Organisational culture dimensions in Romanian finance industry*

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As part of the GLOBE project, this paper explores the societal and the organizational culture of the Romanian finance industry as reflected by middle managers' opinion. The two culture levels are compared across nine cultural dimensions. The differences between the cultural manifestations (practices and values) are analyzed through comparing the middle managers' answers to "what is" and "what should be" type questions at organizational and societal levels. The findings show some significant differences for the majority of the cultural dimensions examined both between culture levels (organizational versus societal) and culture manifestations (practices versus values).

Als Teil des GLOBE – Projekts erforscht dieser Artikel die soziale und organisatorische Kultur der rumänischen Finanzwirtschaft im Hinblick auf die Sichtweise des mittleren Managements. Diese zwei Kulturniveaus werden anhand von neun kulturellen Dimensionen verglichen. Die Unterschiede zwischen den kulturellen Manifestationen (Praktiken und Werte) werden durch den Vergleich der Antworten zu den Fragen auf den organisatorischen und solzialen Ebenen sowie "Was ist" und "Was sollte sein" analysiert, die vom mittelständischen Management erhoben ermittelt wurden. Die Ergebnisse zeigen einige signifikante Unterschiede für die Mehrheit der kulturellen Dimensionen, sowohl zwischen den kulturellen Ebenen (organisatorische vs. gesellschaftliche) als auch zwischen den kulturellen Manifestationen (Praktiken und Werte).

Key words: cultural dimensions, cultural values, cultural practices

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Introduction

Our study explores the concept of societal culture and organisational culture in the context of the Romanian finance industry. This research aims to answer the following four research questions: 1) What are (if any) the differences between the practices and the values of the cultural dimensions of organizational culture in Romanian finance industry? 2) What are (if any) the differences between the practices and values of the cultural dimensions of societal culture in Romania? 3) What are (if any) the differences between the organizational and societal culture with respect of practices? 4) What are (if any) the differences between the organizational and societal culture with respect to values?

There are a number of reasons why we focus our research on the finance industry. First, the finance field is one of the most dynamic sectors of Romanian economy. All ranges of financial activities developed tremendously in the past two decades including banking, insurance, pension funds, financial investment, and investment funds. According to The National Bank of Romania, at the end of 2008 the financial activities reached a net value assets representing 75,4% of Romania's GDP (Banca Națională a României 2001:15).

Second, the main component of the finance industry is represented by credit institutions, particularly banks. While in 1989 Romania operated a mono-banking system, today the system comprises 42 credit institutions, out of which 10 are foreign banks branches (end of September 2009). The net value of the assets including the foreign banks branches is 322.468,6 million Lei. 93.9% of the total assets and the total net assets of credit institutions with majority foreign capital is hold by private or prevalent private capital. (http://www.bnr.ro/files/d/Statistica/seturi%20de%20date/SPV/indsuprav en.xls). The system constantly introduces new products and services, permanently enlarging its offer to population and economic environment.

Third, one of the most distinctive features of Romanian finance industry is that especially its banking component is overwhelmingly based upon foreign-European capital. The foreign capital represents 86.8% of the total assets (net value, September 2009: http://www.bnr.ro/files/d/Statistica/seturi% 20de%20date/SPV/indsuprav en.xls), and is dominated by European capital (Greece, Austria, Nederland, Italy, Hungary, France, Portugal, etc.). At the end of March 2009, the capital from Greece represents 30.7%, Austria 23.5% and Nederland 11.9% of the total foreign banking capital (Banca Națională a României, 2009:18). Only 3 banks held prevalent Romanian capital at the end of 2008 (Banca Națională a României, 2008:24). In this context, it would be expected that the European banking culture and societal culture to generate some cultural peculiarities in the Romanian banking industry. A significant part of the top management in the Romanian foreign owned banks comes from Europe, and/or has had training and experience in Western leadership and management styles.

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Fourth, from a cultural perspective, the Romanian finance industry currently goes through three processes: regionalization (Central and East European), integration (EU) and globalization. All of these processes bring cultural challenges and have strong cultural implications. In addition, the industry is currently shaped by advances in information and communication technologies, in particular the development of the Internet. In this context, the foreign capital itself is a very important vehicle of cultural changes. The integration of Romanian finance system in the European one presumes adopting EU Aquis, know-how, and (for sure) new organizational values, norms, believes and behaviors.

Next, we believe the finance sector has the vocation of influencing individuals and organizations in what concerns practices and values like performance, attitude toward risk, respect paid to work and its outcomes, prevention, investment, trust, power, reward (even) altruism and generosity. The particular culture of the finance organizations has a strong influence on the general business culture, business/life prudential principles, and standards concerning risk and business performance in any society. Moreover, through their activity, the financial institutions get a sense of the interests of individuals and organizations, their intentions, economic power, and success likelihood. At the same time, they hold some information treasures about the projects of the economic actors, their costs and profits, objectives and strategies, resource allocation, strengths and weaknesses, market opportunities and threats.

