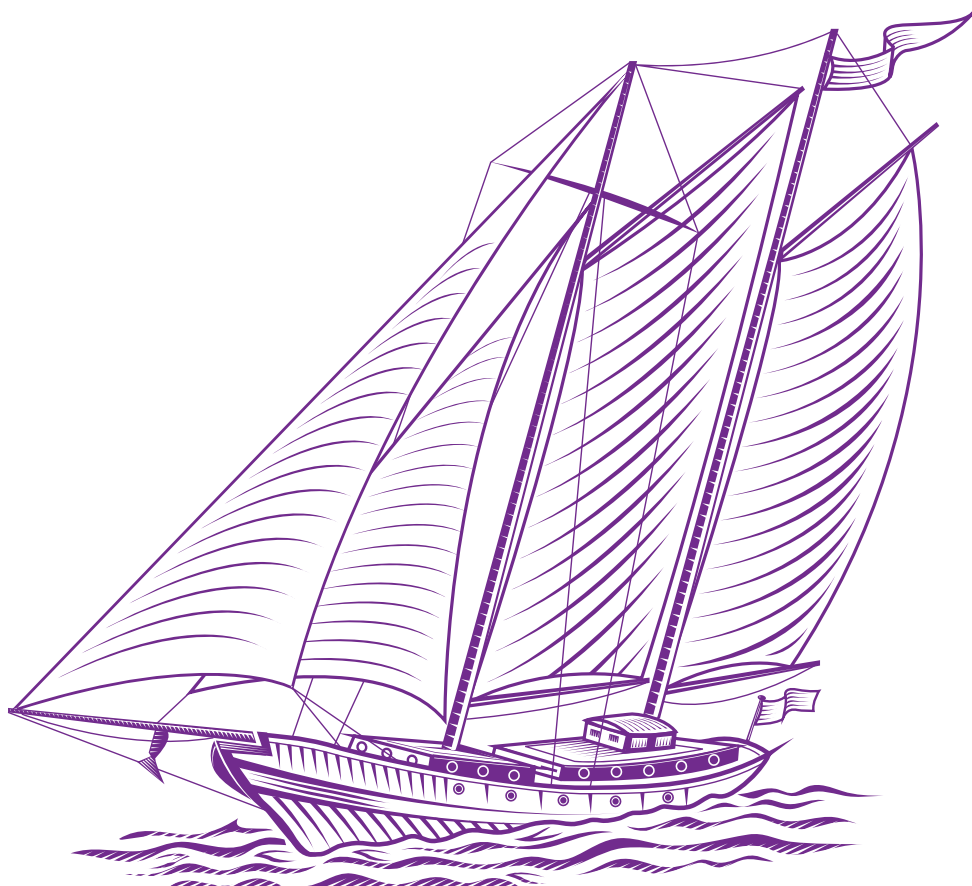




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INVESTIGATING THE IMAGE OF A TOURIST DESTINATION: THE CASE OF SAARISELKÄ

CRISTINA VIJOLI¹, NICOLAE MARINESCU²

ABSTRACT. This paper emphasizes the importance of defining a precise image for a tourist destination. We review first the main contributions in the literature on tourist destinations and their marketing. Then, we outline the methodology of a marketing research conducted in Saariselkä, a resort located in northern Finland. The results of the research provide interesting insights on how the image of this particular destination is perceived by tourists. The findings of the research also enable us to draw several conclusions which may prove useful for an enhanced efficiency of the promotional efforts.

Key words: tourist destination, marketing research, online promotion

JEL Classification: L83

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1. Introduction

The process of creating the image of a certain tourist destination implies the research, implementation and assessment of tourists' opinions on that respective destination.

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The main aim of this paper is to analyze, by means of a marketing research, the opinions of tourists on Saariselkä, a destination in northern Finland, with a view to identify the elements of differentiation for Saariselkä as a tourist destination.

The research undertaken within this paper is an empirical study and, as such, contributes to the literature on the way tourist destinations are perceived, and subsequently marketed. The paper enriches the insights of other recent regional studies that deal with the promotion of tourist destinations. The results of the research offer interesting and useful findings for the administrators of the tourist destination in order to promote it more efficiently on the tourism market.

The paper is structured as follows: we start by surveying some of the important contributions in the literature on the definition and marketing of tourist destinations. In the next section, the method of the marketing research is detailed together with the investigated population and the resulting sample. The third section comprises the main results of the research oriented towards the opinions of tourists on the Saariselkä destination. In the last section we draw some conclusions considering the way Saariselkä is currently perceived and promoted and we suggest some recommendations.

2. Review of Literature

One of the first researchers to approach the concept of tourist destination was Gunn, who defined it as a collection of experiences gained by the traveller (Gunn, 1972). More elaborate, Leiper considered the tourist destination to be a packaging of products and services partly created by public and private operators. The core is not the single attraction in itself, but a combination of factors made through the tourist's consumption experience (Leiper, 1990). Further, a destination is also a place where tourist activities have been developed and then tourist products are produced and consumed (Buhalis and Costa, 2006).

According to the UNWTO (2007), a tourist destination is characterized by three perspectives: geographical (a distinctly recognizable area that tourists visit and stay in during their trip), economic (the place where they stay and spend a relevant amount of money and where tourism revenue is significant), and psychological (the main rational or emotional reasons for the journey).

Destination marketing is then an amalgamation of individual or collective efforts and activities created to form a total experience of a visited place (Murphy *et al.*, 2000).

Tourist destination marketing is the on-going research and evaluation process conducted upon the target public's needs, by means of which the organizations in charge with tourist destination management build the image of the location (Morrison, 2013).

The purpose of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is to create a well-designed marketing mix targeted at a clearly defined target market to move a destination into the consideration set of that specific market (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989).

A major aim of the positioning strategy of a tourist destination should be to reinforce positive images already held by the target audience, correct negative images, or create a new image (Pike and Ryan, 2004). In fact, this understanding of the destination image is critical and provides the basis for more effective and efficient future strategic planning for the destination (Ispas and Saragea, 2011). Della Corte and Micera (2007) define destination image as the whole of beliefs, ideas and impressions a destination can generate in potential and actual tourists' minds. According to other authors, a destination image is composed of 3 elements: the product (for instance the attraction itself), the behavior plus attitude of hosts and the environment, consisting of weather, scenery and facilities (Milman and Pizam, 1995). As Lai and Li (2016) observe in their recent comprehensive research of 45 representative definitions of tourist destination image, even though this concept has been extensively studied, its nature and scope still remain vague.

The core of the concept remains the same, though. The need to build a strong image for a tourism destination stems from the desire of understanding the psychological forces that motivate individual travelers, as noted by Chon (1990). Thus, one can say that the process of creating the image of the tourist destination involves researching, implementing and evaluating the tourists' opinions in this regard. It entails the promotion of a tourist destination on various media channels. Promotion is one of the important activities conducted by the organization in charge of the tourist destination management. Likewise, this activity has an essential

role in creating the image of the tourist destination, and its competitive edge over other tourist destinations. The promotion, development, and finally, the knowledge of tourist destinations by visitors are possible after identifying genuine elements, capable to differentiate a place from others (Baltescu, 2016).

The use of the internet to promote a tourist destination represents a big opportunity nowadays. Thus, destinations can benefit from the increasing popularity of social media and web services, using these tools to develop a coherent image in the global marketplace, and interacting with potential tourists, to subsequently ensure delivery of high levels of customer satisfaction (Morgan *et al.*, 2004). Given the strong competition between destinations and the increasing trend of worldwide tourism, new empirical studies are continuously published on how to best promote selected tourist destinations.

3. Material and method

The purpose of our research was to find the elements of differentiation for Saariselkä as a destination on the tourism market, and more generally to analyze the tourists' perceptions on the image of Saariselkä as a tourist destination.

The research objectives were the following:

- to identify the profile of the tourists who visit Saariselkä;
- to establish the main reasons for choosing Saariselkä by tourists;
- to identify the information sources used by the people who choose Saariselkä as their tourist destination;
- to assess the quality of the information retrieved within these sources;
- to measure the notoriety of several tourist attractions;
- to identify the main tourist attractions.

The following research hypotheses were set:

A. General hypotheses

1) Most tourists checked the official website of the destination (www.saariselka.fi) before choosing Saariselkä as their destination.

2) The tourists analyzed the variety of leisure activities, when choosing Saariselkä as their tourist destination.

3) Tourists believe that Saariselkä is an ideal holiday destination for a family.

4) The tourists took into account the activities for children, when choosing Saariselkä as destination.

