

ERD 2020**Education, Reflection, Development, Eighth Edition****THE ROMANIAN MATERIALISM-POSTMATERIALISM RATIO -
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Grama Iuliu Sever (a)*, Chiş Vasile (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Tudor Vladimirescu street, no 2, Tg. Mureş, Romania, severgrama@yahoo.com

(b) Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Sindicatelor street, no 7, Cluj-Napoca, vasile.chis@ubbcluj

Abstract

The study is an analysis in a comparative evolution on the importance that Romanian population, respectively the generations in its composition, attribute to some item/values that must be given priority in our country in the next 10 years, such as: Maintaining order in the country and Fighting rising prices, both associated with materialism dimension, respectively Giving people more say in important government decisions and Protecting freedom of speech, both associated with postmaterialism dimension. In order to ensure the uniformity of the comparative analytical approaches, for the analysis of general trends, indicators that have been used were taken from waves of the international data base World Values Survey (WVS 1998, WVS 2005 and WVS 2012) and a wave of the international data base European Values Survey (EVS 1999), on triple generations with the age of under 29 years old, 30-49 years old, respectively over 50 years old. For the intergenerational and intragenerational analyzes, indicators that have been evaluated were taken from two waves of the international database World Values Survey (WVS 2005 and WVS 2012), on triple generations with the age of under 29 years old, 30-49 years old, respectively over 50 years old. The result of the statistic process reveals tendencies both in the sense of increasing - the postmaterialism dimension and decreasing - the materialism dimension, being observable, especially among younger generations, a tendency towards a more postmaterialistic profile.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by EuropeanPublisher.

Keywords: Materialism, postmaterialism, intergenerational replacement

1. Introduction

The theory of value change holds that the existence of a sufficient level of economic and physical security, experienced for a period of at least 15 years at the level of a society, determines a gradual value translation from the satisfaction of some material objectives / goals to some related to self-expression, freedom, quality of life, categorized as postmaterialist (Inglehart & Abramson, 1995; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

Establishing the trends of manifestation of the relationship materialism - postmaterialism at the level of a society or of the generations from its composition, can be achieved through the identification / establishment of the major objectives of the population, choosing between materialistic priorities, such as: maintaining order in the country and fighting rising prices, respectively postmaterialist priorities, such as: giving people more say in important government decisions and protecting freedom of speech (Inglehart, 2008).

The choice of options maintaining order in the country and fighting rising prices, denotes a materialistic value orientation, the emphasis being on ensuring physical and material security, while choosing items giving people more say in important government decisions and protecting freedom of speech denotes a postmaterialist value orientation (Inglehart, 1971; Inglehart & Norris, 2011).

To this end, the World Values Survey and European Values Survey (abbreviated throughout the paper as WVS and WVS) public opinion research programs have included a number of items designed to indicate the predominant individual values between those related to physical and material security called materialist and those related to expression and self-expression, also called postmaterialist.

2. Problem Statement

In order to identify whether the Romanian cultural profile could change over the next years, it is important to analyze if the materialism-postmaterialism ratio is stable in time or under the natural intergenerational replacement there can be observe an increasing or decreasing trend.

3. Research Questions

The main research questions of our study regarding the evolution of materialism-postmaterialism ratio are:

Is the Romanian materialism-postmaterialism ratio stable in time? And if not, in what direction is it moving?

Are there intergenerational differences? And if so, in what directions?

Are there intragenerational differences? And if so, in what directions?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to analyze from a quantitative perspective the dynamics of the Romanian materialism-postmaterialism ratio and to observe whether significant changes have occurred in the past 15 years, based on a comparative intergenerational and intragenerational analyze.

5. Research Methods

The present study is a meta-analysis in comparative progression on the importance that the Romanian population, respectively the generations in its composition, attribute to some items / values that must be given priority in our country in the next 10 years, such as: Maintaining order in the country, Fighting rising prices, Giving people more say in important government decisions, namely protecting freedom of speech.

The hypothesis of the comparative approach is that the younger generations in Romania share to a greater extent value orientations associated with the postmaterialist dimension (Associated items: Giving people more say in important government decisions and Protecting freedom of speech) and in to a lesser extent value orientations associated with the materialist dimension (Associated items: Maintaining order in the country and Fighting rising prices), compared to older generations.

