

The Romanian Entrepreneurial Profile from the Perspective of Cultural Dimensions: A Case Study for Prahova County – Romania

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Abstract

This paper presents a pilot research developed in order to establish a profile for the Romanian entrepreneur. In order to realise the entrepreneurial profile, a set of variables which characterize a classic entrepreneurial profile were analyzed in correlation to five characteristic features of the firm raisers: Management experience, Professional experience in the field of activity of the enterprise, Age, Gender, Educational background. Our preliminary survey pointed out some aspects: because the “family” model is being carried out, the Romanian entrepreneurs risk losing their employees, Romanian entrepreneurs need to learn rapidly how to structure organizational activities and to introduce instruments for democratic decisions, Romanian entrepreneurs look for a collaborative environment and ask support from all the organization’s employees, the employees of the Romanian organizations generally need to be close to the central power and, generally, Romanian entrepreneurs feel more comfortable in situations of total consensus.

1. Introduction

Until recently, entrepreneurs were not widely studied. There was a general lack of knowledge and information about what made them tick. Globalization requested new studies involving entrepreneurial behaviour, and the situation has changed. Most business universities now offer courses in entrepreneurship. Although no one has found the perfect entrepreneurial profile, there are many recurrent characteristics.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CHARACTERISTICS

A series of interviews were conducted with distinguished entrepreneurs. They were asked what they considered to be their main characteristics. From these studies some main features emerged:

Self-Control

A dominant characteristic of entrepreneurs is their belief that they are smarter than their peers and superiors. They have a compelling need to do their own thing in their own way. They need the freedom to choose and to act according to their own perception of what actions will result in success.

Emotional Stability

Entrepreneurs have a considerable amount of *self-control* and can handle business pressure. They feel comfortable in stress situations and are challenged rather than discouraged by setbacks or failures. Entrepreneurs tend to handle people problems with

action plans without empathy. There are studies which point out their moderate interpersonal skills being often inadequate to provide for stable relationships.

Self-Confidence

Entrepreneurs are self-confident when they are in control of what they are doing and when they are working alone. They tackle problems immediately with confidence and are persistent in their pursuit of their objectives.

Sense of Urgency

Entrepreneurs have a never-ending sense of urgency to develop their ideas. Inactivity makes them impatient, tense, and uneasy.

Comprehensive Awareness

Successful entrepreneurs can comprehend complex situations that may include planning, making strategic decisions, and working on multiple business ideas simultaneously. They are aware of important details, and they will continuously review all possibilities to achieve their business objectives. At the same time, they devote their energy to complete the tasks immediately before the others.

Conceptual Ability

Entrepreneurs possess the ability to identify relationships quickly in the midst of complex situations. They identify problems and begin working on their solution faster than other people. They are not troubled by ambiguity and uncertainty because they are used to solving problems. Entrepreneurs are natural leaders and are usually the first to identify a problem to be overcome.

Realism

Entrepreneurs accept things as they are and deal with them accordingly. They are seldom unrealistic. They will change their direction when they see that change will improve their prospects for achieving their goals. They want to know the status of a given situation at all times. They will verify any information they receive before they use it in making a decision.

Status Requirements

Entrepreneurs find satisfaction in symbols of success that are external to themselves. Their egos do not prevent them from seeking facts, data, and guidance. Symbols of achievement such as position have little relevance to them. Successful entrepreneurs find the fulfilment of their status needs in the performance of their business, not in the appearance they present to their peers and to the public. They will postpone acquiring status items like a luxury car until they are certain that their business is stable.

Interpersonal Relationships

Entrepreneurs are more concerned with people's accomplishments than with their feelings. They generally avoid becoming personally involved and will not hesitate to sever relationships that could hinder the progress of their business. During the business-building period, when resources are scarce, they seldom devote time to dealing with satisfying people's feelings beyond what is essential to achieving their goals.

Entrepreneurs are impatient and drive themselves and everyone around them. They don't have the tolerance or empathy necessary for team building unless it's their team, and they will delegate very few key decisions.

As their business grows and assumes an organizational structure, for many of them, their need for control makes it difficult for them to delegate authority in the way that a structured organization demands. Their strong direct approach induces them to seek information directly from its source, bypassing the structured chains of authority and responsibility. Their poor interpersonal skills, which were adequate during the start-up phases, will cause them problems as they try to adjust to the structured or corporate organization. Entrepreneurs with good interpersonal skills will be able to adjust and survive as their organization grows and becomes more structured.