B. Statistical hypotheses

1) Over 70% of tourists checked the official website of the destination (www.saariselka.fi) before choosing Saariselkä as their destination.

Below 70% of tourists checked the official website of the destination (www.saariselka.fi) before choosing Saariselkä as their destination.

2) The tourists considered the variety of leisure activities to be important, when choosing Saariselkä as their destination.

The tourists did not consider the variety of leisure activities to be important, when choosing Saariselkä as their destination.

3) Tourists agree that Saariselkä is an ideal holiday destination for a family.

Tourists do not agree that Saariselkä is an ideal holiday destination for a family.

4) Tourists considered the activities for children to be important, when choosing Saariselkä as destination.

Tourists did not consider the activities for children to be important, when choosing Saariselkä as destination.

The research was a descriptive one. In order to gather the data, the survey-based inquiry was used. The tool for data collection was a questionnaire, filled in face-to-face with the target public.

A non-random sampling method, namely conventional sampling was applied. It supposes choosing the sample components through interviews conducted on street or in an enclosure, by stopping the persons that the operator considers to be part of the population studied (Constantin, 2009). This research was conducted on the main street of Saariselkä, at the ski slopes and inside Tunturi hotel. The studied population consisted of tourists. Throughout the duration of the research (March 2015), the number of tourists in Saariselkä reached around 6,000 persons according to the regional marketing agency, of which about 60% women and 40% men, aged between 35 and 64 years old. The majority of tourists present at the time were of Finnish origin (approx. 60%), the others from abroad (40%).

In order to determine the sample size, using a non-random sampling, a confidence level of 95% and a permissible error of $\pm 5\%$, for which “z” takes the value 1.96, were considered. Thus, the size “n” of the sample in the case of the percentages was determined, applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{E^2}$$

where,

E = permissible error, expressed in percentages;

z = the value in the normal-distribution table, corresponding to the confidence level considered;

p = the assessment in case of success, or of those who answer “Yes”;

$q = (100 - p)$ the assessment in case of failure, or of those who answer “No”.

In this situation, we do not have previous information about “p”. Therefore, the maximum achievable level is adopted: $p = 50\% \Rightarrow q = 50\%$.

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384$$

$n = 384$ persons who represent the tourists of Saariselkä.

For objective reasons, a sample consisting of 384 persons could not be taken into account; hence, a fixed sample size of 153 persons was chosen.

In this case, the error is:

$$E = \sqrt{\frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{n}} = \sqrt{\frac{1.96^2 \cdot 50 \cdot 50}{153}} = 7.92$$

The resulting confidence level is:

$$p \pm z \sqrt{\frac{p \cdot q}{n}} = 0.5 \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{50 \cdot 50}{153}} = 0.5 \pm 0.0792$$

As a result, the sample size of 153 persons entailed a reduction of the precision level, namely the acceptance of a greater error, while maintaining the confidence level (95%). Establishing that sample size, the representativeness was guaranteed with an error of $\pm 7.92\%$ and with a confidence level of 95%. The sample validation was performed by means of a comparison test of the percentage differences.

$$H_0: \pi = \pi_0 ; H_1: \pi \neq \pi_0$$

Where: H_0 – null hypothesis;

H_1 – alternative hypothesis;

π – percentage at the level of the studied population;

π_0 – real percentage at the level of the researched population;

p – percentage at sample level.

$$z_{obs} = \frac{|p - \pi|}{\sqrt{\frac{p \cdot (100 - p)}{n}}}$$

4. Results and discussions

The results of the research revealed some interesting insights.

Most interviewed tourists (37.9%) indicated cross country ski as their main reason for choosing this tourist destination (see fig.1). A large part of them mentioned that the ski slopes were similar to those

of other resorts in northern Lapland. Yet, what differentiate Saariselkä from other resorts were the purity of nature and the lack of massive buildings.

As for the way tourists used to book their stay in Saariselkä, a percentage of 30.7% of the respondents booked their tourist services by means of online booking websites. A similar percentage opted for packages offered by travel agencies. Other ways of booking marked small percentages.

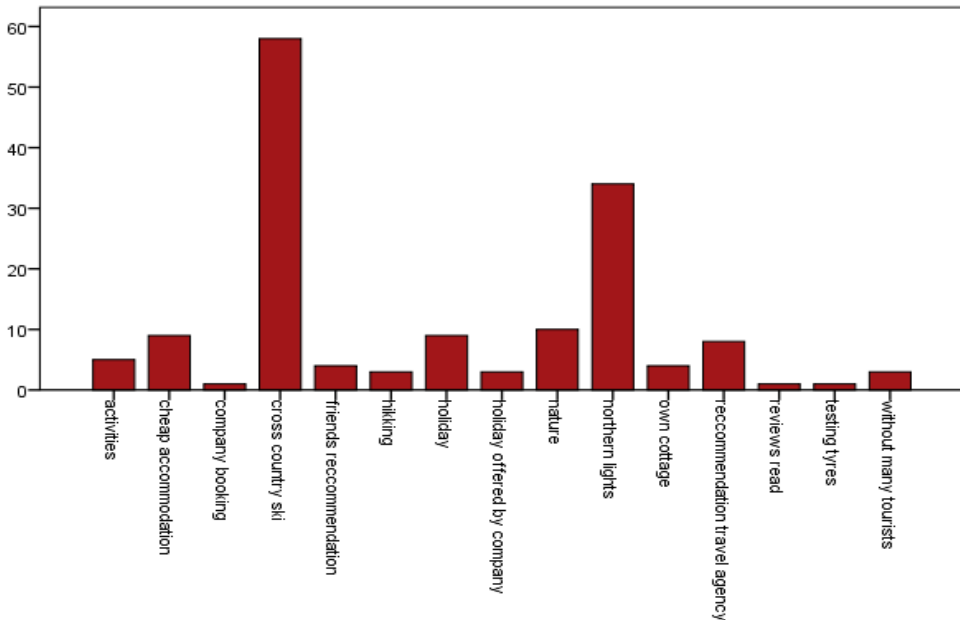


Fig.1. Reasons for choosing Saariselkä

The most commonly used information sources by tourists for choosing Saariselkä were: the official website of the destination, advice from friends/family, and reviews posted on Tripadvisor.com (see table 1). Thus, a percentage of 63.8% of all respondents resorted to the official website of the destination as their information source, this answer representing 24.4% of the total. The smallest percentage in the total number of answers was marked by videos on Vimeo or YouTube (5.9%), used only by 2.3% of respondents.

Table 1. Response frequencies on information sources

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Information sources	Comments on Facebook/Twitter	15	3.8%	9.9%
	Friends/Family	47	11.8%	30.9%
	Holiday and Travel Blogs	22	5.5%	14.5%
	Information from travel agency	43	10.8%	28.3%
	Photos on Pinterest/Tumblr	10	2.5%	6.6%
	Reviews on Booking.com	28	7.1%	18.4%
	Reviews on TripAdvisor.com	48	12.1%	31.6%
	Saariselkä's Facebook profile	38	9.6%	25.0%
	Saariselkä's mobile application	13	3.3%	8.6%
	Website saariselka.fi	97	24.4%	63.8%
	Videos on Vimeo/YouTube	9	2.3%	5.9%
	Other	27	9.8%	25.7%
Total		397	100.0%	261.2%

Among those who checked the website www.saariselka.fi, 43% stated it included useful information; yet they suggested it might be updated with aspects related to leisure activities. However, as regards the information on Tripadvisor.com, most respondents considered it to be neither irrelevant, nor relevant, which means it should be reviewed and completed. A consistent portion of respondents considered the information on the Facebook page to be useful. The tourists said, nevertheless, they wanted to find more information on weather and on the activities that can be performed in Saariselkä. The research also brought forward the activities that tourists would like to perform when staying in Saariselkä (see table 2).

The clear majority of respondents (19.4%) said they would make cross country ski throughout the time period spent in Saariselkä. Likewise, a large proportion of tourists (17.5%) emphasized they would make a trip to see Aurora Borealis (most of them were of foreign origin). An activity quite popular among tourists is the husky dogsled ride (10.5%).