In the situation of identifying such an intergenerational trend, it is relevant to observe the extent to which these differences are maintained over time (through the analysis of global trends and intragenerational trends) and thus can be classified as **generational effects**, which in the long run can lead to changes of value orientations at the global level of society.

On the other hand, if we are in the situation of **life cycles**, characterized by the migration of young generations to materialistic values with the aging process, or the **effects of the period**, which induce temporary changes in the value orientations of all generations on the background of the socio-economic volatility of society, then we are talking about a relatively constant maintenance of long-term value orientations at the global level of society.

In this regard, for each of the four Items associated with the relationship materialism - postmaterialism (Inglehart, 1971), three distinct types of analysis were carried out, on the following coordinates:

- longitudinal analysis in order to identify the global trend - at the level of the entire population - of manifestation in the period 1998 - 2012 of the two mentioned dimensions (materialism and postmaterialism), based on World Values Survey - (WVS 1998, WVS 2005 and WVS 2012) and European Values Survey - (EVS 1999);

- longitudinal intragenerational analysis - in order to identify the changing trends of the two mentioned dimensions (materialism and postmaterialism) for each of the generations under 29 years, 30-49 years, and over 50 years, based on World Values Survey data (WVS 2005 and WVS 2012);

- cross intergenerational analysis (two time points of comparison represented by the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012), in order to comparatively observe the generations under 29 years, 30 - 49 years, respectively over 50 years.

In order to ensure the uniformity of the comparative analytical approaches, for the analysis of global trends, indicators measured / evaluated through four waves of international databases were taken into account, as follows: WVS 1998, WVS 2005, WVS2012, respectively EVS 1999.

For the intergenerational and intragenerational analyzes, indicators measured / evaluated through two waves of the international database World Values Survey (WVS 2005 and WVS 2012), were taken into account, by triples generation under 29 years, 30-49 years, respectively over 50 years.

6. Findings

6.1. Materialism dimension

The global evolution of the materialism dimension, highlights a trend of moderate decrease in the period 1998 - 1999, a relative accentuation until the level of 2005, subsequently manifesting an accentuated decrease until the level of 2012. Thus, in global terms limited to the period 1998 - 2012, the dimension of materialism shows a decreasing trend (Figure 01).

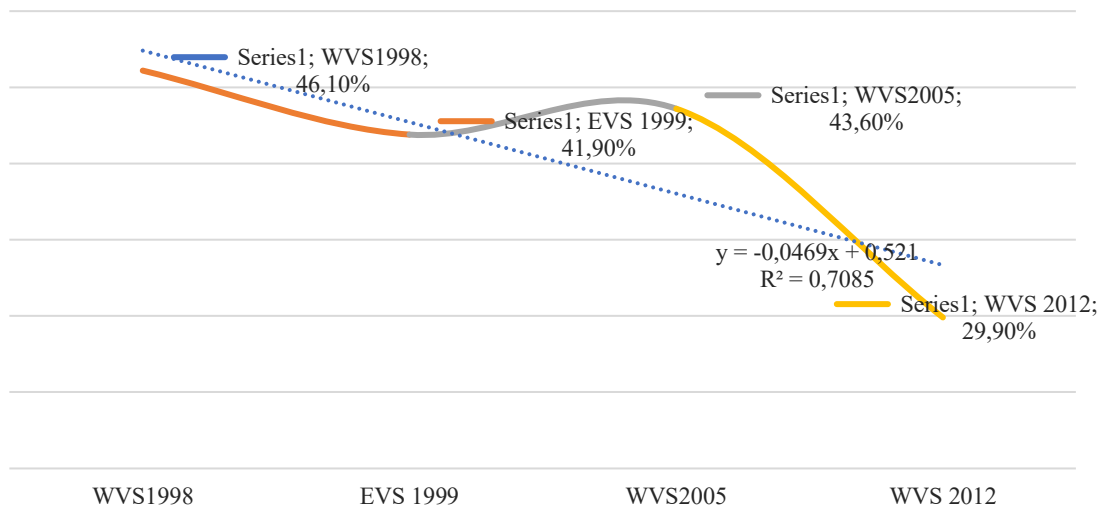


Figure 1. The evolution of the materialism dimension, between 1998 and 2012, in global terms

The intragenerational analysis, related to the generations under 29 years, 30 - 49 years and over 50 years, based on the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012, reveals the following manifestation of the analyzed dimension (Table 01):

At the level of the generation under 29, the difference in absolute terms between the WVS 2005 and WVS 2012 waves is 13.30 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (10.23 to 16.31), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

At the level of the generation 30 - 49 years, the difference in absolute terms between the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012 is 14.6 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (11.32 to 17.81), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$.