We took into consideration four types of relationships: with business partners, with opinion leaders, with authorities and with employees.

2. The influence of cultural values upon Romanian behaviour and business environment

In a globalize business environment, in order to avoid huge mistakes, it is important to know what are the cultural traits of a specific area and characteristic features of the entrepreneurs and labour force. Hofstede (2001) [1] proposed that "ideas and theories about management and organization are often exported to other countries without regard for the values context in which these ideas were developed" (p. 374). He argued that "there is no single formula for developing successful managers that can be used in different cultures" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 390) [1].

Training company Interact performed in 2005, in partnership with The Gallup Organization Romania, a study about the influence of cultural values upon Romanian behaviour and business environment. This survey was realized by random sampling using a representative sample of 1076 subjects. "Thinking at global scale and taking into consideration the national specificity" represents the motto for international companies. Starting from this point of view this research intended to discover the characteristics of the Romanian entrepreneur and how they could influence the Romanian business environment [3].

The main conclusions of the above mentioned study refer to the manner of how the Romanian values and behaviour reflect on the organizational and managerial practices, on the organizational structures, on the leadership, marketing and human resource management practices. Moreover, this study offers a clear perception about the implications generated by the EU integration.

Tabel 1. Values of the Cultural Dimensions' Indexes

<i>Study</i>	<i>Cultural Dimensions' Indexes</i>				
	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
ROMANIA - first survey 2005	29	49	39	61	42
ROMANIA - second survey 2005	33	49	39	61	42
ROMANIA - Geert Hofstede's estimations	90	30	42	90	-

Source: Study about Romanian values and behaviour from the perspective of cultural dimensions, after the method of Geert Hofstede, April 18th, 2005 [3]

This research was made using the perspective of Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. According to Professor Geert Hofstede from the Maastricht University, every nation can be described from the perspective of the place occupied in each of five given situations. He developed a model that identifies five dimensions to assist in differentiating cultures: Power Distance Index - PDI, Individualism - IDV, Masculinity - MAS, and Uncertainty Avoidance Index- UAI, **Long-Term Orientation (LTO) [2].**

Hofstede's conclusion was that the employees will apply those local or foreign "practices" that are indicated by the organization, but they will keep their "values", meaning their characteristic cultural principles [1]. Values are expressed by the adopted behaviour.

For the foreign entrepreneurs, from this study emerged some important conclusions:

- This study showed that the Romanian society has minimal propensities to strategic planning; this being a result of the anxiety level and the tendency to rapid operational actions, with instantaneous feed-back. The employees leave planning for "specialists" or consultants. They have difficulty in comprehending what is the relevant information for forecasting.
- Another interesting aspect is revealed by "innovation" in the sense of implementation of other creative ideas. "Innovation is not the best strategy" was shown in the above mentioned study. Specialists assert that this will affect especially the American firms, which built

their international strategy on innovative processes. Many original and creative ideas can be obtained from the Romanian team, but it will be more difficult to implement them. Some Romanian people consider that it could be stressful for them to innovate and assume responsibility, especially because of the high level of uncertainty, but also because of the power distance dimension. The only innovations that will be really implemented are those generated and communicated up-to-down.

- **Romania in the European Union** The most alarming difference between Romanian society and the European society is that which is illustrated by the authority complex and the tendency to duplicity and the dissociation between affirmations.

3. The Romanian Entrepreneurial Profile from the Perspective of Cultural Dimensions

We are developing a research in order to establish a profile for the Romanian entrepreneur. The first stage of our research was a survey aiming at the identification of the main factors which influence successful results and developing new enterprises [5]. The target population of the survey consists of firms which were created in 2002 and which operated continuously until 2007, their management being permanently the same from the beginning.

This paper presents a pilot research realised as a first step of the research. This study aimed at identifying Romanian entrepreneur features linked to cultural dimensions. Data presented in this paper are not representative for Romania, reflecting only some trends obtained from 50 companies from Prahova County [5].

In order to realise the entrepreneurial profile, a set of variables which characterize a classic entrepreneurial profile were analyzed in correlation to five characteristic features of the firm raisers:

- Management experience
- Professional experience in the field of activity of the enterprise
- Age
- Gender
- Educational background.