Table 2. Response frequencies on preferred activities

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Activities	Cross Country Skiing	98	19.4%	64.1%
	Dinner at Reindeer Farm	23	4.6%	15.0%
	Down-hill skiing/Snowboarding	36	7.1%	23.5%
	Husky safari	53	10.5%	34.6%
	Angry Birds Activity Park	5	1.0%	3.3%
	Reindeer safari	26	5.2%	17.0%
	See the Aurora Borealis (trips)	88	17.5%	57.5%
	Snowmobiling	44	8.7%	28.8%
	Snow shoe hiking	50	9.9%	32.7%
	Visit Santa Claus's Resort	9	1.8%	5.9%
	Other	72	14.3%	47.0%
Total		504	100.0%	329.4%

As for the most important factors for choosing Saariselkä, results showed that nature and a relaxing environment played a major role (see fig. 2). This factor had an average of 4.71 in terms of importance (where: 1-very unimportant, 5-very important). 76.5% of respondents considered that nature and a relaxing environment were very important in the decisional process of choosing Saariselkä as their holiday destination. Most respondents totally agreed that Saariselkä is an ideal location for spending the holidays with a group of friends, yet they did not agree that, in this destination, the price of services is low.

**Fig. 2.** The importance of various factors when choosing Saariselkä

One can see that tourists perceived Saariselkä as a destination offering a wide variety of activities, which can be performed along with a group of friends (see fig. 3). A large portion of the respondents considered the locals to be hospitable and friendly, and Saariselkä to be a unique/original destination. The average score for the first statement had the value of 3.63 (where: 1-don't agree, 5-agree), meaning that tourists agreed that the destination is worth being visited also in the summer season/throughout the year.



Fig. 3. Opinions on Saariselkä

Tourists were also asked to assess the activities that can be performed in Saariselkä, according to the notoriety acquired by means of various promotional channels (see fig. 4), along a scale from 1 to 5 (where: 1-low notoriety; 5-high notoriety).

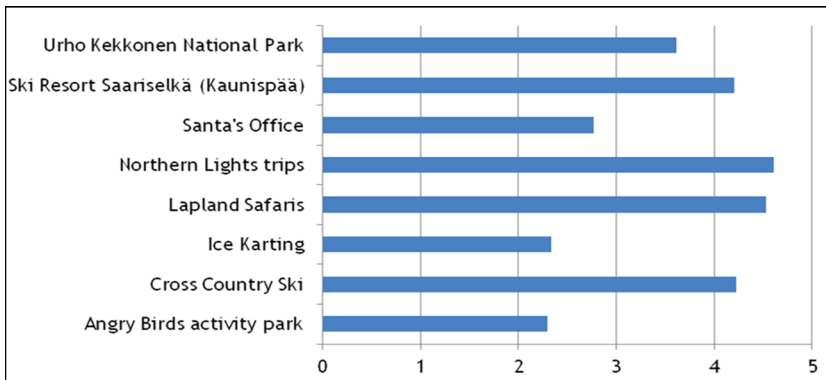


Fig.4. Notoriety of activities in Saariselkä

Note that the highest average (4.61) was obtained by trips made to see Aurora Borealis. The average for Angry Birds Activity Park was of only 2.3, which means the respondents considered the park to have low notoriety. This location has been recently opened and it has not been sufficiently promoted on different media channels, hence it is less known among tourists.

To enrich the findings of the research, the general hypotheses were tested.

1) Most tourists checked the official website of the destination (www.saariselka.fi) before choosing Saariselkä as their tourist destination.

$$H_0: \mu = 0.7; H_1: \mu < 0.7$$

Table 3. Descriptive statistics: official website

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
saariselka.fi	153	.56	.499	.040

At the level of the 153 persons having answered this question, the average of the binary characteristic is 0.56 (see table 3), which signifies that 56% of respondents checked the official website. Note that the percentage at the level of the sample is lower than the theoretical value established in the statistical hypothesis, $\mu_0 = 70\%$ of the respondents.

The significance level Sig. 2-tailed (0,000) is lower than 0.05; therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, according to which, the percentage of the persons who used the official website to inform themselves, is significantly different from 70%. The analysis of the confidence interval leads to the same decision, as it does not include the value "0", the percentage being lower than 70%.

2) Tourists analyzed the variety of leisure activities, when choosing Saariselkä as their tourist destination.

$$H_0: \mu = 4; H_1: \mu \neq 4$$

Table 4. Descriptive statistics: variety of activities

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The variety of leisure activities	153	3.85	1.099	.089

For the 153 respondents, an average of 3.85 was obtained (see table 4), in terms of the importance given by tourists to the variety of leisure activities, with a standard deviation of 1.099. Note that the average at the level of the sample is lower than the theoretical value set in the statistical hypotheses, $\mu_0 = 4$.

The significance level Sig. 2-tailed (0.093) is higher than the significance level 0.05; hence the null hypothesis is accepted, according to which the average score is not significantly different from the value 4. The analysis of the confidence interval leads to the same decision, as it does not include the value "0". In conclusion, tourists considered the variety of leisure activities to be important, representing one of the contributing factors when deciding for Saariselkä as one's tourist destination.

3) According to tourists, Saariselkä is an ideal holiday destination for a family.

$$H_0: \mu = 4; H_1: \mu \neq 4$$

Table 5. Descriptive statistics: family holiday

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Saariselkä is an ideal destination for families.	153	4.01	1.088	.088

An average of 4.01 was obtained for the 153 respondents (see table 5), stating their opinion on Saariselkä as an ideal destination for a family. The average obtained at the level of the sample is higher than the theoretical value set in the statistical hypotheses, $\mu_0 = 4$.

The significance level Sig. 2-tailed (0.882) is higher than the significance level 0.05; hence the null hypothesis is accepted, according to which the average score is not significantly different from the value 4. The analysis of the confidence interval leads to the same decision, as it includes the value "0". Thus, one can state that tourists agreed that Saariselkä is a perfect destination for families.

4) Tourists took into account the activities for children, when choosing Saariselkä.

$$H_0: \mu = 4; H_1: \mu \neq 4$$

Table 6. Descriptive statistics: children activities

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Activities for children	153	1.86	1.269	.103

The average obtained for this hypothesis is of 1.86 (see table 6). The significance level Sig. 2-tailed (0.000) is lower than the significance level 0.05; hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The analysis of the confidence interval leads to the same decision, as it does not include the value "0". In conclusion, tourists did not consider the activities for children to be important, when choosing Saariselkä destination. On the contrary, they considered them hardly important. Most of them said that the destination was ideal for the elderly couples, usually coming to relax.

Differences were also tested, in the case of the average.

H_0 : The notoriety average for the Saariselkä ski resort is the same for both Finnish and foreign tourists; H_1 : The notoriety average for the Saariselkä ski resort differs between Finnish and foreign tourists.

$$H_0: \mu_0 = \mu_1; H_1: \mu_0 \neq \mu_1$$

Table 7. Group statistics: ski resort

	Country of origin	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Ski resort Saariselkä	Finland	82	4.39	1.173	.130
	Foreign country	71	3.99	1.439	.171

For Finnish tourists, the notoriety-assessment average is of 4.39 points (see table 7), ranging between the 4 and 5 levels of the scale. However, at the level of the foreign tourists, the average is lower, 3.99. This aspect shows that the notoriety of the ski resort in Saariselkä is lower among the tourists coming from abroad.

Finally, differences were tested, in the case of percentages.

H_0 : There is no difference between Finnish and foreign tourists, in terms of making the trips to see Aurora Borealis; H_1 : There is a difference between Finnish and foreign tourists, in terms of making the trips to see Aurora Borealis.

$$H_0: \mu_0 = \mu_1; H_1: \mu_0 \neq \mu_1$$

Table 8. Group statistics: Aurora Borealis trips

	Country of origin	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
See the Aurora Borealis (trips)	Finland	82	.33	.473	.052
	Foreign country	71	.86	.350	.042

A percent of 86% of foreign tourists made trips to see Aurora Borealis (see table 8). Only a percentage of 33 of the Finnish tourists performed this activity. One can see that the percentage of the tourists of Finnish origin (24.8%) is higher around the variable “Totally agree”, in terms of the affirmation “Saariselkä is worth being visited also in the summer season/throughout the year.” Foreign tourists are neuter as regards this statement. A large portion of them said they were more willing to visit the destination in winter, than in other seasons. Thus, one can state there is a difference between the two groups in the perception on the image of the destination in different seasons of the year.

5. Conclusions

This research reveals that the main reasons for which tourists are choosing Saariselkä are the natural landscapes, the quality of the ski slopes, and the lack of agglomeration. However, one can notice that most tourists in this resort are of Finnish origin. Foreign tourists choose Saariselkä as it is a location situated in northern Finland (further North than its main competitors), and thus the likelihood of seeing the Aurora Borealis is greater.