At the level of the generation over 50 years, the difference in absolute terms between the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012 is 11.7 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (8.33 to 15.02), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

Table 1. The evolution of the materialism dimension, split into the level of the three generations, between 2005 and 2012

Waves World Values Survey	Generations		
	Under 29 years	30 – 49 years	Over 50 years
2005	34.90%	43.30%	47.00%
2012	21.60%	28.70%	35.30%
Difference 2005 - 2012¹	13.30	14.60	11.70
Significance level (p)	p<0.0001	p<0.0001	p<0.0001

Summarizing it can be stated that the intragenerational analysis reveals that the materialism dimension experienced, between 2005 and 2012, a statistically significant decrease in all three generations analyzed (Figure 02).

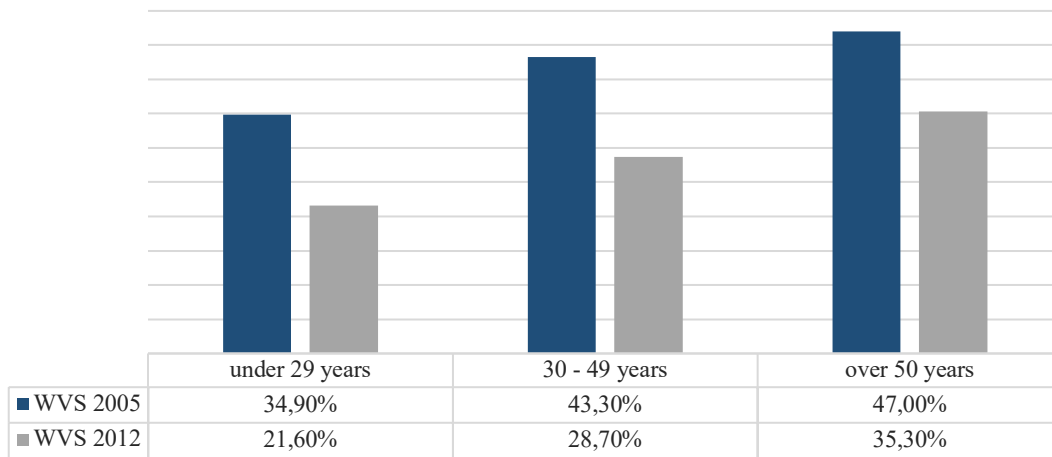


Figure 2. The trend of the materialism dimension, intragenerational analysis

The intergenerational analysis, related to the generations under 29 years, 30 - 49 years and over 50 years, based on the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012, reveals the following manifestation of the analyzed item:

At the level of 2005, comparing the mentioned generations, the following can be observed (Figure 03):

- Under 29 years and 30 - 49 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 8.4 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (5.19 to 11.58), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$;

- 30 - 49 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 3.7 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (0.42 to 6.96), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$;

- Under 29 years and over 50 - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 12.1 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (8.87 to 15.28), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

¹ Absolute terms;

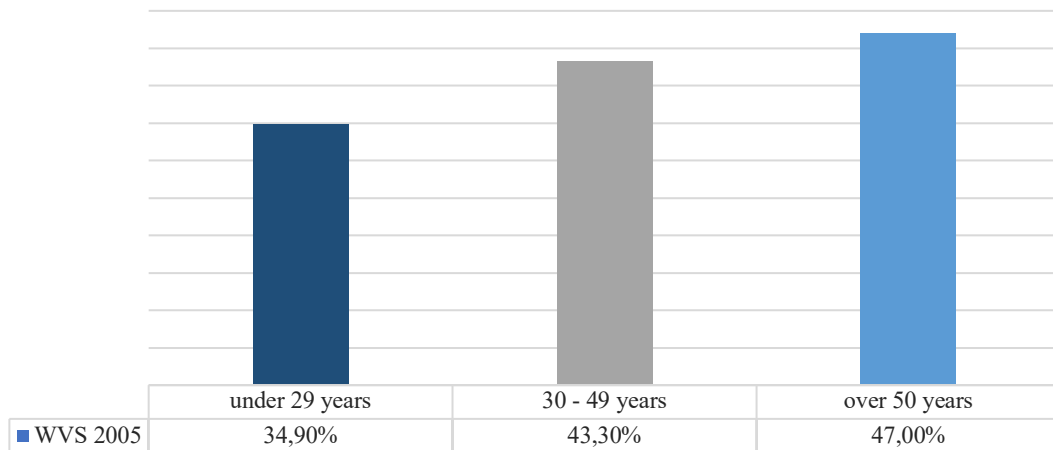


Figure 3. Intergenerational analysis of the materialism dimension, for 2005

It is noted that, for the year 2005, the materialism dimension has a statistically significantly lower level at the level of the younger generations compared to the older generations (Figure 03).