Finally, our findings could be compared with the outcomes of the other studies within the GLOBE project that have explored the culture and leadership in the context of the financial sector in other countries.

Theoretical considerations

This section details the theoretical considerations concerning the variables approached in our analysis.

This paper explores the concept of culture in the context of the Romanian financial industry. Culture (in general) is a set of shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations (House et al. 2004:15).

Culture manifests itself at societal and at group level, e.g. at the level of organizations, institutions, or different public categories. At both societal and group levels, the culture develops values, practices, norms, schemas, and expectations prescribing adequate behaviours concerning the interactions between the members of a society/organization (Hill/Jones 2001). At both levels, culture also manifests through practices and values (House et al. 2002/2004; Chhokar et al. 2007). It seems the values are linked with anthropological

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tradition (Kluckhohn/Strodtbech 1961; House et al. 2002), while practices with the community psychological tradition, enacting behaviors, politics etc.

Practices represent the culture process (being exposed in family, schools, churches, army, organizations and institutions), while the values represent the culture content (referring to norms and targets).

Based upon the assumption that the culture is simultaneously a product of a society (organization), and a process of creating cultural values, norms and institutions, GLOBE research distinguishes between how culture is (practices) and how culture should be (values). While practices describe the (actual) cultural societal/organizational product, the values describe the (expected) desired cultural product. In a philosophical sense, practices display the socio-cultural reality or phenomenology, while values concern the targeted future of that community in the field. Of course, the distinction between practices and values is relative. For any specific case, any practice was at some point a value, an expectation, a model before it became an actual cultural product. Similarly, values are perpetuated through repetitive practices. In all languages, the word value expresses something worthy to follow, a goal, a stimulus, a model. Almost always the values are about something important, and therefore are supposed to be followed. If they are not important (and not followed), they are not values. Perhaps this is why some authors believe that values express the effectiveness of most efficient individuals, such as leaders (House et al. 2004; Javidan et al. 2006a/2006b), while practices express the average effectiveness of a society (organization).

One widespread approach in the cultural literature is to consider that values express themselves only at societal level, while practices are expressed only at organizational level (Hofstede 1980a/1980b/1991/2006). Consequently, in this approach, the causal relationship between values and practices disappears. However, this implicit lack of casual relationship between values and practices has not really been proved, and at least in our view, this approach needs validation.

In the most recent literature dedicated to culture there is a significant debate concerning the approach to measuring the cultural phenomenon and its impact on leadership and other dependent variables (Earley 2006; Graen 2006; Hofstede 2006; Javidan et al. 2006a; Kirkman et al. 2006; Smith 2006 ; Gelfand 2007). There are studies that focus on the data and attempt to empirically develop new theory (Hofstede 1980a/1980b/1998/2001), and studies which focus on the theory and aim to search for empirical validation (House et al. 2004). The issue of measurement is so important because it represents the basis on which researchers can assess different cultures, which inform the comparison and discussion of research findings in different environments. Any measurement is performed in order to compare entities to be measured (i.e. organizational, societal culture) from the measured dimensions perspectives (as, for example,

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gender equalitarianism). Consequently, if we want to measure cultures, we then must accept that these cultures might be characterized through sizes (probably different) of the same dimensions (material or immaterial).

The first attempts to assess the societal cultures were made by Toynbee and Cattell over half a century ago (Toynbee 1947; Cattell 1950). Since then a range of dimensions including geographic (North vs. South, West vs. East), historical, linguistic, religious, and economic dimensions (Gupta et al. 2002) were used to measure culture. Some authors argue that culture can be measured with a discrete set of cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2006). One of the most well known studies of cultures (Hofstede 1980a) identified four, then later five global cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, interpersonal relationships, gender role (Hofstede 1980a) and long versus short term orientation (Hofstede 1991). A recent international research project, GLOBE research, extended the number of discrete global cultural dimensions to 9: performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, power distance, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, gender egalitarianism (House et al. 2004). GLOBE compares these dimensions across 62 societal cultures, analysing the correlations between societal culture, organizational culture and leadership. The second major GLOBE book delivers a complex projection on 25 countries, from the 9 dimensions perspective (Chhokar et al. 2007), discussing also the theoretical and methodological issues shown by the recent approaches concerning a universal management and leadership theory.

There are a range of other major inter and cross-cultural research projects which attempted to discover how different or similar are the cultures of some societies or organizations and why they are different or similar (Inglehart et al. 1998/ 2004; Schwartz/Bardi 2001; Smith et al. 2002).