Likewise, note that the tourists' wish to perform other activities than cross country ski and the trips to see the Aurora Borealis, is very low. This aspect is mainly due to the low notoriety of the other activities, and also to their lack of promotion, even within the tourist destination itself.

This research offers an overview of the tourists' perception on the quality and usefulness of the information found on different communication channels, and also on the notoriety of the various tourist attractions in Saariselkä. It reveals a series of marketing problems of the Saariselkä destination. Firstly, this location does not have a comparative advantage differentiating it from other destinations. Likewise, its main tourist attractions are not sufficiently promoted on the online channels. Furthermore, the official website and the mobile application should be improved in terms of navigability and attractiveness, so as to be easier and more enjoyable for tourists to access.

Saariselkä is a destination with great tourist potential. Tourists are always impressed with the beauty of the place, and the stories behind each sight. It is essential for the administrators of this destination to raise the visibility of Saariselkä destination and to choose an adequate online promotional mix. Likewise, for an improved image of the Saariselkä destination, the image should be unitary on all promotional channels.

The research has its limitations as it is confined to a local level and there is a bias towards regional characteristics. The extent to which such insights may be generalized to other regions is not addressed in the present research as it would require knowledge of various features of the promotional activities in other destinations and contexts.

Nevertheless, we believe that the findings of our research contribute positively to the existing literature. The results can be used by administrators in Saariselkä to enhance the efficiency of their efforts to promote the tourist destination. Future research could comprise more empirical studies on an international level to enable comparisons of results. As long as tourism is on ascending worldwide trend, it is expected that more empirical studies will enrich the literature.

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GASTRONOMY AND CULINARY ARTS EDUCATION IN TURKEY: DEPARTMENT HEADS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT. This study investigated how gastronomy and culinary arts department heads perceived their programs and what their expectations were about the future of their field. A qualitative design was employed to collect data from the department heads. A total of nine department heads participated in the study. Findings revealed that course content was the most important concern, followed by the internship problems. Postgraduate programs were also desired for educating the necessary academics specialized and experienced in the field. Academic events and contests are also found to be important in supplementing and supporting the gastronomy and culinary arts education.

Keywords: Gastronomy and culinary arts education, department heads, perception.

JEL Classification: I22

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1. Introduction

Food has become a significant part of tourism in general. Therefore, it is vital that hospitality education and training include a gastronomy component in order to give students a greater understanding of the history and culture of food and drink (Santich, 2004). As such, the goal of university-level gastronomy education is to train and educate students, who have a good theoretical and practical knowledge, besides being capable of clearing up complex social, economic and technical problems of gastronomy; have high levels of knowledge, skills, and executive ability; have the capacity of abstraction, synthesis and decision-making by evaluating the efficiency of various factors; and are fluent in at least one foreign language (Avcikurt, 2000, p. 288; Hacıoglu et al., 2008, p. 44). In the same manner, gastronomy field of study is apparently interdisciplinary, with knowledge/skill requirements in technical culinary skills, communication skills, business knowledge, food science, and others (Harrington et al., 2005).

The growing importance of gastronomy in tourism is revealed by the prominent position of this field within academic research (Kivela and Crofts, 2006). Similarly studies have also examined a range of topics on gastronomy and its relevance to hospitality (Santich, 2004), practice skills of students/workers (Sarioglan, 2013; Shen, 2002; Yang, 2003; Getz, 1994), quality in culinary arts programs (Hertzman and Ackerman, 2010; Hegarty, 2011), employee expectations (Sarioglan, 2014), employee competences (Ko, 2010) and gastronomy education (Zahari et al., 2009; Ko and Chung, 2015). For example, the study of Powell (2005) suggested that most college graduates have received insufficient instruction from educators with professional experience. Similarly, Ko and Chung (2015) suggest that educators with inadequate practical professional experience may fail to teach content most relevant to the needs of the current work environment. Regarding the quality of gastronomy education, Hertzman and Ackerman (2010) note that faculty characteristics, organization and administration facilities, student learning opportunities, student outcomes and student services are considered important. However, research is still limited on gastronomy education. As such, studies at university-level gastronomy education are needed due to its importance in the well-being of the tourism industry as a whole.

Therefore, this study tries to reveal how department heads of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts (GCA) departments at Turkish universities evaluate the content and performance of programs. In this context, the opinions of department heads, as the most significant contributors of this field, are of great importance. This is extremely important especially in designing GCA programs that will meet the needs of the gastronomy sector and the tourism sector in general. For the purpose of the study, the paper starts with a review of GCA education in Turkey. The methodology utilized is explained in the following section, and the findings are presented in their dedicated section. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and suggestions drawn from the findings.

2. Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Education in Turkey

Tourism requires qualified personnel in order to maintain its competitive edge around the world (Anton et al., 2013). Therefore, education and training of the employees is crucial for the well-being of the industry. This is especially true for gastronomy sector where the skills, education and talent are vital for the provision of food and service. In Turkey, gastronomy and/or culinary education is provided in two separate ways including secondary education and university-level education.

Secondary level GCA education in Turkey has been offered in specialized high schools (Anatolian Culinary High School) in Bolu-Mengen, since 1985-1986, and has been converted into a department/program in Anatolian Hotel Management and Tourism Schools as from 2001-2002 academic year and spread over the country. This is followed by culinary education at associate, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees offered by universities (Cakir, 2010, p. 68). The first undergraduate program was opened in 2003 in Yeditepe University, Istanbul. Consequent years witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of GCA departments starting from 2009. While GCA departments offer programs within the Faculties of Tourism in many universities, these departments offer programs within the body of the Faculties of Fine Arts in some universities, under the impression that cookery is a work of art thanks to its preparation to presentation.

The primary goal of the departments of GCA in the faculties of tourism is to train and educate students in kitchen management, restaurant management, café-bar management, and food and beverage management. Further, these departments aim to train qualified personnel and executive chefs, who are endowed with knowledge and skills which they display on the international arena, and who are specialized in national and international cuisine culture. In general, all kitchen personnel should have a good knowledge of the kitchen domain. For a productive and profitable production, the information regarding the entire kitchen should be relayed precisely. This transfer of information should cover areas, such as the layout and physical properties of the kitchen, the materials used in the kitchen and what they are used for (Gokdemir, 2009, p. 32).

Moreover, postgraduate programs have a critical role in training more successful managers in the future (Lee et al., 2008). This is also important for the GCA departments, which occupies a significant place in tourism faculties. However, it is observed that only four universities in Turkey (Abant İzzet Baysal University in Bolu, Gazi University in Ankara, Gaziantep University in Gaziantep and Okan University in Istanbul) offer postgraduate programs in this field. Informal education services on culinary arts are also offered by programs organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Development and Education Foundation, and some other private institutes (Demirkol and Pelit, 2002). These programs set the ground for qualified kitchen personnel and ensure that food preparation is accepted to be a profession in society (Hughes, 2003, p. 10).

Meantime, it is crucial to create need-based course schedules and regularly update the course contents in the GCA programs. Bringing up qualified labor force is possible through an efficient instructor. A study by Cetin (1993) in Turkey reports that 46.2% of instructors do not have any sector experience, and 70.3% are graduates of different majors. Therefore, opportunities for practical education should be created in order for gastronomy departments to achieve its goals. In this context, a well-equipped kitchen laboratory, where the students can practice their theoretical knowledge, is essential in gastronomy education. It can be easily claimed that students are only provided with theoretical knowledge, and where the sole purpose is to pass courses or classes (Akinci, 2015). As such, rote learning without practice is at the core of such courses.

The role of educational institutes cannot be underestimated in the provision of quality GCA education. For example, Gilhespy (2005) claims that tourism schools at all levels, created by most of the world's universities in recent years, are designed to deliver a holistic, industry-oriented education. Therefore, these schools focus on both the employability of future professionals and the training intended for them to acquire the necessary skills. On the other hand, Sigala and Baum (2003) note that tourism schools have traditionally focused on helping students acquire the necessary technical expertise, while neglecting other aptitudes needed to rise to today's challenges.