A classic entrepreneurial profile is defined by a set of features: perseverance, moderated risks assuming, need of fulfilment - Status Requirements (realization, performance), knowledge, self-confidence, comprehensive awareness, realism, patience, decisiveness, interpersonal relationships, independence, self-control and emotional stability.

Management experience

Are entrepreneurs with managing experience significantly more numerous than those without it? While more than a half of the entrepreneurs (52%) had 5-10 years of experience in running an enterprise and almost a quarter of them (24%) had

over 10 years, there is another quarter (24%) having under 5 years of experience, 6% having no management experience (under one year).

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47,970(a)	12	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

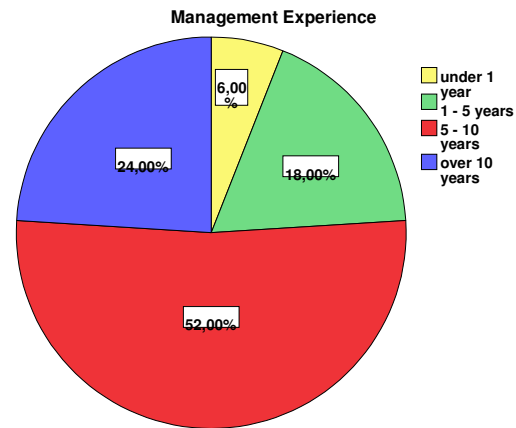


Fig. 1

- Self-Confidence

According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between *Management experience* categories in respect of Self-Confidence. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.700) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,566) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.000).

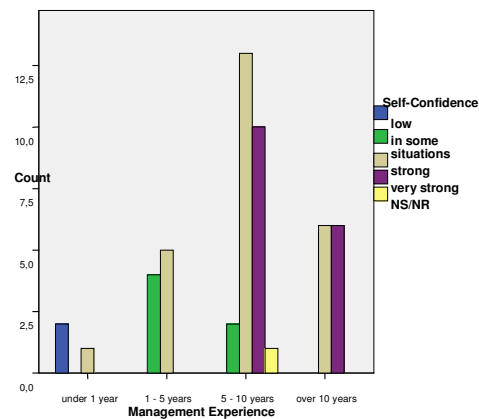


Fig.2

- Perseverance
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14,287(a)	6	,027
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between *Management experience* categories in respect of Self-Confidence. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.471) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,378) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.027).

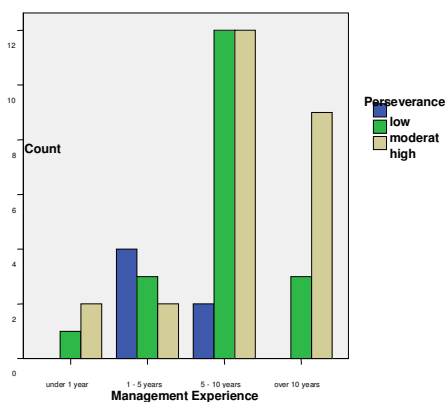
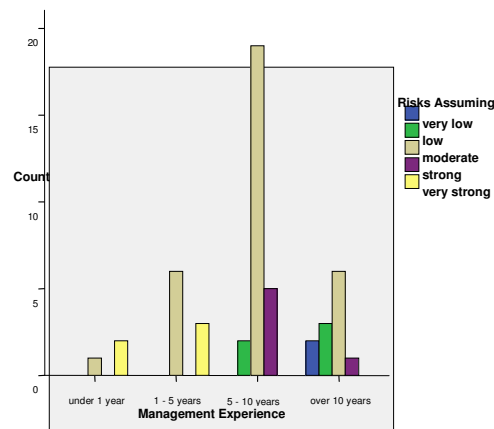


Fig.3

- Risk Assuming
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32,565(a)	12	,001
N of Valid Cases	50		

This is another characteristic which differs significantly to the Management Experience. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.426) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,628) indicates that there is also an important correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.001).



	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,555(a)	9	,015
N of Valid Cases	50		

This characteristic also differs significantly to the Management Experience. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.540) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,370) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.015).