Methodology

In performing our study, we measured the cultural dimensions using the research instruments created by the GLOBE project. The sample items included in the constructs for each cultural dimension are displayed in Table 1.

Data collection run between 2007 and 2009. The data consists of four distinctive parts, representing two cultural levels (organizational answers to Questionnaire Alpha and societal answers to Questionnaire Beta) and, respectively, two cultural manifestations (practices included in section one of both questionnaires, and values included in section three of both questionnaires). Each question is designed as a quartet of parallel items referring to the same cultural problem in four forms: organization as it is; organization as it should be; society as it is; society as it should be, as the example in Table 2 shows.

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Table 1. Some relevant questionnaire items belonging to cultural dimensions

Dimensions	Sample items from questionnaire Beta and Alpha
Uncertainty avoidance	In this society, orderliness and consistency are (should be) stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation; In this organization, job requirements and instructions are (should be) spelled out in detail so employees know what they are expected to do
Future orientation	In this society, the accepted norm is (should be) to plan for the future/accept the status quo; In this organization, meetings are (should be) usually planned well in advance/spontaneous
Power distance	In this society, people are generally (should be) very friendly/very unfriendly; In this organization subordinates are (should be) expected to obey their boss without question/question their boss when in disagreement
Collectivism 1 (institutional)	The economic system in this society is (should be) designed to maximize individual interest/ collective interest; The pay and bonus system in this organization is (should be) designed to maximize individual interest/collective interest
Humane orientation	In this society, people are (should be) generally very sensitive toward others/not at all sensitive toward others; In this organization people are (should be) generally very concerned about others/not al all concerned about others
Performance orientation	In this society, teen-aged students are (should be) encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance; In this organization, most employees set (should set) challenging work goals for themselves
Collectivism 2 (in group)	In this society, children take (should take) pride in the individual accomplishments of their parents; This organization shows (should show) loyalty towards employees
Gender egalitarianism	In this society, boys are (should be) encouraged more than girls to attain a higher education; In this organization, men are (should be) encouraged to participate in professional development activities more than women
Assertiveness	In this society people are (should be) generally tough/tender; In this organization people are (should be) generally dominant/non-dominant

All the questions have seven points scales. The construct of each cultural dimension is measured as an aggregated mean value of the questionnaire items belonging to it, with some of the items being reversed scored (see http://www.thunderbird.edu/sites/globe/globe_instruments/index.htm for the GLOBE Culture and Leadership Scales Guidelines and Syntax for the GLOBE Leadership and Culture).

The sample consists of 268 middle managers from the branches of 13 finance organizations, out of which 80.5% represent banks. The branches were spread nationally. The sample is split in two independent sub-samples: 172 middle

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managers answering questions concerning organizational culture (79.6% from banks) and 96 questions concerning societal cultural dimensions (82% from banks). As data in Table 3 shows, the relevant socio-demographic variables for the two sub-samples are quasi similar, thus they can be approached as interchangeable. The main reason of using two different sub-samples was to avoid common source variance (Chhokar et al. 2007) for the two distinctive levels of analysis (organization and society). Using only one sample to answer both questionnaires would tempt the subjects to give similar answers for both levels of analysis. In other words, we wanted to get the "organizational being" perspective from one sub-sample and the "societal being" perspective from the second one. Being aware that the answers given by the "societal being" in finance is influenced by the field of activity (among other factors), we used for comparison the answers obtained only from the finance respondents (not from the "average societal being" targeted by our larger research, which include telecommunications and food industry too).

Table 2. Examples of questionnaires items forming a "cultural quartet"

Organization *as is* In this organization, orderliness and consistency should be stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation (Q1_1Questionnaire Alpha)						
Strongly agree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly disagree 7
Organization *as should be* In this organization, orderliness and consistency should be stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation (Q3_1Questionnaire Alpha)						
Strongly agree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly disagree 7
Society *as is* In this society, orderliness and consistency are stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation (Q1_1Questionnaire Beta)						
Strongly agree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly disagree 7
Society as *should be* I believe that orderliness and consistency should be stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation (Q3_1Questionnaire Beta)						
Strongly agree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly disagree 7

In order to test the statistical significance of the differences between organizational practices ("as it is" variables) and organizational values ("as it should be" variables) the paired-samples T-Test was employed, using the 0.05

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significance threshold. The same test was performed for analyzing the discrepancies between societal practices and societal values.

