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# PLANNING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR TIMISOARA GROWTH POLE

Case studies

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## Keywords

Quality of Life  
Economic Development  
Quality Function Deployment Method

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## JEL Classification

I31, O10

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to show that planning the quality of life at local level through economic development can be a new approach for policy makers and community in improving quality of life.*

*In this purpose, the Quality Function Deployment (QFD) model will be use to planning the quality of life and to identify the main directions of economic development to support improving the quality of life at the level of Timisoara Growth Pole from Romania. The dimensions of quality of life are analyzed starting from the point of view of inhabitants.*

*The results include a new approach in which the dimensions of quality of life are the key element that orients economic development in order to improve the quality of life of human being.*

*The case study results refer to the main elements of quality of life at Timisoara Growth Pole and the relevant directions of economic development to improve the quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole.*

## 1. Introduction

The field of quality of life is a field of interest for specialists and for the factors of political decision, its importance resides from the importance that is granted to the human factor in a society. The concept of quality of human life was not truly named until the '60, although many studies and researches in the field have been issued during the time. Presently, the researches regarding the quality of life represent a field of activity reuniting specialists from the sphere of social sciences.

The explanation consists both of the practical political interest of this theme and in the ontological status of the quality of life and of the corresponding concept within the social reality and its sciences. The sense of the entire social activity, of the society itself, is to ensure the existence of people. As a last finality of the functioning of the social organism, the quality of life occupies a privileged position within the society. From here, it results the synthetic character of the quality of life; to it and with it are convergent all the aspects of the social system. From this point of view, it may be asserted: the quality of life represents the mirror in which the entire social and economic system, being a purpose of the economic development. A problem in defining the quality of life is its multidimensionality. It varies depending on the time and circumstances, it is subjective and objective, qualitative and quantitative, direct and indirect.

When there are conceived economic development strategies by the decisional factors, the quality of life should be found among priorities, as a developed society is characterized by a high quality of life. It means that, at the macro level, it has available positive structural conditions, providing the individual with opportunities for personal development and on the other hand, at individual level, people may reach a high level of subjective welfare, with other words they are feeling pleased and satisfied.

The analysis of the quality of life in relationship with the economic development is important for monitoring the evolution in time of the main social and economic phenomena characterizing a society in its aggregate. The globalization trends and the current acute financial and economic crisis start up questions about the models of human development and quality of life and, therefore, about the connections between the social and economic priorities.

As it was underlined within these recent analyses, at European and international level, there are trends in using natural resources, in the development of technologies, in the demographic perspective of societies, in the distribution of income and fortune, which requires a social and ecologic transition. This transition shall imply major tensions between the different models of capitalism, between social

groups, between political priorities. The tensions shall also arise between different economic interests competing for increasing businesses, between different types of consumption behaviors, between short and long term political views, between traditional and modern values. Rethinking of the models of economic development and growth that should settle out the problems due to the financial and economic crisis appears as a requirement.

In Romania, the transition process meant an important modification of the people's life conditions. Once with the adhesion of Romania to the European Union, in the current economic and political national and international context, the increase of the quality of life of Romanian represents a first order objective. This vital objective of growth of the quality of life in Romania may be achieved only by the improvement of the quality of life at the level of each local community, through a strategic planning of the quality of life at the level of that community. This paper, as case study, presents the planning of the quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole from Romania.

## 2. Methodology

Planning the quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole uses the model of planning the quality of life at the level of a local community by economic development and starts from the premise that the purpose of the economic development is the quality of life.

The fundamental premises of the model of planning the quality of life are the following: - quality of life can be planned only for a well defined geographically area, a local community; - planning the quality of life starts from the level of each person and local community; - planning the quality of life is made taking into account all the dimensions characteristic for the quality of life.

As methodology, planning the quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole is based on the Quality Function Deployment (QFD) Method, (Falni et al., (2011)) with accent on the evaluation of quality of life from the perspective of inhabitants and from the perspective of public institutions/private entities within Timisoara Growth Pole aiming the short-term planning of the quality of life at the level of Timisoara Growth Pole.

The case study, by choosing Timisoara Growth Pole as local geographical area, started from the fact that a growth pole can represent the administrative-territorial structure to facilitate the economic development by the focus of resources for the improvement of the quality of life. Timisoara Growth Pole is considered as the second center of economic dynamics at national level, after Bucharest.