At the level of 2012, comparing the mentioned generations, the following can be observed:

- Under 29 years and 30 - 49 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 7.1 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (4.00 to 10.18), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$;

- 30 - 49 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 6.6 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (3.26 to 9.91), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$;

- Under 29 and over 50 - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 13.70 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (10.49 to 16.86), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

It is noted that (Figure 04), for 2012, the materialism dimension has a statistically significantly lower level at the level of younger generations compared to older generations.

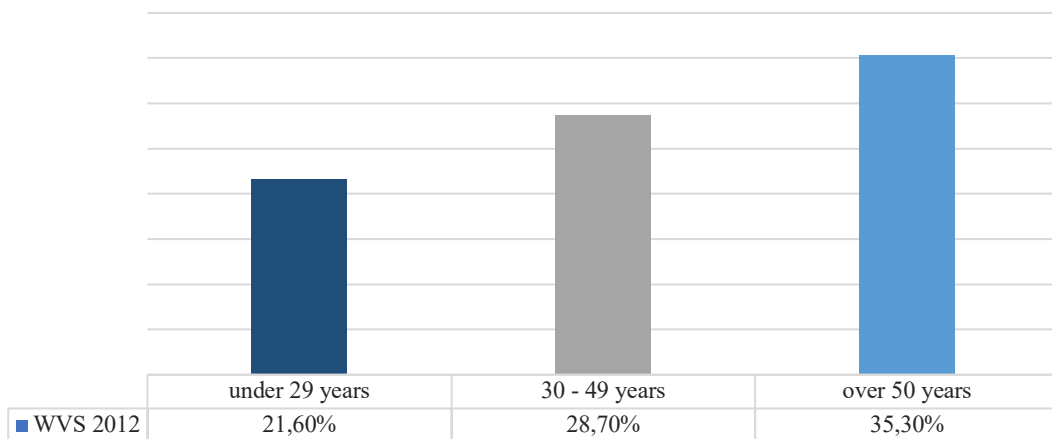


Figure 4. Intergenerational analysis of the materialism dimension, for 2012

Summarizing it can be stated that the intergenerational analysis highlights, related to the temporal comparison points WVS 2005 and WVS 2012, that the materialism dimension has the lowest value at the level of the generation under 29 years, followed by the generations 30-49 years, respectively over 50 years, all differences being statistically significant (Figure 05).

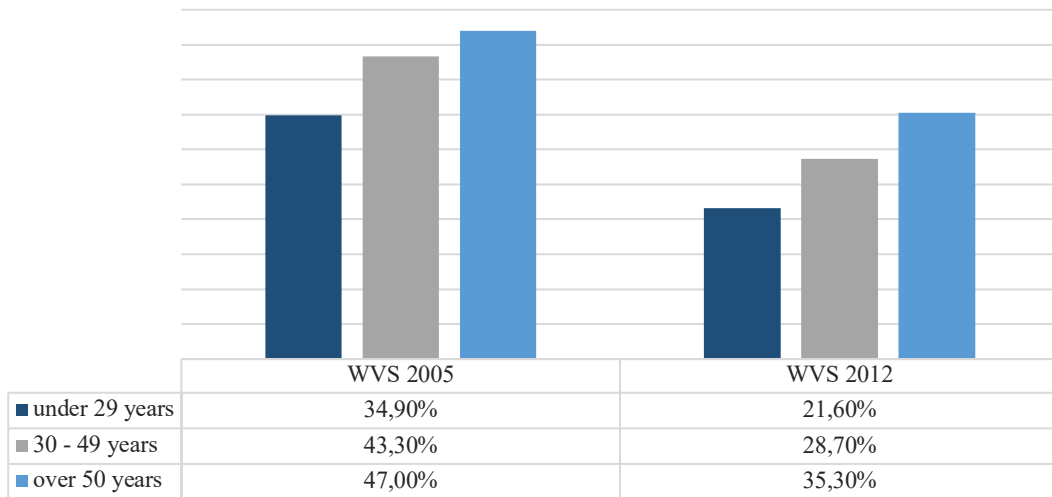


Figure 5. The trend of the materialism dimension, intergenerational analysis

In conclusion, it can be stated that the results of the statistical processing reveal:

- **in global terms**, the manifestation of a downward trend of the materialism dimension, afferent to the period 1998 - 2012;
- **at intra-generational level**, between 2005 and 2012, the trend of the materialism dimension of statistically significant decrease, afferent to all the three generations analyzed;
- **at intergenerational level**, the materialism dimension has a lower value at the level of the younger generations compared to the older generations.

6.2. Postmaterialism dimension

The global evolution of the postmaterialism dimension highlights a trend of moderate increase between 1998 and 1999, a relative decrease until the level of 2005, subsequently manifesting an accentuated increase until the level of 2012. Thus, in global terms limited to the period 1998 - 2012, the postmaterialism dimension showed an upward trend (Figure 06).

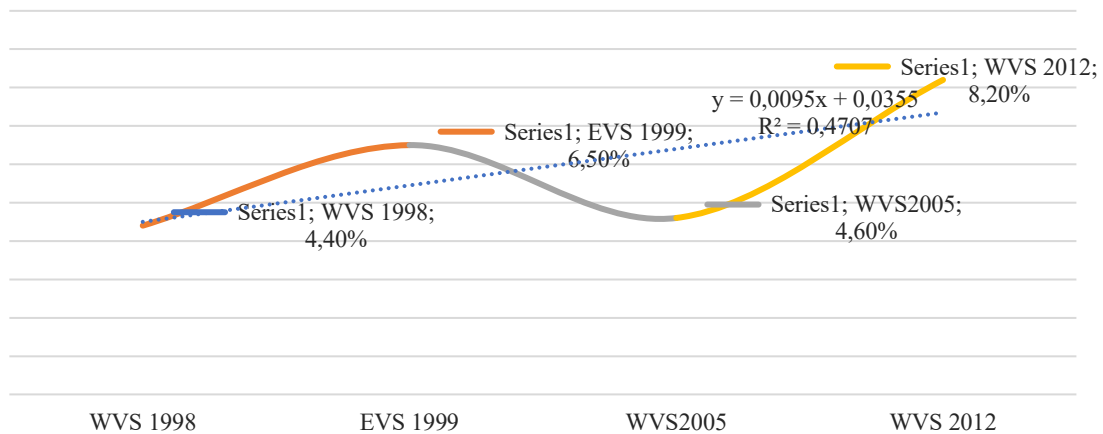


Figure 6. The evolution of the postmaterialism dimension, between 1998 and 2012, in global terms

The intragenerational analysis, related to the generations under 29 years, 30 - 49 years and over 50 years, based on the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012, reveals the following manifestation of the analyzed dimension (Table 02):

At the level of the generation under 29, the difference in absolute terms between the WVS 2012 and WVS 2005 waves is 5 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (3.01 to 7.03), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

At the level of the 30-49 generation, the difference in absolute terms between the WVS 2012 and WVS 2005 waves is 4.5 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (2.74 to 6.31), and the significance threshold associated is $p < 0.0001$.

At the generation level over 50 years, the difference in absolute terms between the WVS 2012 and WVS 2005 waves is 1.8 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (0.36 to 3.29), and the associated significance threshold is $p = 0.0135$.

Table 2. The evolution of the materialism dimension, broken down at the level of the three generations, between 2005 and 2012

Waves World Values Survey	Generations		
	Under 29 years	30 – 49 years	Over 50 years
2005	6.80%	4.80%	3.70%
2012	11.80%	9.30%	5.50%
Difference 2005 - 2012 ²	5	4.5	1.8
Significance level (p)	$p < 0.0001$	$p < 0.0001$	$p = 0.0135$

Summarizing it can be stated that the intragenerational analysis reveals that the dimension of postmaterialism has experienced, in the period 2005 - 2012, a statistically significant increase, at the level of all three generations analyzed (Figure 07).

