

TIME ALLOCATION DIFFERENCES AMONG HUMAN GENERATIONS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: Daily time is limited to 24 hours, but the quality of life depends by the individual time allocation structure and also by the social values and norms, traditions and the economic development of the country. For the individuals, the structure of time is different across particular stage of the life cycle. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the essential differences between the patterns of time allocation of Romanian population in some stages of the life cycles, especially in the early childhood education, higher education, and labor market entry.

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Introduction

The mechanisms of evolution of a population over time are related to the socio-economic events that are showing the transition from an individual's life stage to another. Life cycle approach is not a new one. In its original formulation, this approach was based on the traditional family model because the concept launch coincided with a historical period that was characterized by an apparent homogeneity and stability of the general behavior of households in different stages of training and development. In most traditional societies precise patterns generally recognized age categories, indicating the place and role that the individual should have in the community.

The gender is also one of the factors determining the structure of the time budget, with major differences between the ways in which people of different genders use their available time. My concern is, however, finding the answer to the question of why gender differences exist? We are interested in whether the use of time provides information on gender inequality and how these inequalities are reflected in the development of the individual. Life cycle concept has continuously developed, its evolution being determined, in particular, by the increased marriage instability and by the growing importance granted the unconventional families. Currently there are no rigid boundaries between age groups; those that still stand out, are partially generated by the biological and normative benchmarks.

Life path - A time use approach

It can be assumed that the age is a primary factor affecting employment potential of the individuals in general, but also involves a distinctive perception of values and time. Obviously the age plays an important role in regard to the use of time, which is highlighted by the structure of daily activities and time allocated to them. In this sense, the life path (Figure 1) provides an overview of specific activities carried at different stages of life. This, basically representing a way to show that time is a component of social construction

and its use depends on the timing profile of the major events in life (childhood, adolescence, work, retirement).

Data on time use, classified by age groups, provides an overview of the daily main concerns of the population. As to delineate a pattern of use of time, we take as benchmark a single individual, whom we will follow through the evolution from a life course perspective.

10 - 14 years old

Considering a 10 years old student in his first level of education, he spends most his time with study activities, whether these activities are performed in an institutional environment (formal education), or occur in other training environments (non-formal and informal education). At the age of 14, in addition to education, he has to allocate time for household activities, thus having less free time available. Moreover, free time activities are being amended at this stage, the game being replaced by sport activities, entertainment or voluntary duties.

15 - 24 years old

The age of 15 is becoming a referential one, by providing the individual with the possibility to legally enter the labor market. This is time when an individual can significantly change the allocation of his/her time, by actually increasing the proportion of working time. Although, from that age, time allocated to study begins to decrease, on average it should be noted that up to the age 24, a part of the population still remains registered in the national education system. As a rule, beyond this age, an individual completes his studies, this phase explaining a sharp decrease for future study activities. Further on, if we analyze separately the budget of time allocated to middle school and college students, as stated by the data sorted by employment status, it should be observed that for this category the population, the education has an important place among daily activities (Figure 2).

25 - 44 years old

It is the most active period of life. The daily activity structure as it relates to the budget of time is very different from all other stages of life. It is time when individuals are establishing their own families and have their own children. The people part of this category certainly work more and rest less. The time allocated for work, whether salaried or simply household work records its maximum. Leisure time decreases, and the time allocated to continuing education and further studies is almost inexistent.

Returning to Figure 1, in the households of our country, women are still the ones who perform the most household activities regardless of their age. They allocate an average a volume for a two-fold activities of the household duties (5.0 hours / day) than male (2.4 hours / day). Note that men use on average 7.5 hours per day for paid work activities, with almost two hours more than their partners for life (5.6 hours / day).

There are gender differences even grater, if we would only refer to the employees between 25 and 44 of age: employed women work one hour less than men in the same category, but the time allotted to them for household work is more than double (Figure 3). Women's work in the household is performed at the expense of their spare time. Hence, the conclusion is: while in Romania there is a clear discrimination between sexes, data on use of time reflects differences between women and men, mainly regarding the relationship between time used for paid and unpaid work. These differences reflect the status of women in the family, closely related to her position in society.