Table 3. Sample demographics

Attributes	All (N=268) M.: 40,3%; F. : 59,7%		Organizational (Alpha) (N=172) M.: 41, 9; F.: 58,1		Societal (Beta) (N=96); M: M=37,5%; F.:62,5%	
Age	39,17	22-60	39	22-60	39,3	24-57
Years of formal education	16,70	12-26	16,5	12-23	17,1	12-26
Years in management positions	5,9	1-20	5,5	1-20	6,5	1-19
Years of full time working experience	15,8	2-37	15,3	2-36	16,7	2-37
Years worked for present employer	10,36	1-37	10,4	1-32	10,2	1-37

For testing the statistical significance of differences between organizational practices and societal practices ("as it is" variables) the independent-samples T-Test was employed, using the 0.05 significance threshold. The same test was performed for analyzing the discrepancies between organizational values and societal values ("as it should be" variables).

Findings

To analyze related and supporting industries as well as rivalry in the home market, we also included foreign multinational corporations as they have a decisive influence on the country's competitiveness. The exclusive focus on domesitc country characteristics would neglect the influence of multinational corporations on foreign markets (Dunning 1993). In particular, we do not only look at the Russian diamond of competitive advantage, but combine this with the German one. This construction of double diamonds (Cartwright 1993; Rugman/D'Cruz 1993) allows us to analyze the competitive position of German renewable energy firms in Russia.

The answers to the four research questions stated in Introduction are based upon the data provided by Table 4 to Table 7.

The first research question asked whether there are significant differences between the practices and values for the cultural dimensions of organizational culture in Romanian finance industry. Table 4 summarised the relevant data for answering this question.

In the case of the Romanian finance industry, statistically significant differences between organizational practices and values were found for the following cultural dimensions (based on t value): in group collectivism (t = -9,307; sig=

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0.000), power distance (t = 6.593; sig = 0.000); gender egalitarianism (t = -3.582; sig = 0.000), performance orientation (t = 2.608; sig = 0.010), institutional collectivism (t = -2.189; sig = 0.030) and uncertainty avoidance (t = -2.128; sig = 0.035). The other cultural dimensions (future orientation, human orientation and assertiveness), do not record significant differences between as it is and should be at organizational level.

Table 4. Differences between practices and values at organizational level (finance sample)

Dimension		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t*	Sig (2-tailed)**
Uncertainty avoidance	Practice	170	3,3255	1,36354	-2,128	0,035
	Value	170	3,5265	1,33458		
Future orientation	Practice	170	3,6980	1,51271	-0,927	0,355
	Value	170	3,7853	1,34816		
Power distance	Practice	170	4,0980	,93345	6,593	0,000
	Value	170	3,5373	,96772		
Collectivism1	Practice	172	4,1202	,89532	-2,189	0,030
	Value	172	4,3198	,93266		
Humane orientation	Practice	172	3,6177	1,34980	-0,112	0,911
	Value	172	3,6294	1,03819		
Performance orientation	Practice	170	3,4118	1,42811	2,608	0,010
	Value	170	3,0706	2,12676		
Collectivism2	Practice	169	3,7444	1,10948	-9,307	0,000
	Value	169	4,4586	1,05060		
Gender egalitarianism	Practice	172	4,3760	1,01169	-3,582	0,000
	Value	172	4,6512	,71254		
Assertiveness	Practice	172	3,8547	,75507	-0,373	0,710
	Value	172	3,8857	,80478		

* 95% confidence interval of mean differences

** paired samples T-test

The second research question asked whether there are significant differences between societal practices and values for the investigated cultural dimensions in Romania. Table 5 includes the data relevant to answer this question.

The data indicated that according to the view of the middle managers from finance industry, there are significant discrepancies between societal practices and values in the Romanian society. The statistical test revealed significant differences between the values of "as it is" and "as it should be" variables in the case of the following cultural dimensions (based on t value): future orientation (t = 3.850; sig = 0.000), uncertainty avoidance (t = 3.053; sig = 0.003),

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assertiveness (t = -2.632; sig = 0.010), humane orientation (t = 2.487; sig = 0.015), institutional collectivism (t = -2.255; sig = 0.026), gender egalitarianism (t = - 2.194; sig = 0.031), and in group collectivism (t = -2.056; sig = 0.043). For power distance and performance orientation the subjects did not signal significant differences between societal cultural practices and values.