² Absolute terms;

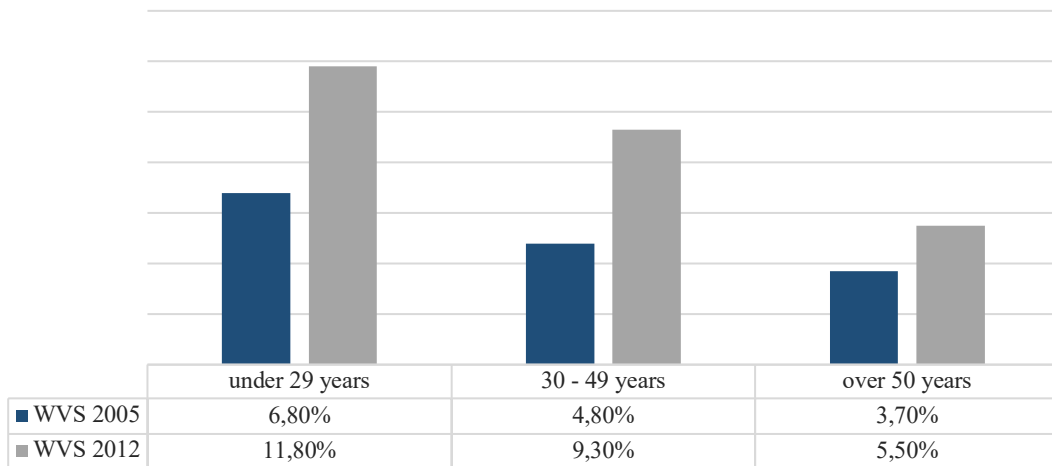


Figure 7. Trend of the postmaterialism dimension, intragenerational analysis

The intergenerational analysis, related to the generations under 29, 30 - 49 years and over 50 years, based on the waves WVS 2005 and WVS 2012, reveals the following manifestation of the analyzed item:

At the level of 2005, comparing the mentioned generations, the following can be observed (Figure 08):

- Under 29 years and 30-49 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 2 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (0.46 to 3.55), and the significance threshold associated is 0.0108;

- 30 - 49 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 1.1 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) includes the value 0 (-0.23 to 2.44), and the significance threshold associated is 0.1042;

- Under 29 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 3.1 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (1.63 to 4.58), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

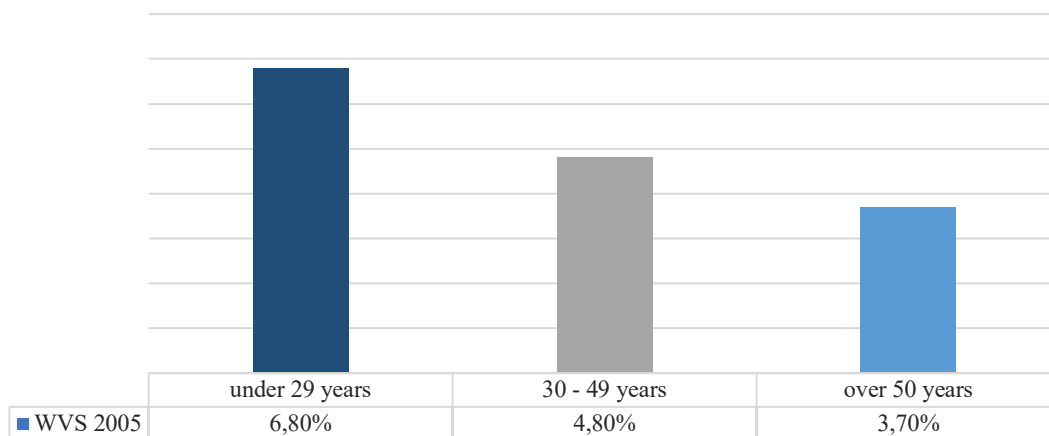


Figure 8. Intergenerational analysis of the postmaterialism dimension, related to 2005

It is noted that, for 2005, the postmaterialism dimension has a statistically significant higher level in the younger generations compared to the older generations, except for the statistically insignificant difference between the 30-49 generation and over 50 generations. years.

At the level of 2012, comparing the mentioned generations, the following can be observed (Figure 09):

- Under 29 years and 30 - 49 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 2.5 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (0.30 to 4.70), and the significance threshold associated is 0.0257;

- 30 - 49 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 3.8 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (1.93 to 5.68), and the significance threshold associated is 0.0001;

- Under 29 years and over 50 years - the difference in absolute terms between the two generations is 6.3 percentage points, the confidence interval associated with the difference (95% CI) does not include the value 0 (4.30 to 8.31), and the associated significance threshold is $p < 0.0001$.