Regarding the skills necessary for gastronomy sector, Anton et al. (2013) suggest that the cross-curricular skills necessary for the students are not compatible with the expectations and values of the sector. In case of Turkey, Tuyluoglu (2003) argues that equipment and laboratories required by gastronomy education are not available at university level educational institutes which eliminates the opportunity to practice the theoretical information. In their study, Cervera-Taulet and Ruiz-Molina (2008, p. 64) suggest that students consider practical training being beneficial for their adaptation to the profession. Students also explain that applied training prepares them for their actual jobs, that the instructors are able to combine theory and practice with the help of applied training, and that applied training methods increase their professional skills and abilities. Thus, laboratories and simulated hotels in all schools are essential for gastronomy education (Capar, 2002). Along with these laboratories, the classrooms, which contain equipment and materials required by these courses, are also considered within this category (Soybali and Bayraktaroglu, 2013). In line with this, Cetin (1993) reports that 42.1% of the instructors experience problems with inadequate kitchen laboratories, and 53.1% encounter problems with insufficient laboratory equipment.

Internship or on-job training program is also crucial along with the course contents and practice, where students can find the opportunity to actively practice what they learned at schools. Kayayurt (2002) notes that 77.7% of kitchen personnel are self-educated, and are graduates of primary or secondary schools. In addition, his study findings reveal that merely 5.7% of the chefs received technical/vocational education in gastronomy. It is also suggested that since there are many untrained/

unschooled employees in the sector, the students are discouraged to work in the sector after graduation. As Robinson and Barron (2007, p. 913) state, cooking is a profession that suffers from the lack of qualified personnel. According to the results of a study by Gorkem and Ozturk (2011), it is observed that nearly one third of kitchen executives in hotels never received occupational education, and merely 1.2% graduated from university-level occupational education. Moreover, kitchen executives claim that the culinary education in schools is not precisely favorable for the sector (Gorkem and Ozturk, 2011). Consequently, the schools are being discredited due to their low-skilled graduates.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to understand the GCA department heads' opinions about the faculty programs. Qualitative researches stand out with their characteristics of revealing the viewpoints and semantic worlds of the subjects (Unisen and Kaya, 2015). A purposive sampling approach was adopted. The study population consists of GCA department heads ranked in Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM) 2015 student manual. According to student manual, 29 universities in Turkey offer GCA programs. The intention was to reach all the department heads, and the question forms were e-mailed to 29 department heads between July 21 and August 5, 2015. Further, the survey was reminded to the GCA department heads two times, once at the end of August and once in September 2015. A total of nine responses were received.

Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. The questionnaire used in this study was developed through literature review (Cetin, 1993; Demirkol, 2002; Kayayurt, 2002; Du, 2003; Koc et al., 2014) also taking into consideration the meeting report of GCA department heads, which was held in Anadolu University, Turkey, in 2014. The questions in the form were as follows:

* Please express your opinions on the contents of the courses offered in GCA departments considering the requirements of this field.

* What are your opinions on internship in GCA departments?

* Do you think postgraduate programs for GCA departments should be opened? What are your opinions on this?

* Do you think the national and international academic events/activities are adequate? What are your opinions on this?

* What are your opinions on national and international contests in the field of GCA?

* What are your suggestions and opinions for the future of GCA departments?

Descriptive analysis method was utilized for data analysis. According to this approach, the data obtained are summarized and interpreted on the basis of pre-determined themes. In order to conspicuously reflect the opinions of interviewed or observed individuals, direct citations are frequently used in descriptive analysis. The purpose of this type of analysis is to present the findings in a revised and interpreted manner. The data were analyzed in four stages in descriptive analysis method: (1) forming a frame for descriptive analysis, (2) finding the themes, (3) identifying the findings, (4) interpreting the findings. For credibility of the study, the data were first presented without any interpretations, and the data were analyzed by more than one researchers. The researchers of this study adhered to the hypothetical circle through continuous comparisons during data analysis (Ersoy and Anagun, 2009).

Another strategy pursued in qualitative researches for validity and credibility of the research is the expert/peer-review (Yildirim and Simsek, 2013). Peer-review method has been adopted in this study for credibility of the research. We have convened a group of experts in this field and method, informed them verbally, and carried out evaluations.

The themes within the transcript were identified using Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor's (2003) framework of steps to analyze qualitative data. The study used each question as the main theme: course contents, internship, graduate programs, academic events/activities, cooking contests and the future of this field. The data was processed in accordance with these six themes, and the results were presented and discussed. In the quotations, respondents were labeled as K1, K2, K3...K9 to ensure their anonymity.

4. Findings

4.1. Course Contents

Previous literature suggest that course contents are crucial for the success of the GCA departments, especially in meeting the needs of the industry (Santich, 2004; Sarioglan, 2014; Zahari et al., 2009). As such, the prime concern for the GCA department heads was found to be the course contents. When the answers of the GCA department heads were analyzed, it was seen that all participants indicated that the course contents were prepared in line with the requirements and expectations of the sector. In this regard, for example, K3 stated that *"the gastronomy courses offered in tourism faculties are compatible with the needs of tourism sector."* However, K4 stated that they *"do not train chefs or cooks; the sector should be aware of this and anticipate this fact."*

On the other hand, practical or experiential learning is a prerequisite in the quality of the program and the graduates (Sarioglan, 2014; Ko and Chung, 2015). This was also supported by the respondents who underlined the importance of practice opportunities. To take the argument further, K1 pointed out a different problem and noted that *"inefficacy of practice opportunities and specialists are important issues."* In line with this opinion, K6 suggested that *"there are too many theoretical courses. The classes should be more practice-oriented."*

Another emerging issue regarding the course content was found to be the skills of educators. Regarding the richness and diversity of gastronomy issues, K3 suggested that *"there is a broad relationship between gastronomy and other disciplines and the courses might have richer content."* However, K8 commented that they *"do not have adequate number of instructors."* In this vein, K5 indicated that *"the main issues are the problems encountered in the employment process of the specialists in public universities and in the financial support process for provision of practicing materials. Thus, some universities are having hard times while training qualified chefs/cooks required by the tourism industry."*

It is clear that the course contents of GCA departments should be improved and renewed in line with the requirements of the sector. By airing their views, one can easily observe that the proportion of theoretical and practical courses should be well-conceived when planning the course

contents. The budgets should be increased and the university administrations should be aware of the importance of equipment and budgetary requirements of the gastronomy departments for State Universities. This can also increase the competitiveness of public universities against the private ones. Moreover, as Hegarty (2011) suggests raising the discipline of culinary arts and gastronomy beyond the craft-based/vocational (operational) level to under/postgraduate-degree level, educators themselves need to become critically reflective and knowledgeable to enable students to learn how to learn, to become entrepreneurial and technological innovators. Finally, educators and the GCA departments must also reinforce their relationship with the industry to ensure that the benefits to both students and industry from the educational process can be expanded.

4.2. Internship

Working in rough hospitality industries especially in food services, the staff should develop rigorous energetic personality, independent, critical, autonomous self-directed learning, self-confidence and charismatic leadership skills (Zakaria et al., 2010). As such, it is well documented that internship contributes to developing students' competencies in GCA (Walo, 2001). Internship, placements and the practicum are a variety of terms for what is, essentially, a period of employment in the tourism and hospitality industry (Busby and Gibson, 2010).

Study results suggested that respondents underlined the importance of internship. Having emphasized the relationship between internship and applied courses, K6 gave the following statement: *"Internship is necessary to consolidate practice. Internship should be done at the right place, where they make a considerable contribution to both the students and the businesses. Not only quantity should be considered while selecting the facilities for internship, there should also be some qualitative criteria."* According to K3, department, sector and students' compliance are very important for the internship performance. He/she commented that *"the interaction of these three stakeholders ensure a successful internship process. If the facility regards internship merely as low-cost labor, if the students do their internship half-heartedly, and if the faculties apply internship as a matter of circumstance, the internship performance would eventually be poor. Or it may also be quite*

the opposite.” K5 brought an alternative point of view focusing on the faculties, and noted that “the students should definitely be well-oriented and monitored throughout their internship in GCA departments. A commission consisting of the instructors should be constituted for optimum orientation and monitoring and these commissions should be financially supported by their universities.”

Two participants (K1 and K2) stated that they could only assess this question within the academic year since internship was not mandatory in their departments. However, K4 criticized the sector’s attitude towards internship: *“Internship is an obligatory practice that the students should definitely experience and fulfill, but since the sectoral authorities look upon interns as low-cost labor, our students always have a rough time during their internship periods.”* K9 added that *“internship periods are not satisfying per se, so work experience should be encouraged.”*

Internship is not only the weak shortcoming of GCA departments. It is among the common problems in the faculties of tourism. The sector should broaden its viewpoint on internship, stop looking upon interns as low-cost labor, and show due diligence and ultimate attention for a productive internship period. If the internship periods are monitored and evaluated through protocols between the businesses and the university, the internship would achieve its objectives. This would be a guiding factor to prevent the problems that would discourage the students and dissuade them from pursuing a career in this sector. On the other hand, the internship should be considered as a step to improve the practical knowledge acquired in applied courses. Long-lasting knowledge and skills are ensured by recommending internship for the students in accordance with their education.