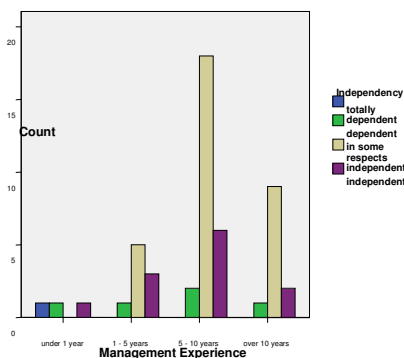


Fig.4 - Professional experience in the field of activity of the enterprise

When it comes to experience in a certain branch of activity, 80 % of the entrepreneurs have previous branch experience (44%, having over 10 years of experience), while 20 % have under 5 years of experience in the field of activity of their enterprise, 4% having no experience. This characteristic was examined by looking at the start-up difficulties.

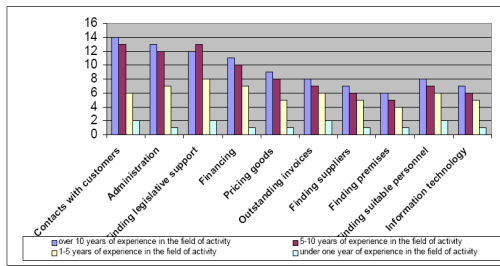


Fig.5. Start-up difficulties by type of experience

1) Self-Control

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32,926(a)	12	,001
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between *Management experience* categories in respect of Self-Confidence. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.630) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer’s V coefficient (0,469) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.001).

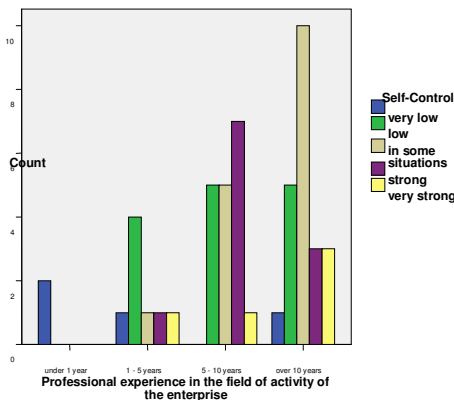


Fig.6

2) Self-Confidence

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	74,459(a)	12	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

Chi-Square Tests

This is another characteristic which differs significantly in respect of Management Experience. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.773) shows that there is an association between these two variables and value of Cramer’s V coefficient (0,705) indicates that there is also an important

correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig.

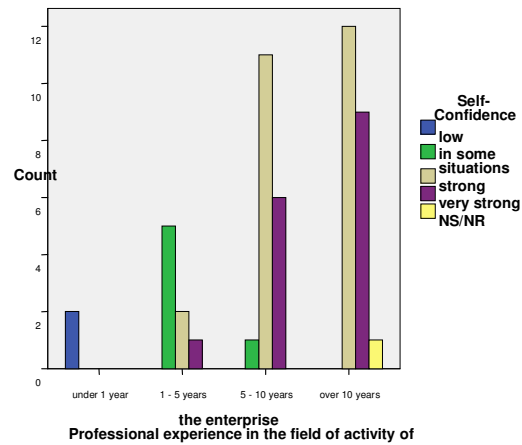


Fig.7

3) Perseverance

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43,529(a)	6	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

This characteristic also differs significantly in to the Management Experience. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.682) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer’s V coefficient (0,662) indicates that there is also an important correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.000).

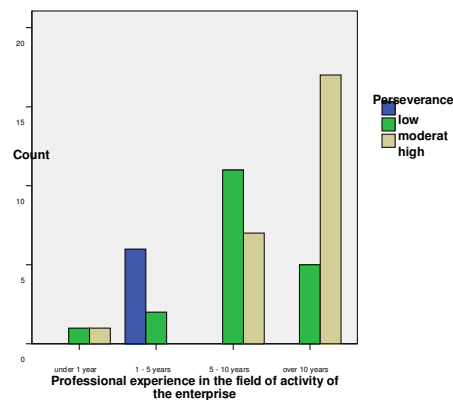


Fig.8

4) Risk assuming

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43,142(a)	12	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between *Management experience* categories in respect of Self-Confidence. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.681) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,536) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.000).

5) Independence

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23,010(a)	9	,006
N of Valid Cases	50		

This is another characteristic which differs significantly to the Management Experience. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.561) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,392) indicates that there is also an important correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.008). In the final survey we intent to extend the examination upon different economic activities.