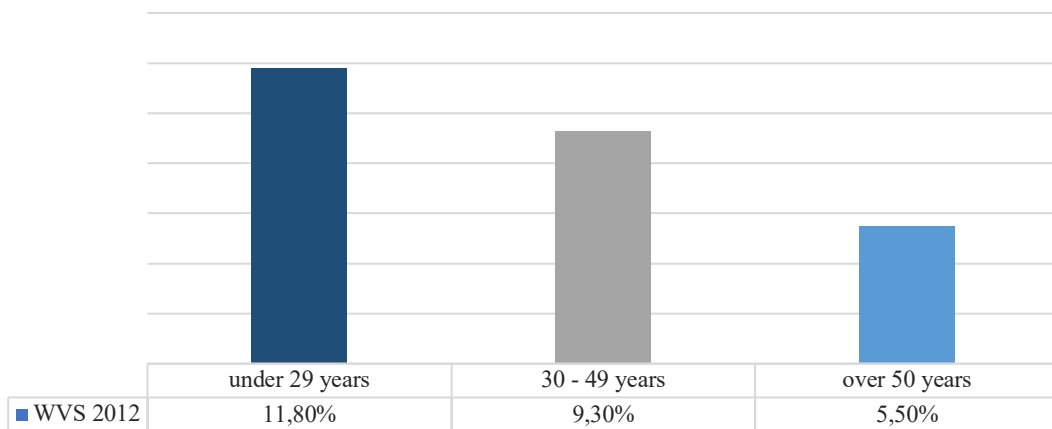


Figure 9. Intergenerational analysis of the postmaterialism dimension, for 2012

It is noted that, for 2012, the dimension of postmaterialism has a statistically significant higher level in the younger generations compared to the older generations.

Summarizing it can be said that the intergenerational analysis highlights that the dimension of postmaterialism has the highest value in the generation under 29, followed by generations 30 - 49 years old, respectively over 50 years old. All intergenerational differences are statistically significant (Figure 10), except for the statistically insignificant difference between the 30 – 49 years and over 50 years (related to the 2005 wave).

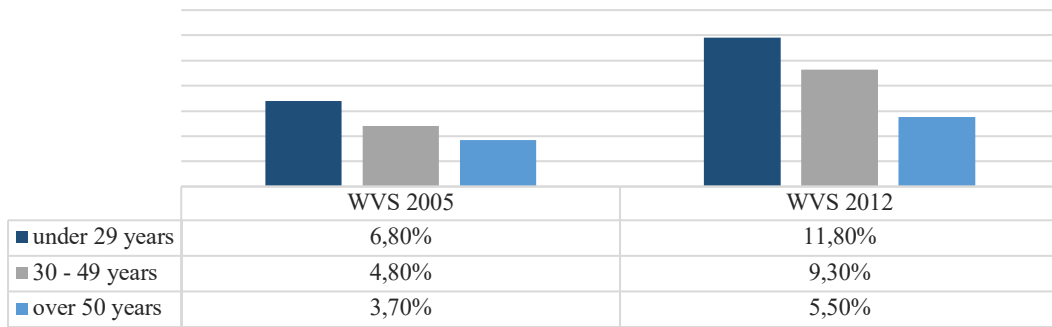


Figure 10. The trend of the postmaterialism dimension, intergenerational analysis

In conclusion, it can be stated that the results of the statistical processing reveal:

- **in global terms**, the manifestation of an ascending trend of the postmaterialism dimension, afferent to the period 1998 - 2012;
- **at intra-generational level**, in the period 2005 - 2012, the trend of the postmaterialism dimension of statistically significant increase, afferent to all the three generations analyzed;
- **at intergenerational level**, corresponding to all temporal landmarks of comparison (WVS 2005 and WVS 2012), the dimension of postmaterialism has a higher value at the level of the younger generations compared to the older generations.

7. Conclusion

The results of the statistical processing performed at the level of the materialism - postmaterialism relationship highlight the following aspects:

In global terms, for the period 1998 - 2012, there is an upward trend of the postmaterialism dimension, simultaneously with a downward trend of the materialism dimension. In order to capture in the integrated dynamics the manifestation of the two dimensions, we proceeded to calculate the difference between the percentage of postmaterialists and that of materialists, at the level of all comparison points.