45 - 64 years old

For the people in this age group it is observed a significant decrease of time spent of their economic activities on the labor market (e.g. men's paid work time is reduced on average by half compared to previous age group). However, should also be noted that the age group to which we refer includes people with a higher exposure to risks of exit from the labor market. One of the biggest risks is, for example, unemployment. After completion of the period in which they receive unemployment compensation, many of these individuals which are closely approaching the retirement age (64 years old) are choosing to work on their own, most often performing agricultural activities. These being the reasons, it is interesting to examine -that the 45-64 age group - which is the ratio between working time paid and unpaid work time for both women and men in relation to labor market participation. Figure 4 illustrates another aspect: among the professional categories analyzed, the unemployed male allocate for employment (whether paid or not) the least time (5 hours / day).

Over 65 years old

This is another milestone in the life of individuals. After the age of 64, most busy people retire, and the structure of the budget of time changes. There is a growing trend of time spent resting, but free time. Specific to the age category above

mentioned it is that at this age the gender differences are mitigated in relationship to the use of time. This is because older people have common activity interests like: religious beliefs, civic activities, political views, help offered to other households, etc.

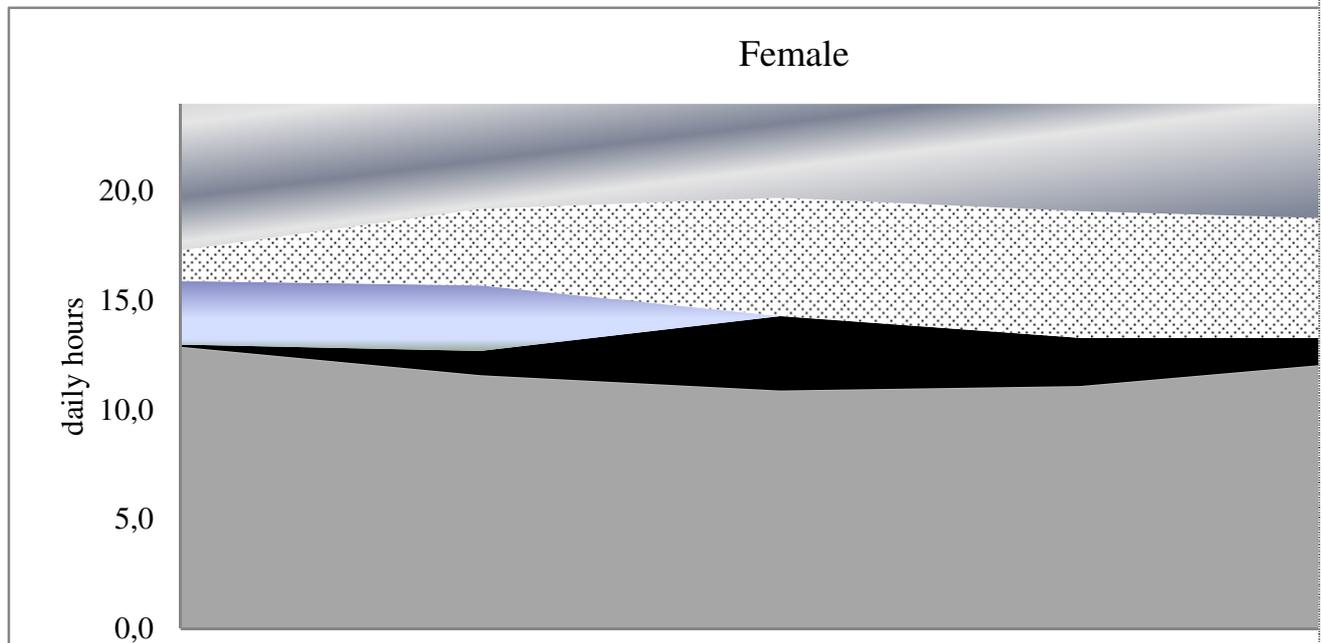
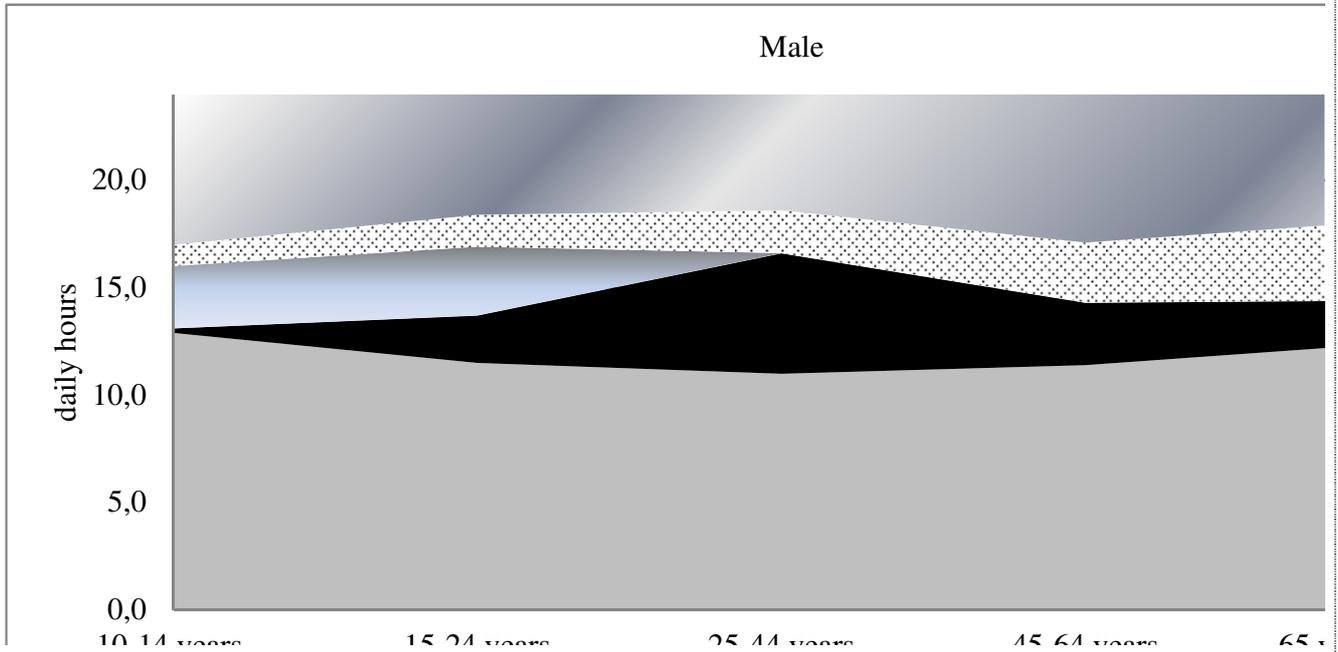
Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that life stages primary affect the employment potential of the individual. Obviously the age plays an important role in the use of time, which is highlighted by the structure of daily activities and time allocated to them. Highlighting the differences by age groups, the types of time allocation are observed at several different levels: first, analyzing the importance of time in daily averages for economic resources; second, analyzing the main activities performed daily by men and women; Third, identifying some groups by their demographic variables, which reflect similar behavior in the allocation of time.