4.3. Postgraduate Programs

Reflecting the maturation of tourism as a field of study, Ruhanen and McLennan (2012) suggest that competition within the labor market and students’ desire for professional and financial advancement are the primary drivers for many students to undertake further and /or higher-level studies. Moreover, postgraduate level education in GCA has the potential to support academic studies in the field, and educate the future

generations of instructors (Bayraktaroglu, 2013). What is expected from postgraduate education is to ensure that individuals specialize in certain fields and conduct scientific studies (Demirkol, 2002).

When the opinions of GCA department heads were considered on postgraduate programs, seven out of nine participants agreed upon the necessity of postgraduate programs in GCA. Having suggested that postgraduate programs should be offered, K3 noted that *"postgraduate programs are necessary for the development of the department, for academic improvement and especially for the sector to benefit from these academic improvements."* According to K6, postgraduate programs are especially needed for the development of academic staff needed for GCA departments. On the contrary, K2 claimed that *"it is too early to offer these graduate programs"*. The participant continued that *"we need to face the problems associated with rapid popularization of undergraduate-level gastronomy programs."* However, K8 suggested that *"if there is an undergraduate program, than there should also be a postgraduate program for the students, who would like to specialize on this subject."*

Motivational factors such as a personal interest in the field of study, relevance to employment, enjoyment of study, skill development and career change have increased the demand for postgraduate programs in GCA (Ruhanen and McLennan, 2012). As such, postgraduate programs are significant, in terms of making up for lack of instructors and academic members. Since gastronomy is affiliated to many other disciplines, postgraduate programs would have a guiding role in terms of specialization. However, the lack of qualified instructors and academic personnel may be considered as an obstacle in offering postgraduate programs.

4.4. Academic Events/Activities

Academic events and activities provide educational opportunities for exchanging ideas among participants and serve as an educational and training platform (Getz, 1997; Dwyer, et al., 2000). Academic events also offer the potential to expand participants' expertise and knowledge in a given area. As such, these activities and events may act as a beneficial tool for students' development in GCA. Moreover, attending to these events offers networking opportunities for personal and professional development (Judith, 2014).

When the participants were asked whether the number of national and international academic events are sufficient, many participants stated that the frequency of these events on GCA was not adequate. In this regard, K1 suggested that *“initially, it is necessary to organize national and then international conferences and/or symposiums, which will be organized annually.”* K5 supported this idea and noted that *“the conferences and symposiums on GCA are not yet organized in a professional manner. It is necessary to organize conferences and symposiums similar to annual National Tourism Congress, which will encourage all GCA academics to participate.”* In regards to the outcome of these events, K4 stated that *“the number of academic events/activities will eventually increase as the quality of postgraduate education increases”.*

The increasing number of symposiums, conferences and workshops on GCA will also be an encouraging factor in terms of the quality of the departments. If these activities are financially supported and regulated in a qualitative manner, not only the academic personnel but also the students will be able to improve themselves and make appearances in various platforms.

4.5. Cooking Contests

Cooking contests or sensorial tastings constitute examples of activities that would encourage GCA students. In this regard, contests are educative and useful tools for students, educators, audiences, society and the sector. Contests also provide opportunities to discuss daily issues, create ideas to solve different problems, and share ideas among participants (Garip and Garip, 2012). Moreover, contests allow students to bond and encourage healthy competition in the educative environment (Saha, 2014). Contests further help students develop skills necessary for their professional career.

When the participants were asked about the national and international contests on GCA, K1 stated that the contests were not satisfying. K2 reflected his/her negative thoughts that *“it is the blind leading the blind. The ‘old-boy’ network is too obvious.”* K3 stated that he/she has been participating in all contests since 2010. He/she expressed both the pros and cons of the contests: *“The contests are not given due importance. The members of the*

jury are not experts in the field. The contests are usually far from being fair, but they offer opportunities for the participating students, since they always have the chance for networking and meeting chefs. In addition, they also get the chance to meet key people for employment purposes." Meanwhile, K4 approached this topic from another viewpoint and noted that *"the contests for the academics should have different concepts."* K6 stated his/her concerns regarding the evaluation processes of the contests that *"there are major issues regarding the evaluation criteria of the contests. There are abundant contests on cooking and food. And there are problems regarding the objectivity of the jury."* Agreeing on K6's point of view K7 expressed that *"not only the menu, but also the knowledge and skills of the competitors should be evaluated."*

The contests are among the significant events that will contribute to the development of GCA departments. The number of these events should be increased, especially for the development of the students. Moreover, it is important to motivate the students to participate in these events. However, fairness becomes a vital issue in planning and organizing these contests. As such, the evaluation criteria and the members of the jury should be set in a fair and just way.

4.6. Overall Assessment

Finally, the participants were asked to indicate their suggestions and opinions regarding the future of GCA departments. The majority of the department heads were hopeful about the future of the field. However, K8 was pessimistic and indicated that *"the gastronomy department will experience a turnaround as long as the number of GCA departments increased. Soon, there will be unemployed college-graduates."* In this regard K2 underlined the importance of cooperation among all stakeholders and setting quotas in terms of student numbers at the departments, and suggested that *"if universities can increase sectoral cooperation and utilize their chefs and kitchens, and if the quotas would not exceed 30 students, I believe the future of gastronomy department would be more promising."* Supporting the ideas of K2, K1 added that *"it is essential for any gastronomy department to promote itself and to search for support from university administrations and other institutes through various projects. Conferences, symposiums, various local festivals, contests, shows, workshops and scientific journals will also be significant improvements for the development of the gastronomy department."*

As the viewpoint towards food and beverage has been changing in recent years, gastronomy and food and beverage have become more significant. In order to have an educated, well-equipped, and sophisticated workforce, having the adequate skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the sector, the demands and expectations of the gastronomy departments should definitely be satisfied. The increase in the number of specific scientific events/activities regarding the gastronomy departments will contribute to their development. The vision and mission of the departments should be explained precisely to the society, the students and prospective students. Thus, this major will be well understood bereft of its fuzzy connotation.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the opinions of GCA department heads on their programs and the structure of GCA education. Findings of the study provide important contributions to the literature by investigating the components of GCA education such as course contents, internship, postgraduate programs, academic events/activities, cooking contests and the future of GCA departments.

Specifically, findings of this study reveal that course contents of GCA departments should be designed on the basis of sector requirements. Collaboration of the sector and the public and private universities when taking decisions regarding the course contents and courses, opening courses in line with the needs of the sector and training the students accordingly are essential for sector-university collaboration. Accordingly, it is also found that the course contents should be supplemented for graduates to meet the expectations of the sector. These courses should be student-centered, instead of assigning instructor-centered ones, and to collaborate with the sector by conferring on sectoral representatives while preparing the curriculum. Limiting the number of students in applied courses in order to increase the effectiveness of education will also ensure that the classes will be more efficient. Further, study findings reveal that theoretical education should be supplemented by applied courses. As suggested by Tuyluoglu (2003), the theoretical learning would be more permanent when supported with applied courses. Moreover, increasing the number of elective courses may allow students to specialize on their interested areas.

Study findings suggest that the sector and student congruence is very important for the performance of the internship, since internship has a significant influence on permanence of theoretical knowledge. Ensuring that students do their internship in line with their education should be considered as a part of education. The fact that intern students being treated as personnel and the businesses' higher expectations from these students cause problems between the student and the businesses, and the internship would end up as an unsatisfactory process. As such, the businesses should be informed about the fact that internship is a follow-up processes of education. Opportunities for internship and number of projects should be increased and diversified in collaboration with the stakeholders. The students should at least be paid the minimum wage, the internship conditions should be standardized and controllable. In addition, revision of the academic calendar in line with the sector, and extension of internship periods will both ensure that the students find places for internship and ensure a higher-quality internship period. In addition, occupational laws should be enacted, quality of employment should be increased, and job opportunities should be provided by revision of the wages policy (Kozak and Acikoz, 2015). Moreover, as Walo (2001) suggests, educators should consider incorporating a practical component such as internship or alternatively incorporate specialized training that will provide similar outcomes in terms of developing students' management competencies. Consequently, as suggested by Koc et al. (2014), there is a need for academics to spend more time on the planning and implementation of gastronomy internship programs.