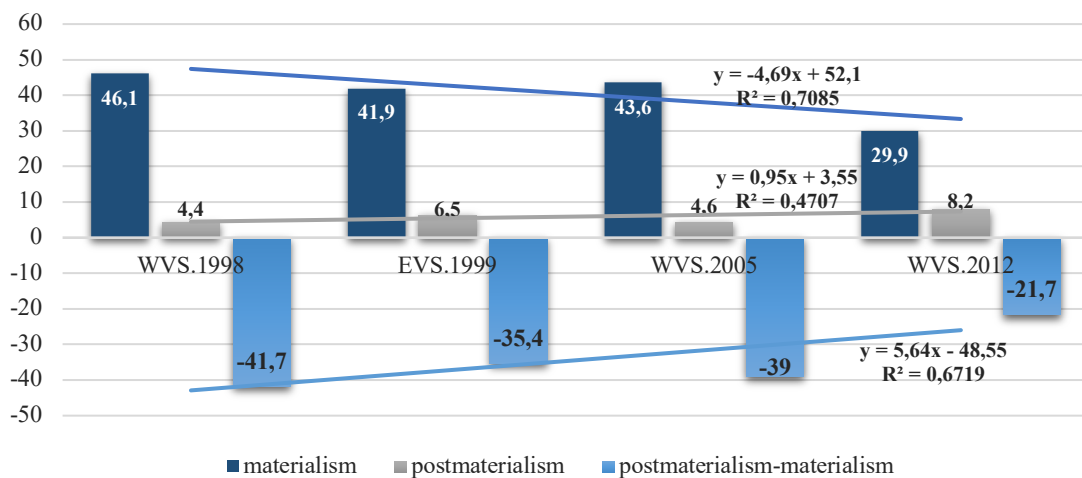


Figure 11. The evolution of the materialism-postmaterialism relationship, between 1998 and 2012, in global terms

Thus, a common dimension of the materialism-postmaterialism relationship was created, which highlights the constantly increasing trend of the difference between the percentage of postmaterialists and that of materialists in Romanian society, between 1998 and 2012 (Figure 11).

The intragenerational analysis, related to the period 2005 - 2012, highlights the tendency of significant decrease of the level of the materialism dimension, simultaneously with the tendency of significant increase of the postmaterialism dimension, at the level of all the three generations analyzed.

The intergenerational analysis highlights the fact that the postmaterialism dimension has a higher value at the level of the younger generations compared to the older generations, while the materialism dimension has a higher level in the older generations compared to the younger generations.

The intergenerational analysis, carried out from the perspective of observing the extent to which we are witnessing a phenomenon of translating the tendencies of increase or decrease from one generation in one wave to the next generation in the next wave, reveals the following:

- a tendency to translate the increase of the level of the postmaterialism dimension from the generation under 29 years old from the wave 2005 to the generation 30-49 years from the wave 2012. Similarly, there is a translation of the increase in the level of the dimension of postmaterialism from the generation 30-49 years of the 2005 wave to the generation over 50 years of the wave 2012;

- a tendency to translate the decrease of the level of the materialism dimension from the generation under 29 years old from the wave 2005 to the generation 30-49 years from the wave 2012, respectively from from the generation 30 - 49 years of the wave 2005 to the generation over 50 years of the wave 2012.

Concluding, it can be observed that, both at the level of the materialism dimension and the postmaterialism dimension, the translation of the decreasing, respectively increasing tendencies, takes place at the level of all generations in consecutive waves of the World Values Survey.

In conclusion, the results of statistical processing reveal the manifestation of trends in both the increase - the dimension of postmaterialism and the decrease - the dimension of materialism, being observable, especially among young generations, a trend towards a more postmaterialist profile. The process of translating upward or downward trends from one generation in a WVS wave to the next generation in the next WVS wave can be interpreted as subsuming **the generational effects**.

This state of affairs, over time, against the background of the natural replacement of generations, leads to a change in the relationship materialism - postmaterialism that characterizes the Romanian society as a whole.

References

- Inglehart, R. (1971). *The Silent Revolution, Changing Values and Political Style among Western Publics*. Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy, The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2011). *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (2nd Edition). Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (2008). *Changing Values Among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006. West European Politics*, 31, 130-146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380701834747>
- Inglehart, R., & Abramson, P. R. (1995). *Values Change in global perspective*. The University of Michigan Press.