Quality Function Deployment Method adapted for the planning of the quality of life at community level by economic development presents four “houses”, and namely: (i) “*House of quality of life*” connects the dimensions of the quality of life established by the inhabitants of the local community analyzed by the economic objectives of community development; (ii) “*House of economic objectives for development*” connects these economic objectives for community development to the categories of institutions that can achieve the established objectives; (iii) “*House of institutions which implement the established objectives*” connects the categories of institutions that can achieve the objectives established by the available finance sources for the achievement of the economic objectives for community development; (iv) “*House of institutions funding sources*” connects the available funding sources for the achievement of the economic objectives for community development to the financing institutions.

For the case study we chose to present only the main important house of Quality Function Deployment method, and namely: House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole (Popa, 2012). This house is the basis for the construction of the whole planning of the quality of life at local community level and of defining the other three houses of the Quality Function Deployment method. Figure 1 shows the House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole.

The House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole contains four main components:

1. *Dimensions of the quality of life*. These are: 1. Material living conditions; 2. Health; 3. Education; 4. Personal activities including work; 5. Political voice and governance; 6. Social connections and relationships; 7. Environment (present and future conditions); 8. Insecurity (economic and physical nature).

2. *Economic objectives for Timisoara Growth Pole*. These economic objectives are extracted from Pole Strategy for the period 2010-2015 and refer to: 1. Creating an attractive business environment, stable and innovative; 2. Development tertiary sector; 3. Development of industries that use high technology, informatics and telecommunications; 4. Interconnection territorial and increased accessibility pole; 5. Modernization and expansion of technical infrastructure and energy; 6. Ensure rapid and efficient flow of information; 7. Development of educational performance; 8. Introduction Timisoara City in European cultural circuit; 9. Improved performance of health services and social assistance; 10. Development of urban areas unitary, coherent and modern; 11. Ensuring environmental quality to EU standards; 12. Develop opportunities for leisure and recreation.

3. *The importance attached to the quality of life dimensions*. For this part are considered relevant following categories: 1. Residents Timisoara Growth Pole; 2. Important public institutions in the Timisoara Growth Pole; 3. Major private entity in the Timisoara Growth Pole; 4. Association for Quality of Life, based in Timisoara and dealing with research and projects on quality of life, both locally and nationally and internationally. To establish the importance attached to the quality of life the data was collected on the basis of the applied questionnaire.

4. *Correlation matrix* is crucially important in generating results influence the quality of life. Correlation matrix analysis is the most complex and at the same time, planning key quality of life in the local community through economic development.

If planning for quality of life at local community through economic development, the correlation matrix shows the relationship between each dimension of quality of life and economic development each objective, establishing if there is a weak relationship, moderate relationship, a strong relationship or no relationship.

Correlation matrix was made based on the following types of documents:

- Reports on the assessment of quality of life in Europe (European Quality of Life Survey, prepared by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions - Eurofound); ([www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu))

- Reports on national assessment of quality of life (reports made by the Quality of Life Research Institute based in Bucharest); (Mrginean & Precupeu, 2008; Mrginean et al., 2006; Mrginean & Blaa, 2005; Mrginean, 2004; Mrginean & Socol (coord.), 1991; [www.iccv.ro](http://www.iccv.ro))

- Integrated Development Plan of Timisoara Growth Pole, for the period 2010-2015; (Jivan & Popa, 2013; Integrated Development Plan of Timisoara Growth Pole)

- Reports on the economic development of the European Union, Romania and Timis County; (Popa & Jivan, 2014; Popa, 2012; Zamfir, 2002; *Strategia de Dezvoltare Economico-Social a judeului Timi*).

- Information report on the results of the project “The role of social dialogue in the development of active social inclusion” project coordinated by the Resource Center for Ethical and solidarity initiatives in Timisoara. The project included a step of involving citizens in expressing welfare criteria for the City. (Ve an et al., 2013).

After recording the dimensions of quality of life, economic development objectives and the importance given by Timisoara Growth Pole residents, public institutions, private entities and the Association for Quality of Life in the house of

the quality of life was made matrix of correlations between quality of life dimensions and directions economic development and the final results were determined.