The results also suggested that postgraduate programs are required in GCA education. Postgraduate programs are expected to ascertain that the individuals are specialized in certain fields, that they conduct scientific studies to pursue academic careers and that they acquire the ability to devise and implement projects for the sector as researchers and planners (Demirkol, 2002). This is also supported by a study by Cetin (1993) that instructors in gastronomy have no sector experience. Therefore, gastronomy graduates with industry experience should be encouraged to enroll postgraduate programs. Study findings also suggest that the number of academic events would expectedly increase as the number of postgraduate programs increase. Thus, high-quality tourism education at postgraduate level is important for training and educating qualified instructors and researchers (Du, 2003: 109). Consequently, it is recommended that the

number of postgraduate programs should be increased to improve the quality and quantity of academics in the field.

In line with the findings, it is clear that GCA departments do not only train chefs/cooks. The graduates of this major are also prospective academicians, executive chefs and facility managers. Thus, arming students with necessary knowledge and skills is one of the most important goals of these departments. Current drawbacks and the problems of the departments can be overcome when they are supported and backed by necessary resources needed for quality education. In this context, cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders provides an important tool for the department heads. Moreover, closer relationship among the department heads is required to solve the problems specific to these departments and to improve their educational services. Collaboration is also essential for the effectiveness of practical training and the internship. Setting closer relations with the sector, assigning qualified internship businesses and monitoring the students during their employment will help faculties to harvest desired outcomes. As the study findings suggest, increasing the number of contests will improve competitiveness of both the departments and the students. As such, the contribution of national and international prominent representatives to make assessments in a fair and righteous way is necessary for organizing contests and events on GCA. Last but not least, development of a positive attitude towards GCA is a prerequisite for the success of GCA departments at university level.

On the basis of study findings, it can be suggested that the academic development of these departments can be taken a step further if the instructors and academic personnel are supported and subsidized. In this regard, provision of adequate facilities, financial support for both the department and the instructors are important for the success of the departments. Similarly, sector-university collaboration can improve departments to overcome problems of course contents designed according to the needs and expectations of the sector and internship that would satisfy all parties. Moreover, organizing meetings, seminars and contests may help departments an agenda to share their experiences, programs and capabilities. Such events may also help students to expand their learning and to meet important players in the field. In addition, promotional activities designed to help prospective students to make right choices when building a career in this field can increase recognition about the field and the departments. As such, informing prospective students about

the advantages and disadvantages of the field may also help right students to choose GCA education.

Study findings revealed that the majority of the participants were unsatisfied with the number of the gastronomy contests. In such, contests provide an opportunity for GCA students to gain experience and to evaluate themselves in terms of their proficiency compared to their peers. According to the results of the Academic Tourism Education Search Conference (Kozak and Acikoz, 2015), academic events, such as conferences, contests and fairs, are the backbones of gastronomy. Moreover, these events offer students a chance to utilize and show their knowledge and skills, an opportunity to meet the sector employees. Therefore, increasing the number of student contests may help both the GCA departments and their students to evaluate themselves.

This study should be evaluated on the basis of certain limitations. The primary limitation of this study is that it is limited with the opinions of GCA department heads in Turkey. Moreover, although there are 29 faculties offering GCA programs, only nine department heads participated in the study. Further, this study is limited to the determined themes of course contents, internship, postgraduate programs, academic events, contests and overall evaluation. However, several other factors may have an impact on the GCA education. It is possible that inclusion of other factors may result in a better overview of GCA education. Therefore, future studies may examine other factors in GCA. Furthermore, this study included only the opinions and thoughts of department heads. Future research should examine perceptions of students and other stakeholders in GCA. Similar studies focusing on different stakeholders and different countries will broaden our knowledge and help us develop better understanding of GCA education.

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ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT. The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the entrepreneurial orientation of university students and whether their nationalities and level of education influence their entrepreneurial intentions. The investigated sample included students from 6 countries (Romania, Germany, Poland, Russia, United Kingdom and France) and the entrepreneurial traits were risk-taking propensity, innovativeness, locus of control, self-esteem, need for achievement and proactiveness. The findings indicate that, overall, only in the case of locus of control there are statistically significant differences between the different nationalities. The need for achievement and proactiveness differ significantly only in the case of Germans, on one hand, and Romanians and Russians on the other. The other entrepreneurial dimensions were not influenced by students' nationality. Our results show that only self-esteem and proactiveness were influenced by the level of studies.

Keywords: personality traits, entrepreneurial orientation, students, education level

JEL Classification: L26

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INTRODUCTION

The positive effect of entrepreneurship on economic growth and its capacity to create wealth, product and process innovations, technological and organizational knowledge and to provide new jobs is acknowledged.

Entrepreneurship can be promoted early in life by education (Obschonka, Silbereisen & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2010, in Luca and Cazan, 2011). Educational programs aiming at the development of entrepreneurial competences do make a difference, providing not only knowledge, but attitude change towards entrepreneurship (Souitaris, Zerbini & Al-Laham, 2007, in Luca and Cazan, 2011). Growing evidence regarding the relationship between entrepreneurs' education, their businesses, and prospects of success is indicative of the importance of university-based training for both graduate and undergraduate students (Al-Habib, Abdulaziz, 2012).

Entrepreneurship is a matter of culture (institutional point of view) or a matter of state of mind (individual point of view). Thus entrepreneurship education is helpful to create an entrepreneurial culture within countries, societies, firms, associations, and so on, and/or to change the mindset of individuals (Fayolle and Klandz, 2006).

Culture is a set of shared values, beliefs and expected behavior (Hofstede, 2001, in Postigo, Iacobucci and Tamborini, 2006). An entrepreneurial culture implies a society with a high entrepreneurial birth rate and with an important degree of acceptance of entrepreneurs. Some cultures produce more entrepreneurs than others. Mueller and Thomas (2001) see a relationship between values, beliefs and behavior, and point out that differences in culture may influence the decision of whether or not to become an entrepreneur. Only few studies focused on cross-cultural studies in terms of entrepreneurial intent among students (Lüthje and Franke, 2003). The studies focusing on students' career decisions conclude that cultural context influences career decisions through social norms, valuations and practices and there exist consistent cross-cultural differences in people's willingness to become an entrepreneur (Flores et al., 2010).

In this context, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the entrepreneurial orientation of university students and whether their nationalities and level of education influence their entrepreneurial intentions in an attempt to fill the gap existent in the literature in term of cross-cultural studies. The investigated sample included students from 6 countries (Romania,

Germany, Poland, Russia, Great Britain and France) and the entrepreneurial traits entrepreneurial were risk-taking propensity, innovativeness, locus of control, self-esteem, need for achievement and proactiveness which were mentioned by previous studies and which we consider to be representative for successful entrepreneurs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of Entrepreneurship has been discussed in many research papers for several decades. The studies concerning the triggers of entrepreneurship argue that motivations for becoming an entrepreneur can be categorized as either push or pull situational factors including frustration with present life-style, childhood, family environment, education, age, work history, role models, and support networks (Hisrich, 1990; Martin, 1984; Moore, 1986; Krueger, 1993; Scheinberg and MacMillan, 1988, in Mueller and Thomas, 2001). In addition to push and pull factors, personal characteristics (sometimes referred to as *personality traits*) also play a role in new venture initiation (Mueller and Thomas, 2001).

The trait model has been a significant element of research on entrepreneurship (Gürol and Atsan, 2006). Several theorists have argued that some personal characteristics or traits define the entrepreneur and are instrumental in motivating entrepreneurial behavior (Mueller and Thomas, 2001).

Hisrich (1990) argues that the entrepreneur demonstrates initiative and creative thinking, is able to organize social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account, and accepts risk and failure. Previous studies indicate that entrepreneurs possess high need for achievement, moderate risk-taking propensity (McClelland, 1961, Brockhaus 1982 in Mueller and Thomas, 2001; Begley and Boyd 1987, Koh, 1996, in Ertuna and Gurel, 2008, Gürol and Atsan, 2006), preference for energetic and/or novel activity (McClelland, 1961 in Mueller and Thomas, 2001), tolerance of ambiguity (Begley and Boyd, 1987, Koh, 1996, in Ertuna and Gurel, 2008), internal locus of control, high degree of self-confidence and innovativeness (Koh, 1996, in Ertuna and Gurel, 2008, Gürol and Atsan, 2006), and assuming personal responsibility for successes or failure (McClelland, 1961 in Mueller and Thomas, 2001).

In this paper we examine six personal traits associated with entrepreneurial potential, namely: innovativeness, self-esteem, proactiveness, need for achievement, locus of control and risk taking propensity.