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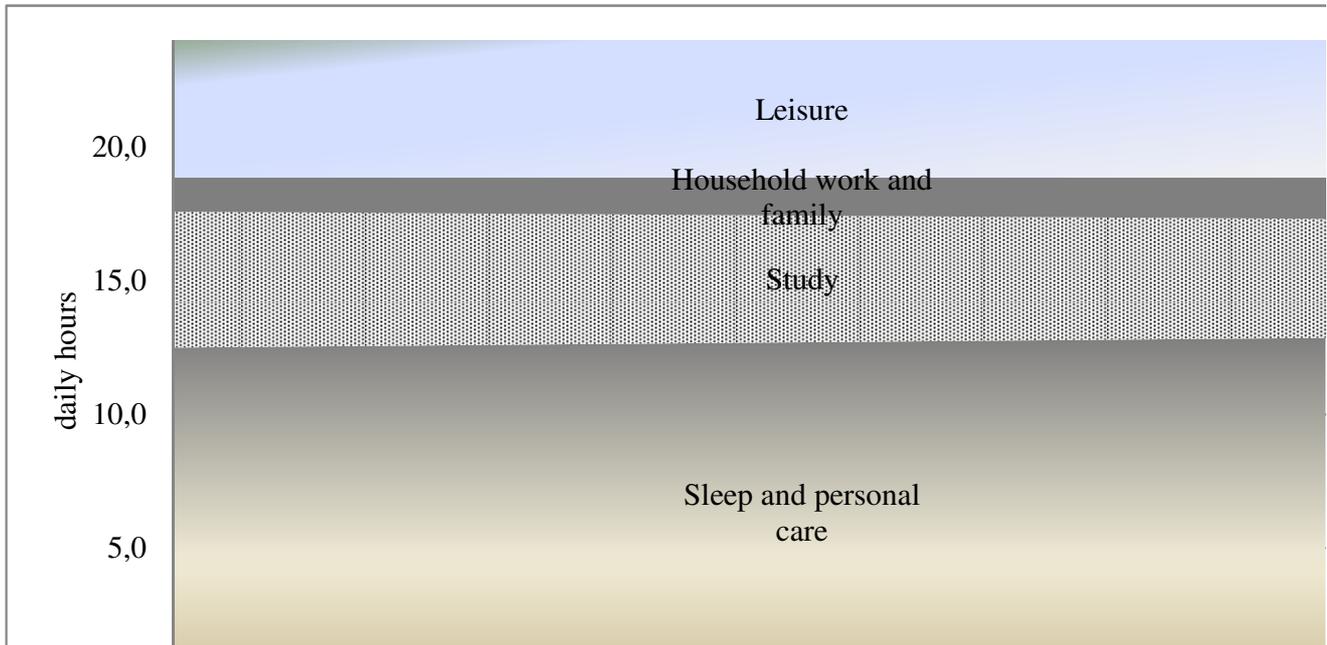
CHART 1. TIME USE AND THE LIFE PATH



Source: Time Use Survey, National Institute of Statistics, 2000.

Note: Time for paid work refers to labour work; for employers aged 15-64 years old - paid work includes time for transport to/from working place.