Table 5. Differences between practices and values at societal level (finance sample)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t*	Sig (2-tailed)**
Pair 1	Pr. Uncertainty avoidance	96	4,1172	1,08273	3,053	,003
	V. Uncertainty avoidance	96	3,4375	1,51826		
Pair 2	Pr. Future orientation	96	4,5104	,78987	3,850	,000
	V. Future orientation	96	3,8672	1,50173		
Pair 3	Pr. Power distance	96	4,0562	,88482	,983	,328
	V. Power distance	96	3,8667	1,18966		
Pair 4	Pr. Collectivism1	96	3,7266	,80220	-2,255	,026
	V. Collectivism1	96	3,9870	,90929		
Pair 5	Pr. Humane orientation	96	3,9271	,85057	2,487	,015
	V. Humane orientation	96	3,5703	1,38540		
Pair 6	Pr. Performance orientation	96	4,0521	1,13666	-,340	,735
	V. Performance orientation	96	4,1328	1,70794		
Pair 7	Pr. Collectivism2	96	3,4609	1,50496	-2,056	,043
	V. Collectivism2	96	3,6641	1,27724		
Pair 8	Pr. Gender egalitarianism	96	3,8437	,67820	-2,194	,031
	V. Gender egalitarianism	96	4,0313	,54547		
Pair 9	Pr. Assertiveness	96	3,6389	,98131	-2,632	,010
	V. Assertiveness	96	4,0521	,86156		

* Paired sample T-test

* 95% confidence interval; paired samples T-test

The third research questions inquired which are the significant differences between the organizational and societal culture with respect to practices. The data to support the answer to this question is provided by data of Table 6.

The differences between organizational practices in the finance industry and societal practices (as perceived by middle-managers from the Romanian finance industry) were statistically significant in the case of the following cultural dimensions (based on t-value): future orientation (t = -5.798; sig = 0.000), uncertainty avoidance (t = -5.204; sig = 0.000), gender egalitarianism (t = 5.135; sig = 0.000), performance orientation (t = -3.992; sig = 0.000), institutional

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collectivism (t = 3.579; sig = 0.000) and humane orientation (t = -2.298; sig = 0.022). In the case of power distance, in group collectivism and assertiveness, there are no significant differences between organizational and societal practices.

Table 6. Differences between practices at organizational and societal level (finance sample)

Dimension	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t*	Sig (2-tailed)**
Uncertainty avoidance	organizational	170	3,3255	1,36354	-5,204	,000
	societal	96	4,1172	1,08273		
Future orientation	organizational	172	3,6957	1,50927	-5,798	,000
	societal	96	4,5104	,78987		
Power distance	organizational	170	4,0980	,93345	,357	,721
	societal	96	4,0562	,88482		
Collectivism1	organizational	172	4,1202	,89532	3,579	,000
	societal	96	3,7266	,80220		
Humane orientation	organizational	172	3,6177	1,34980	-2,298	,022
	societal	96	3,9271	,85057		
Performance orientation	organizational	171	3,4167	1,42535	-3,992	,000
	societal	96	4,0521	1,13666		
Collectivism2	organizational	170	3,7400	1,10766	1,590	,114
	societal	96	3,4609	1,50496		
Gender egalitarianism	organizational	172	4,3760	1,01169	5,135	,000
	societal	96	3,8437	,67820		
Assertiveness	organizational	172	3,8547	,75507	1,868	,064
	societal	96	3,6389	,98131		

* For Power distance and Collectivism 1 "equal variances assumed", in Levene's test for equality of variances

** 95% confidence interval of the mean difference

The fourth research questions inquired the significant differences between the organizational and societal culture with respect to values. The data relevant to answer this question is included in table 7.

The t-test shows significant differences between organizational and societal values for the following cultural dimensions (based on t-value): gender egalitarianism (t = 7.968; sig = 0.000), in group collectivism (t = 5.153; sig = 0.005), performance orientation (t= -4.507; sig = 0.000), institutional collectivism (t= 2.826; sig = 0.005), power distance (t = -2.179; sig = 0.031). For uncertainty avoidance, future orientation, humane orientation and assertiveness, the respondents did not seem to feel that there are significant differences between the two levels.

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Table 7. Differences between values at organizational and societal level (finance sample)

Dimension	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t*	Sig (2-tailed)**
Uncertainty avoidance	organizational	172	3,5174	1,33185	,431	,667
	societal	96	3,4375	1,51826		
Future orientation	organizational	170	3,7853	1,34816	-,443	,658
	societal	96	3,8672	1,50173		
Power distance	organizational	172	3,5562	,97935	-2,178	,031
	societal	96	3,8667	1,18966		
Collectivism1	organizational	172	4,3198	,93266	2,826	,005
	societal	96	3,9870	,90929		
Humane orientation	organizational	172	3,6294	1,03819	,364	,716
	societal	96	3,5703	1,38540		
Performance orientation	organizational	171	3,0585	2,12640	-4,507	,000
	societal	96	4,1328	1,70794		
Collectivism2	organizational	171	4,4522	1,04608	5,153	,000
	societal	96	3,6641	1,27724		
Gender egalitarianism	organizational	172	4,6512	,71254	7,969	,000
	societal	96	4,0313	,54547		
Assertiveness	organizational	172	3,8857	,80478	-1,582	,115
	societal	96	4,0521	,86156		

* For Collectivism 1 and Assertiveness, "equal variances assumed" in Levene's test for equality of variances

** 95% confidence interval of the mean difference; independent sample T test

A synthesis of the above findings is provided by Table 8. It shows that the cultural dimensions having a big "differential loading" are (in decreasing order): institutional collectivism, gender egalitarianism (recording significant differences at all of quadrant components), in group collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance (recording significant differences for three of cultural quadrant components.)

