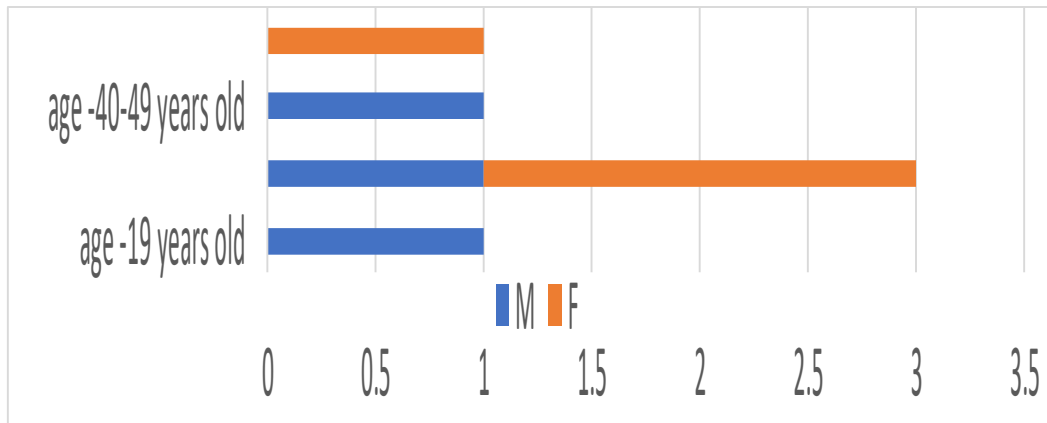


Figure 5. The respondents who replied with 'I would not employ a Roma person'

Figure 5 represents the graph of the 6 respondents who replied with 'I would not employ a Roma person'. 3 of these are female, 3 are male, 2 people are up to 29 years old, one person is up to 19 years old, and 2 people are up to 59 years old.

Therefore, the study conducted on the Romanian citizens of 92.7% Romanians, 4.7% Hungarians, 1.4% Germans, 0.7% Moldovans and 0.7% Roma has the result that 89.3% people would employ the Roma; hence, they do not face discrimination in relation to employment.

Previous studies published in *Disabled People and Jobs* in 2003 (Berthoud, R., 2003) identify a significant impact of ethnicity on the employment opportunities of people with disabilities, and a report by the Romanian Academic Society shows that 13.4% of the respondents of Romanian ethnicity and 14% of the respondents of other than Romanian or Roma ethnicity have a job, while only 2.7% of the respondents who declare themselves Roma have a

job. Some respondents stated that ethnic discrimination prevented them from getting a job rather than the discrimination based on disability.

Our study contradicts previous studies (Berthoud, R., 2003; Gábor, F. at all, 2009) showing that, in Romania, in Codlea, the Roma do not face discrimination in relation to employment.

To answer the first question, ‘why don’t the Roma want more money and a higher qualification, which in time could bring them other benefits such as: being promoted at work, a cleaner and better paid job, the security of having a life with fewer worries?’, a question regarding the ability to delay gratification, 4 group interviews were conducted. Each interview was attended by 5 people, 5 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity. We chose this method to collect data in a social context and to use the dynamics of the group to construct the answers, thus trying to respect a social reality.

We wanted to find out the reasons why the 20 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity applied for a short-term training program – 3 months, lower qualification and little money, and not for a longer training period – 6 months, higher qualification and more money (double). The first training, the short one, was supposed to start in a few days, while the second one, the longer one, started in 3 months’ time.

4 group interviews were organized, with the participation of 5 Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity, of which 15 were female and 5 were male.

gender / age	
male	female
5 respondents /19-21 years old	15 respondents /19-22 years old
	Total 20

Table 1. centralize the distributions of the Roma participants according to gender / age / education.

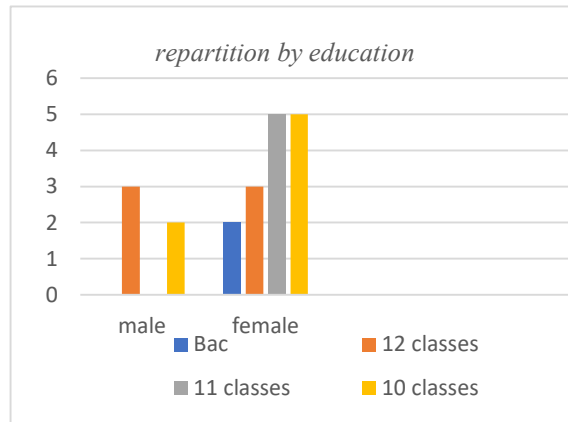


Figure 6.

Table 1, and figures 6 centralize the distributions of the Roma participants according to gender / age / education.

The responses of the male participants were as follows: ‘I have no time’; ‘We need money now’; ‘Now we are in the country’.

The female participants said that they did not think that the long-term courses would take place, or that they did not trust that they would receive the money, and the vast majority of them said that they did not have the time to wait and they urgently needed money. A 19-year-old respondent, who passed the Baccalaureate exam and who could have benefited from a long-term training, said, ‘I am getting married and I want to finish my courses faster, in order to live with my beloved man’. It seems that some aspects of access to education are differentiated by gender, the Roma girls being given servile family roles, including the pressure not to continue their education.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study lead us to the idea that this ability to delay gratification that the American psychologist Walter Mischel, in his book *Marshmallow Test* (Walter M. 2017), describes as a predictor for much better jobs, much higher salaries, a more balanced social and family life is absent in the 20 young Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity.

Delayed gratification, the characteristic most closely related to success in life (Kaku M. p.253), is not an ability of the people who have not met the needs that are at the base of the pyramid and the safety needs; thus, they cannot invest time and energy in courses that will be rewarded over time. The participants to this study needed to survive 'now'. Most of them wanted to sign up for the course that started immediately and that was the shortest in order to get some money quickly.

The Roma in Romania do not face discrimination in relation to employment, but, unfortunately, such characteristics as the ability to delay gratification and access to education are transmitted from one generation to another, because family offers models of adaptation and motivation in social coexistence and material insurance. Resilience in social interactions and even the risk of having problems can be passed down from one generation to another (Walter. M., p. 102).

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