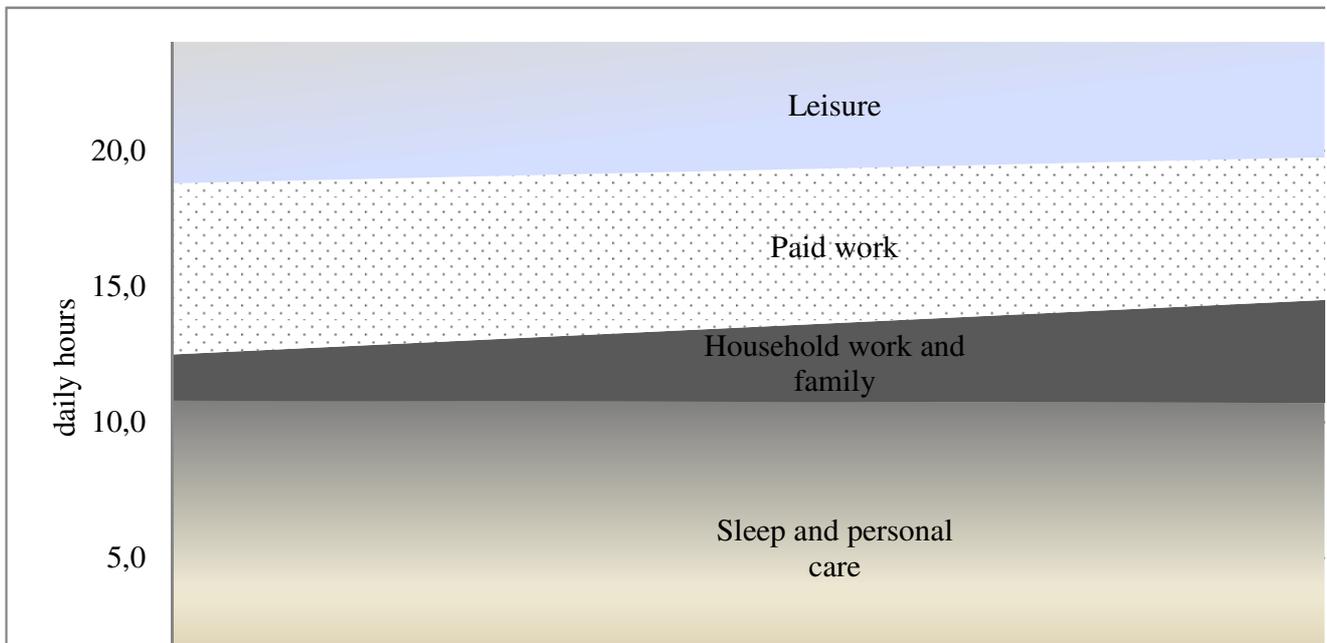
CHART 2. THE TIME BUDGET OF STUDENTS (UNDER 25 YEARS)



Source: Time Use Survey, National Institute of Statistics

Note: Time allotted for study and education includes time for transport to/from school.

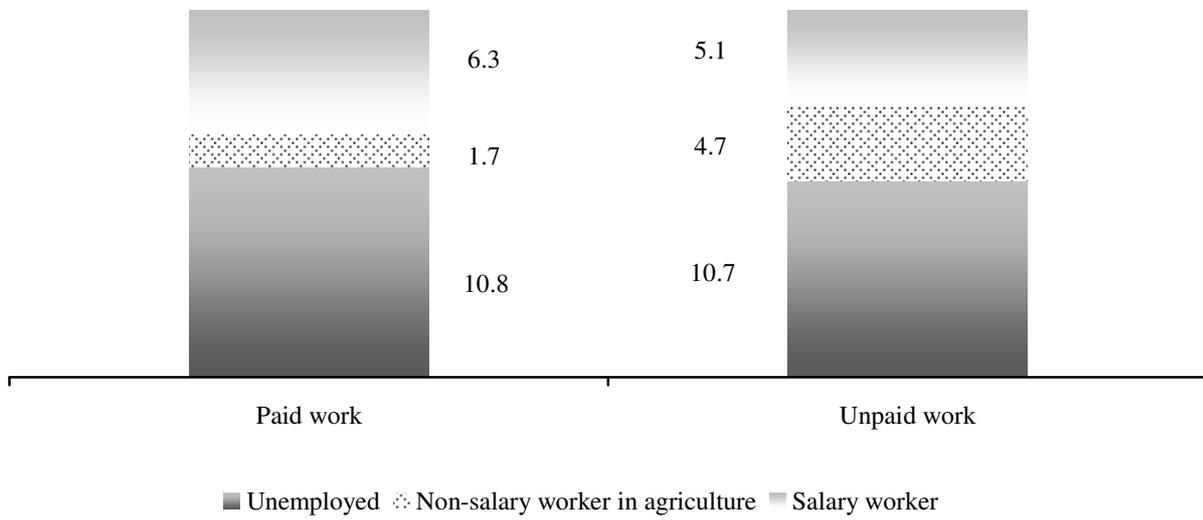
CHART 3. THE TIME BUDGET OF WORKERS



Source: Time Use Survey, National Institute of Statistics, 2000.

Note: Time allotted paid work includes time for transport to/from working place.

CHART 4. THE BALANCE BETWEEN PAID AND WORK, BY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS (IN HOURS)



Source: Time Use Survey, National Institute of Statistics, 2000.