Discussions

Due to the data volume and space constraints, the discussions are limited to those cultural dimensions which recorded significant differences for all components of cultural quadrant or for majority of them (see Table 8) including institutional collectivism, gender egalitarianism, in group collectivism, performance orientation, and uncertainty avoidance.

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Table 8. Matrix of significant differences

Cultural dimension	$P._{org.}$ vs. $V._{org}$	$P._{soc.}$ vs. $V._{soc}$	$P._{org.}$ vs. $P._{soc}$	$V._{org.}$ vs. $V._{soc}$
Uncertainty avoidance	t = -2,128 sig = 0,035	t = 3,053 sig = 0.003	t = -5,204 sig = 0,000	
Future orientation		t = 3,850 sig = 0,000	t = -5,798 sig = 0,000	
Power distance	t = 6,593 sig = 0,000			t = -2,178 sig = 0,031
Collectivism1	t = -2,189 sig = 0,030	t = -2,255 sig = 0,026	t = 3,579 sig = 0,000	t = 2,826 sig =0,005
Humane orientation		t = 2,487 sig = 0,015	t = -2,298 sig = 0,022	
Performance orientation	t = 2,608 sig = 0,010		t = -3,992 sig = 0,000	t = - 4,507 sig = 0,000
Collectivism2	t = -9,307 sig = 0,000	t = -2,056 sig =0,043		t = 5,153 sig = 0,000
Gender egalitarianism	t = 3,582 sig = 0,000	t = -2,194 sig = 0,031	t = 5,135 sig = 0,000	t = 7,969 sig = 0,000
Assertiveness		t = -2,632 sig = 0,010		

Institutional collectivism

Institutional collectivism shows the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action (House et al. 2004). The mean values at organizational level are just above the scale middle point (practice: 4.120; value: 4.319), with a significant difference between reality (practices) and norm (values) (t = -2.189, sig = 0.003). The mean values at societal level are just below the scale midpoint (practice 3.7266; value 3.9870), with a significant deficit in practice (t= - 2.255, sig = 0.026). The respondents perceive a higher institutional collectivism at the level of organizational practice than at the level of society practice (t= 3,579; sig = 0,000). At the same time, the respondents desire more institutional collectivism in their organizations than in the Romanian society (t = 2.826; sig = 0.005 for the gap between organizational and societal institutional collectivism value).

Deepening the analysis, it seems that the subjects perceive a high enough individualism in their organization when scoring the statement: “managers encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer” (reverse scored item mean = 3.453; st. dev.= 1.861). Interesting, the respondents desire even a higher individualism (lower collectivism) at this level (reverse scored item mean 3.133). They perceive that in practice, “individualism is more valued than group cohesion” (reverse scored item mean 3.558) and desire that “people should not work only on individual projects” (mean 5.20). This acute manifestation of

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individualism is understandable after 40 years of communist collectivist ideology (the biggest collapse of collectivism in the history took place in Eastern Europe in the last 20 years, giving room to individualism flourishing).

Gender egalitarianism

Gender egalitarianism measures the degree to which an organization/society fights against gender discrimination, and promotes gender equality (House et al. 2004). Our respondents considered that women do benefit from some opportunities both in the organizational context of the finance industry and in the Romanian society as a whole. However, they wished for more opportunities for women in both contexts. As employees in finance industry and as members of Romanian society our respondents feel significant differences between the practices and the values of this cultural dimension (t= - 3.582; sig = 0.000 at organizational level; t= -2.194; sig = 0.031 at societal level). The respondents perceive that women are more favored in their organizations, than in the society as a whole (t=5.135, sig = 0.000 for practice). They also desire more opportunities for women at organizational rather than at society level (t=7.969; sig = 0.000).

Looking at the items belonging to gender egalitarianism construct, we see that in a sample dominated by women (almost 59%), the subjects do not agree that "men are encouraged to participate in professional development activities more than women" in their organizations (mean 5.47). They also disagree with the statement that "men should be encouraged to participate in professional development activities more than women" (mean 5.00). Some might wonder in what degree the communist ideology is accountable for this egalitarian mentality about men and women. Existing studies have shown that in a little degree (Finlay et al, 2005), because women emancipation in communism has been more a party propaganda issue than a social and cultural reality. Probably we should look for the answer in keeping the tradition about respect paid to woman in Romania.