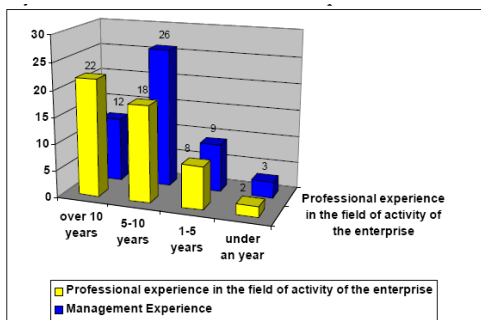


Fig.9

Fig.3 shows that there is no correlation between *Management experience* and *Professional experience in the field of activity of the enterprise*.

Age

28% of the entrepreneurs were less than 36 years old, 48% between 37 and 55 years and 24% 55 years and over.

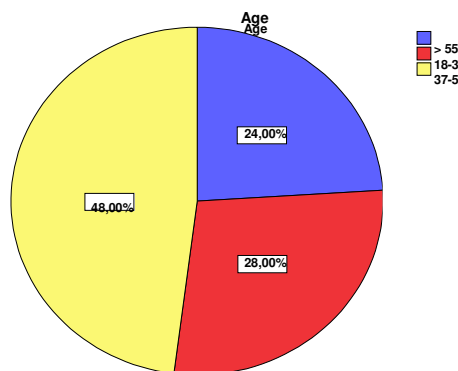


Fig.10

Could age play a role in differentiation of the categories of entrepreneurial behaviour? Are there any significant differences between different age categories in respect of the entrepreneurial main traits? In order to answer to these questions, we used the χ^2 Test, and we obtained the bellow mentioned answers:

- Self-Control

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,266(a)	8	,140
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are not significant differences between age categories in respect of Self-Control.

The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.495) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,444) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. We must make a specification about how representative these results are, taking into consideration the sample of this pilot study.

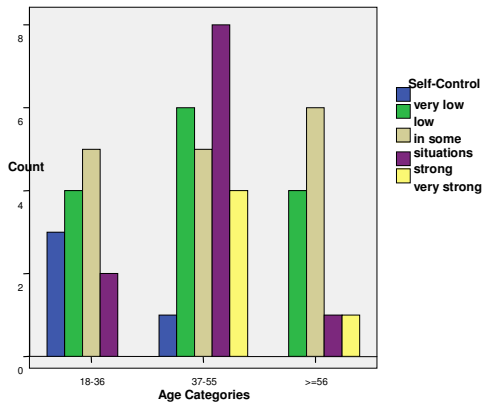


Fig.11

- Self-Confidence

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,277(a)	8	,054
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are not significant differences between age categories in respect of Self-Confidence.

The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.484) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,391) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables.

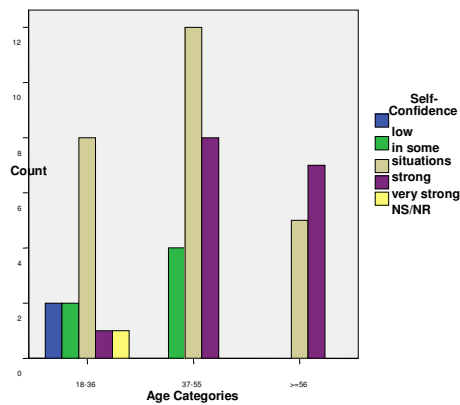


Fig.13

- Risk Assuming

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25,519(a)	8	,001
N of Valid Cases	50		

This is another characteristic which differs significantly in respect of Age. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.581) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,705) indicates that there is also an important correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.001).

- Comprehensive Awareness

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,413(a)	8	,009
N of Valid Cases	50		

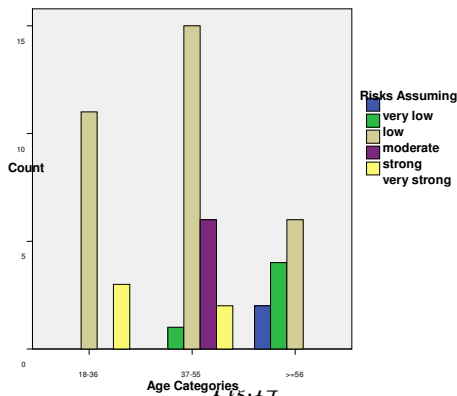


Fig.15

Gender

First of all we must say that this study accentuates the idea that women are less involved (only 16%) in entrepreneurial activities (fig.10).