To made the House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole and to obtain the results was being used the software provided by QFD Online Free. [www.QFDonline.com](http://www.QFDonline.com)

### 3. Results

Based on the information entered into the House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole and calculations yielded the following results:

*I. Position of the dimensions of the quality of life:* position 1: Health; Education; Social environment (life family and social relationships); Natural environment (environment – present and future conditions); position 2: Occupation (personal activities including work); Security (economic and physical); position 3: Material conditions (income, consumption, wealth); position 4: Political environment (personal political option, governing).

*II. Position of the economic development direction with the greatest impact over the improvements of the quality of life at the level of Timisoara Growth Pole:* 1. Creation of an attractive, stable and innovative business environment; 2. Development of industrial sectors which use high technology, of informatics and telecommunications; 3. Territorial interconnection and growth of pole accessibility; 4. Diversification of the leisure and recreation possibilities; 5. Development of tertiary sector; 6. Development of performance educational system; 7. Ensuring the quality of environment at UE standards; 8. Ensuring the fast and efficient circulation of information; 9. Modernization and extension of technical utility energy infrastructure; 10. Increase of the performances of health and social welfare services; 11. Introducing Timisoara in the European cultural circuit; 12. Development of unitary, coherent and modern urban area.

In the Timisoara Growth Pole based on the House of quality of life results, it appears that the most important dimensions of quality of life relating to health, education, social environment, natural environment, followed by employment and security, and material conditions, and the final political environment. For planning sustainable quality of life in the Timisoara Growth Pole would have indicated that certain dimensions of quality of life to be repositioned. For example, the political dimension is currently in last place. To ensure quality of life and long term should be given greater importance of the political environment that effectively decides the directions of development and social priorities. If not given a higher political environment can not truly achieve sustainable development Timisoara Growth Pole and cannot provide the quality of life in the medium and long term.

Regarding economic development directions at Timisoara Growth Pole the most important directions of development to improve the quality of life refers to the area's economic development, recreation, natural environment, education, infrastructure and health final. To achieve a better quality of life in the Timisoara Growth Pole would be necessary to have several lines of development centered health (prevention and rehabilitation). Health is the basis for ensuring the quality of life in the medium and long term.

Also, at the level of Timisoara Growth Pole should be reconsidered the share of development directions. It is observed that the share of direct thematic directions of economic development is predominant. For sustainable economic development of Timisoara Growth Pole with direct impact in improving the quality of life is necessary to have a balanced share of the directions of development in the three main areas: economic, social and environment. Only taken together can achieve sustainable development and a better quality of life in the short, medium and long term.

### 4. Conclusion

The proposed economic development directions and policies with impact on the quality of life at the level of Timisoara Growth Pole contain the following aspects:

- creation of some public-public partnerships between various public institutions from community and public-private partnerships between various public institutions and private institutions (companies, NGOs etc.) from community for the achievement of investment projects with major impact in community by accessing the European funds, with the aid of specialists in the field;
- creation of a favorable context for the conclusion of public-private partnerships between various local actors for the achievement of projects for the settlement of punctual important problems from own funds;
- a better strategic correlation between the objectives of the local development strategy with the objectives of the development strategy established at European level;
- a greater involvement of the companies in projects of social responsibility in community;
- achievement of social economic projects sustained by community on problems defined as important by local community;
- creation of projects of increasing the capacity of various local institutions in the implementation of the projects with European funds;
- improvement of the business environment by increasing the access of SMEs to financing, simplification of administrative procedures, diminishing the fiscal burden, development of the advice and mentoring activities for accessing

various financial instruments by SMEs, stimulation of innovation and investment support in research-development;

- creation of guides of good practice on the dimensions of the quality of life (health, education, occupation, material conditions, social environment, natural environment, political environment) regarding the better use of the resources and capabilities existing at local community level for a real improvement of the quality of life;

- defining and creating economic and non-economic goods and services to have a major influence in the improvement of the quality of life;

- introducing the indicators of evaluation of the quality of life in the main reports of the decision makers;

- promotion and explanation of the concept of quality of life among many categories of institutions, professional groups and persons of local communities.

At the level of Timisoara Growth Pole, but also at the level of other local communities the general model of planning the quality of life by economic development may be applied and using the Quality function deployment method in order to achieve an improvement of the quality of life, because a developed community is characterized by a high quality of life.

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Figure 1 – House of quality of life for Timisoara Growth Pole