In group collectivism

In group collectivism measures the degree to which individuals express the pride of belonging to an organization or family, loyalty and cohesiveness to them (House et al. 2004). Surprising, the findings seem to show that at organizational and societal levels, the subjects slightly disagree with the practice of this cultural dimension (mean = 3.744 for organization; 3.460 for societal) and desire a higher level for it at organizational level (mean 4.458). In turn, at societal level the respondents' expectations are lower than the scale average, keeping the slight disagreement with this cultural value (mean 3.664). The most significant differences are recorded between practices and values, with the biggest deficit at organizational level (t= - 9.307; sig = 0.000 vs. t = - 2.056; sig = 0.043). This is

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why, at the organizational level, the desire for in group collectivism is higher than at societal one (t = 5. 153; sig = 0.000).

Going down to the items level it has to be noticed that, for example, the average perception is that the organization "does not show loyalty towards employees" (mean 3.462). Maybe this is why the employees do not feel very loyal to their organization and do not think they should feel so (t = 3.499; sig = 0.000). However, they desire that organizational members "should take a great deal of pride in working for the organization" (mean 6.15).

Performance orientation

Performance orientation shows the degree to which the organization/society encourages its members to promote and reward excellence (House et al. 2004). In economic language, performance is strongly related to the work output: quality, salary, profit, innovation, competitive advantage etc. Our findings show that performance orientation does not look as strength in the context of the Romanian finance industry and society. Both practices and values concerning this cultural dimension obtained mean values around the scale midpoint, with some gaps between perceptions at organizational and societal levels. The subjects do not seem interested by the performance in their organizations (practice mean = 3.411; value mean = 3.07). The expectations are lower, giving the impression that in practice already exist a surplus in this respect (t=2.608; sig=0.010). The ratio between practice and value is slightly reversed at societal level (practice mean = 4.052; value mean 4.132) without showing significant differences between them. However, the "societal subject" is more sensitive toward performance idea than the "organizational subject". The scores given by the first one are significantly higher than those of the second one, both at practice (t = -3.992; sig=0.000) and expectation levels (t= -4.507; sig = 0.000). It looks like a paradox: the "organizational subject" perceives a surplus of performance orientation, while the "societal subject", a deficit of this orientation. The paradox seems to vanish if we take a closer look at some items belonging to this cultural construct. For instance, the finance respondents believe that "being innovative to improve performance is generally an effort bellow somewhat rewarded" (mean =3.695). Again, the paradox deepens when the same respondents consider that "being innovative to improve performance should not be substantially rewarded" (mean =3.017). The respondents neither perceive that in their organizations "most employees set challenging work goals for themselves" (mean =3.69), nor agree that "employees should set challenging work goals for themselves" (mean=3.348). A prior to GLOBE study conducted in 1996 showed that 13 years ago only 5.26% of 242 Romanian managers believed their company's culture first priority was performance orientation (Catana/Catana 1996). It is well known that more performing, active, pragmatic societies are more resistant in the history. It is often said that Romanians are rather meditative. Between a culture of dreaming and another one of action,

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Romanians would rather choose the dreaming one. This might be caused by orthodoxy and the communist ideology, but these suppositions demand empirical testing. Anyway, the history proves the Romanians did not excel in economic performance not even prior to communism. Therefore, finding out the causality of such a complex cultural phenomenon as performance orientation is should demands and worth a broader, inter and multi disciplinary research effort.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the degree in which the members of an organization/society strive to diminish uncertainty, relaying their activity on established social norms, rituals, solid bureaucratic practices (House et al. 2004). It concerns the way in which individuals and organizations act or do not act in the spirit of order, law, customs and formalized procedures. The subjects' assessment on this cultural dimension varies in between 3.3 and 4.1, showing a disagreement/ slight agreement with the statements belonging to this construct. It seems that for the two samples, uncertainty avoidance is relatively low. At organizational level, the subjects perceive a certain deficit in norms, procedures and bureaucratic practices meant to diminish uncertainty and risk in running the business (practice mean 3.325; values mean 3.526; t= - 2.128; sig = 0.035). At societal level, the respondents' answers give the impression of a surplus of uncertainty avoidance in practice (practice mean 4.117; values mean 3.437). Comparing practices at organizational and societal levels, the data shows significant differences between them (t = -5.204; sig = 0.000). Meantime, there are no significant differences in expectation, the expectations mean values being very close (3.5174 vs. 3.4375). A closer look at the items belonging to this construct show that the subjects express rather a slight disagreement with the statement that in their organization "orderliness and consistency are/should be stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation" (practice mean 3.418; expectation mean 3.843; t = -3.249; sig = 0.000). At the same time, the middle managers in finance show disagreement with the statement that in their organizations "job requirements and instructions are spelled out in detail so employees know what they are expected to do" (mean 3.205) or with the statement that "managers should provide detailed instructions concerning how to achieve goals" (mean 3.700) (t = -2.565; sig = 0.001). Relatively low uncertainty avoidance and the desire for increasing it might lead to the idea that both finance organizations and the society as a whole lack the ability to prevent crisis, lack a systematic planning activities, and rely on improvisation in decision making and problem solving. In an extended discussion, these findings could be correlated with the subjects' perception and desire for societal and organizational future orientation.