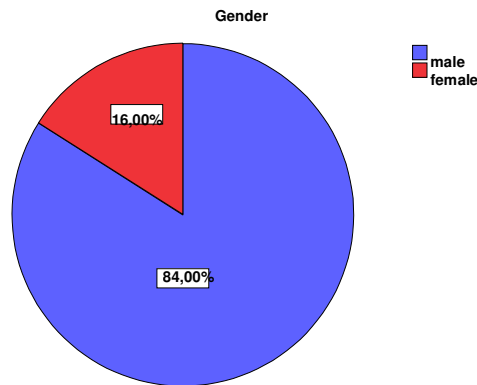


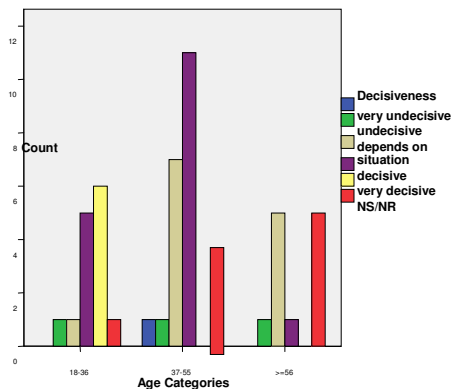
Fig. 16

- Decisiveness

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27,359(a)	10	,002
N of Valid Cases	50		

This is another characteristic which differs significantly in respect of Age. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.595) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer’s V coefficient (0,523) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.002).



- Self-Control

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23,951(a)	12	,021
N of Valid Cases	50		

According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between age categories in respect of Self-Control. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.569) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer’s V coefficient (0,400) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.021).

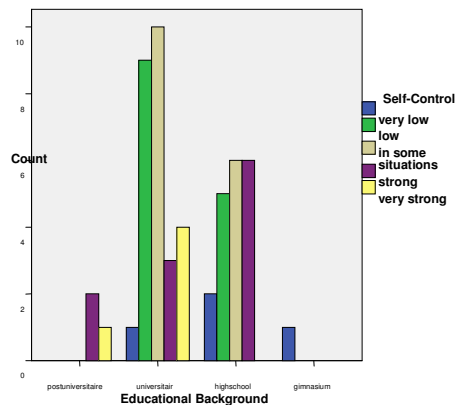


Fig.17

- *Self-Confidence*

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34,413(a)	12	,001
N of Valid Cases	50		

- According to these results, we can say that there are significant differences between age categories in respect of Self-Confidence.

The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.638) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,439) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.001).

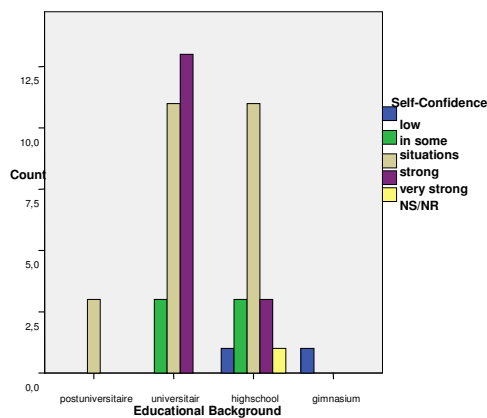


Fig.18

Decisiveness

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28,733(a)	15	,017
N of Valid Cases	50		

This characteristic differs significantly, also in respect of Educational Background. The value of the Contingency Coefficient (0.604) shows that there is an association between these two variables and the value of Cramer's V coefficient (0,438) indicates that there is also a correlation between these two variables. These results can be considered representative (Aprox. Sig. = 0.017).

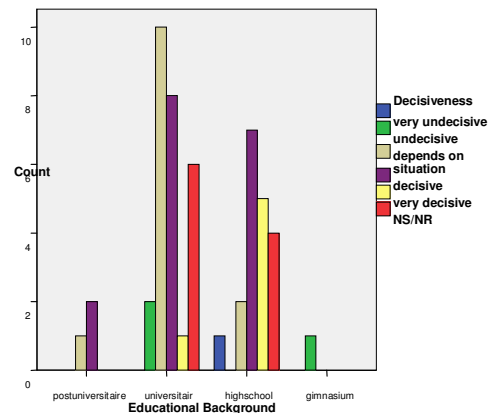


Fig.19

The above results demonstrate some important aspects:

- There are significant differences between entrepreneurs having different levels of *managerial experience* in respect of:
 - Self-Confidence*
 - Perseverance*
 - Risk Assuming*
 - Independence*.
- Regarding *professional experience in the field of activity* there are significant differences between entrepreneurs in respect of:
 - Self-Control*
 - Self-Confidence*
 - Perseverance*
 - Risk Assuming*
 - Independence*.
- There are significant differences between different *age segments* in respect of:
 - Comprehensive Awareness*
 - Risk Assuming*
 - Decisiveness*.
- The entrepreneurial behaviour is not affected by the influence of *the gender*.
- There are significant differences between different types of entrepreneurs from the point of view of *educational background* in respect of:
 - Self-Control*
 - Self-Confidence*
 - Decisiveness*.