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Conclusions and relevancies

The worldwide financial crisis that begun in 2007 is a consequence of increasing globalization in financial services and of increasing interdependencies between national financial systems. Beyond the global economic challenges, the financial industry is confronted with new business difficulties and opportunities generated by the cultural diversity of societies and by the big global finance and banking organizations.

A number of studies had already shown the nature of the impact that national culture has on organizational cultures. Such studies suggest that that the higher the differences between societal and organizational cultures, the stronger the differences between practices and values of these cultural entities (society vs. organizations) (House et. al, 2004; Chhokar et al., 2007). Our findings show that most of the cultural dimensions record significant differences between practices and values both at the level of organizations and at the level of the whole society. This study started from the reality that Romanian financial and money market is dominated by foreign capital, especially from Western and Central Europe. A question that needs to be answered in this context is whether the prevalence of foreign capital could explain the significant differences between the organizational culture in Romanian finance and the Romanian societal culture in practices and expectations (as reflected by finance middle managers).

Our study has scientific, pragmatic and didactic relevance.

From scientific point of view, our findings enrich the field literature with data about Romania (country missing from original GLOBE II sample in which differences between societal and organizational culture in finance, food and telecommunications industries are analyzed). From now on comparative studies (Romania and other cultures approached by GLOBE project) concerning the finance managers perceptions and expectations for organizational and societal values and behaviors in the context of regionalization (Central and East Europe), integration (European Union) and globalization processes can be performed.

From a pragmatic point of view, our findings are relevant for different "knowledge agents" in the context of management and leadership in the finance industry (and not only). First, the study offer a list of practices and values that managers and leaders might take into account in being more efficient at managing in the context of Romanian finance. Managers and leaders in finance industry can use the nine cultural dimensions as predictors of management and leadership effectiveness. In this way they will be able to create and develop culturally appropriate leadership/management styles. In described cultural pattern, interested leaders might produce cultural changes through maximizing or minimizing some cultural dimensions, and might set the cultural trends in their organizations. The international banks acting in Romania will initiate changes in management and leadership in order to let behind the crisis. It is a

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good moment for adopting new practices and values (in fact, new cultures). In the years of growth preceding the current financial crisis, the cultural values were not paid enough attention. During the crisis, the leaders need to look more closely for ways of increasing effectiveness.

Second, our findings are useful for consultants, head hunting, coaching, executive search companies, as well as for other actors supplying HRM services. Consultancy firms can design leadership and executive development programs emphasizing cultural solutions. Head hunting companies might create "cultural filters" for expat managers in finance, who often experience cultural shocks in their first years of work in Romania. For example, mergers and acquisitions in finance are expected to increase in Romania. The complexity involved in negotiations, mergers, acquisitions might be better dealt with if cultural differences are clearly known. Specialists in coaching can offer to expat or Romanian leaders and executives in finance cross cultural advices in creating working environments appropriate to Romanian organizational and societal culture – answering the question "why should you do this" in Romanian culture.

Finally, our findings have relevancy for Romanian and foreign management higher education, MBA and doctoral studies in management. They could be a valuable starting point in developing GLOBE type research through dissertation and doctoral thesis.

Limits and future research

The present findings need to be considered as part of an ongoing research. They might be influenced by the sample size, especially of that answering questionnaire Beta. To deal with this potential factor, one of the actions for future research is to enlarge the sample. It is also possible that the respondents' perception has been influenced by the fact that data collection took place under global financial crisis conditions. Moreover, the middle managers are a specific population (comparing with top managers or first line managers). The question is if the findings generated by their perceptions/expectations could be extended to other types of managers and/or to other industries outside finance.

The objectives of our future research are: first, an extension of analysis in the food and telecommunications fields to assess the impact of industry nature on cultural perceptions and expectations; second, a comparison of organizational culture in Romanian finance industry with that of finance industry in countries of foreign capital origin (such as Greece, Austria, Nederland); and finally, the enrichment of methodology with qualitative methods such as focus groups, interviews, mass media analysis.

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