4. Conclusions

The previous study of Interact Company concluded that two managerial styles of the Romanian entrepreneur can be distinguished:

- The "family" managerial style*, which means that family interests, personal wealth, "this year" profit come before risk and venture possibility and the organizational growth coming last.

- The “founder” managerial style, existing in the west side of Romania, being influenced by the German culture, which is characterised by the fact that the entrepreneur acts and feels responsible for his employees and for the organization. He wants to create something new, is interested in risk assuming and venture and, also in the development of his business, but, also in honour and reputation.

- *The existence of some difficulties in planning for the Romanian entrepreneur (LTO=-/42/42)*

As a result of the anxiety level and the tendency to rapid operational actions, with instantaneous feedback, the Romanian entrepreneur has minimal propensity to strategic planning. If the Romanian entrepreneurs learn to plan their strategic activities and begin to quantify their results, they will succeed in being able to implement those daily operational measures according to planning.

- *Innovation is not the most appropriate strategy adopted by the Romanian entrepreneurs*

Many original and creative ideas can be obtained from the Romanian organizations, but it is more difficult to implement them. Many entrepreneurs consider that when they have to innovate and assume responsibility, they are pressured, especially because of the high level of uncertainty, but also because of the power distancing behaviour.

- *The “Family” model is preferred by the Romanian entrepreneurs*

This model is preferred by the Romanian entrepreneurs because they have not enough knowledge in order to develop a clear structure. This model application will lead in the long run to the “arrest” of the organizational development. Moreover, this Oriental organizational model favours nepotism and corruption at the level employees because of the authority centralization.

- *The “Authority Complex” and managerial style of the Romanian entrepreneurs*

Romanian employees have the “Authority Complex”. From this point of view, the use of every managerial style becomes problematic because the difference between demonstrated behaviour – meaning perception of inequalities and authority distancing - and hidden expectations of working in a consultative and participative environment. If Romanian entrepreneurs do not become aware of this difference, they will begin to use the authoritarian style and, in most cases, they will discover subsequently that the organizational problems will remain in their charge because their subordinates will move progressively towards this kind of behaviour.

Our preliminary survey pointed out some additional aspects:

- Because the “family” model is being carried out, the Romanian entrepreneurs risk to lose

their employees (an important fluctuation of personnel is displayed in many studies and analyzes) or to keep those employees who adapted by psychological corruption (avoiding responsibilities and risky actions and boasting entrepreneur’s efforts) or by creating internal corruption mechanisms (favouritisms and hiding the real performances).

- Romanian entrepreneurs need to learn rapidly how to structure organizational activities and to introduce instruments for democratic decisions. This requests external consultancy, especially in the case when the entrepreneur has no previous managerial experience. A pertinent solution could be the hiring of British or German consultants who help Romanian entrepreneurs transfer entrepreneurial styles like participative (specific for the British) and structural and procedural (specific for the German).
- Romania is a feminine country in respect of national organizational culture (MAS=39/39/42). Romanian entrepreneurs look for a collaborative environment and ask support from all the organization’s employees, regardless of their contribution. Because feminine values appreciate personal free time and cooperation more than performance objectives, Romanian entrepreneurs often accept to be replaced by foreign entrepreneurs without significant resistance.
- Another aspect is represented by the fact that the employees of the Romanian organizations generally need to be close to the central power (PDI=90/29/33). It is important for an entrepreneur to be treated with confidence and respect and also to allow his employees to express their opinions.
- Romanian SMEs look for an entrepreneur who is able to sometimes assume risky decisions *on their behalf* and to offer real support for their new actions. Generally, Romanian entrepreneurs feel more comfortable in situations of total consensus (UAI=61/61/90). A high level of anxiety has impact on the structure of the organization. Favourite actions are those solving ambiguously current situation – “a quick fix” – without taking into consideration their impact on the future.

5. References

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