Innovativeness is generally connected with entrepreneurship and the ability to start a new business. Schumpeter (1990) and Gurel et al. (2010) defined the entrepreneur as an innovator and Drucker (1985, in Al-Habib and Abdulaziz, 2012) argues that creativity and innovation are conditions inherent in the role of entrepreneurship.

Self-esteem is an important characteristic of an entrepreneur, as having high confidence in your own abilities is vital for successfully handling complex and demanding tasks. In the literature on entrepreneurship, it is stated that entrepreneurs demonstrate a higher degree of self-esteem with respect to others (Koh, 1996 in Gürol and Atsan, 2006; Robinson et al., 1991).

Proactiveness reflects initiative in the entrepreneurial process, describing the capability of anticipating and preparing for potential situations in the future, whether they are positive or negative. It is an important function for entrepreneurs in that it encompasses the vision and imagination that is needed to pursue market opportunities (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996).

Need for achievement – individuals with a high need for achievement perform better with non-routine tasks and take responsibility for their performance. They seek feedback, compare themselves with others, set themselves challenging goals, and constantly try to improve their performance (McClelland, 1961, in Krauss et al., 2015).

Locus of control describes the perception a person has in regards to how he/she believes they can influence the life events. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they are in control of their life, prior research demonstrated that those possessing a higher internal locus of control are more entrepreneurial than ones with a lower internal locus of control (Begley and Boyd, 1987).

Risk-taking has been historically associated with entrepreneurship (Gürol and Atsan, 2006). Previous empirical research characterize entrepreneurs as risk-takers, although they also indicate that entrepreneurs prefer to take moderate risks in their business decisions rather than being

involved in situations where there is extreme risk or uncertainty (Koh, 1996, Thomas and Mueller, 2000, in Gurel, Altinay, and Daniele, 2010). Risk-taking propensity can be effectively conceptualized as an individual's orientation toward taking chances in a decision-making scenario (Sexton and Bowman, 1985, in Al-Habib, Abdulaziz, 2012).

According to Schumpeter (Mueller and Thomas, 2001) the creation of new ventures and entrepreneurial activity depends upon the availability of prospective entrepreneurs, i.e. individuals possessing personality traits combined with personal circumstances which are likely to lead them to forming a new venture and also upon an entrepreneurial climate.

MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODS

This research paper focuses on exploring the entrepreneurial orientation dimensions of students and how their education and nationality influence these dimensions. We have conducted a questionnaire-based survey. Data were collected via an online self-administered questionnaire which was posted on social media like Facebook, targeting student groups and student forums. The sampling method used was "snowball".

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, the first was designed to collect information about demographics and the second part consisted of 64 items used for measuring the entrepreneurial dimensions: attitude towards risk, need for achievement, self-esteem, locus of control, proactiveness, and innovativeness. Each dimension was measured using several items, on a 5 point Likert scales with anchors "1- Strongly disagree" and "5- Strongly agree". The need for achievement was measured with 6 items, innovativeness with 22 items, personal control with 7 items, self-esteem with 8 items, risk-taking with 6 (items) and proactiveness with 7 items. Questions regarding Innovative-ness include: "I believe it is more important to think about future possibilities than past results" or "If I see something I don't like, I fix it"; Proactiveness was measured with elements such as "I believe that to be successful a businessperson must spend time planning the future of his/her business" and "I always try to make friends with people who may be useful in life"; Risk-taking was determined by questions like "I get excited when doing new, unusual things in my life" or "I tend to act bravely in situations where risk is involved".

The variables representing the six entrepreneurial dimensions were computed as the average score of all the items describing the specific dimensions.

We have formulated two research hypotheses:

H1: Students' nationality influence their entrepreneurial orientation dimensions

H2: Students' education influence their entrepreneurial orientation dimensions

To test the first hypothesis we have applied One -way ANOVA and the T-Test by pairing two nationalities. For the second one we have used T-Test to compare the means of the EO (entrepreneurial orientation) dimensions between the two groups of students (bachelor and respectively, master students).

Sample characteristics

A total number of 250 students have taken part in this survey, but only a number of 164 questionnaires were complete. The final sample includes students from Germany (21), France (20), UK (22), Poland (20), Russia (21) and Romania (60). The majority of respondents were females (116) and the average age of the participants was 23 years.

In terms of educational level, 87 participants were Bachelor students, 4 MBA students and 73 were Master students. The sample included students with diverse majors/specializations ranging from business or economics (the highest percentage, of approximately 40%) to IT, communication, education, archeology, languages, or medicine. Table 1 presents more information regarding the characteristics of students that were included in our sample.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Gender	Percent	Education level	Percent
<i>Male</i>	29.3	<i>Bachelor</i>	53.0
<i>Female</i>	70.7	<i>Master</i>	47.0

Nationality	Percent	Major/Specialisation	Percent
<i>British</i>	13.4	<i>Business and Economics</i>	46.3
<i>French</i>	12.2	<i>Psychology and Sociology</i>	4.9
<i>German</i>	12.8	<i>Languages and Education</i>	12.2
<i>Polish</i>	12.2	<i>IT and Engineering</i>	15.2
<i>Romanian</i>	36.6	<i>Law</i>	4.3
<i>Russian</i>	12.8	<i>European and Political studies</i>	10.4
		<i>Medicine</i>	1.8
		<i>History and Archeology</i>	1.8
		<i>Agriculture</i>	3.0

Source: Authors' calculations

RESEARCH RESULTS

Background and entrepreneurial intentions

From the 164 respondents, 125 individuals (76.2%) have been already employed in some form or another. This comes as a different figure than many would expect, since generally the older generations of students were not as inclined, or forced to, find employed as many young adults are now. It shows how the recent shifts in economic and social factors, such as high tuition fees of many educational institutions or requirements in terms of work experience of many companies, determine students to enter the job market during their university studies. More than 50% of the students participating in our study have less than 3 years of work experience.

As previous research shows, having an entrepreneur in the family is an important factor conducive to the decision to start a business (Matthews and Moser, 1995 in Veciana et al., 2005). A number of 64 students declared they have an entrepreneur in their family. Consequently, for these persons the idea of becoming an entrepreneur themselves should be more appealing. However, only 6% of the questioned students have already started their own business. More details regarding student's background are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Students' background

Work experience	Percent	Family entrepreneur	Percent
<i>No</i>	23.8	<i>No</i>	61.6
<i>Yes</i>	76.2	<i>Yes</i>	38.4
Years of work experience	Percent	Own a business	Percent
<i>none</i>	22.6	<i>No</i>	93.9
<i>less than 1 year</i>	4.9	<i>Yes</i>	6.1
<i>between 1 and 3 years</i>	47.6		
<i>between 3 and 5 years</i>	17.1		
<i>between 5 and 10 years</i>	5.5		
<i>over 10 years</i>	2.4		

Source: Authors' calculations

H1: Students' nationality influence their entrepreneurial orientation dimensions

As mentioned in the research methodology section, our research has focused on six entrepreneurial orientation dimensions, namely need for achievement, innovativeness, locus of control, self-esteem, risk taking propensity and proactiveness.

As the results show (see table 3) the students participating in our study poses a good entrepreneurial potential as they are characterized by a high need for achievement, proactiveness, creativity, confidence in their own skills and abilities, believe that they are in control of their life and exhibit a moderate risk taking propensity.

One-way ANOVA has been used was for testing correlations in order to identify significant difference among nationalities. The results of the ANOVA test (as shown in table 4) show that, in the case locus of control (Sig .021) there is a statistically significant difference among nationalities.

Table 3. Mean scores of EO dimensions

	<i>Need for achievement</i>	<i>Innovative-ness</i>	<i>Locus of control</i>	<i>Self-esteem</i>	<i>Risk-taking propensity</i>	<i>Proactive-ness</i>
Mean	3.9307	3.6799	3.5357	3.6578	3.0976	3.7605
N	164	164	164	164	164	164
Std. Deviation	.50025	.46566	.55258	.39306	.61116	.65282

Source: Authors' calculations

Table 4. Entrepreneurial dimensions by nationality – ANOVA test results

		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Need for achievement</i>	Between Groups	2.363	5	.473	1.943	.090
	Within Groups	38.427	158	.243		
	Total	40.790	163			
<i>Innovative-ness</i>	Between Groups	1.194	5	.239	1.105	.360
	Within Groups	34.151	158	.216		
	Total	35.344	163			
<i>Locus of control</i>	Between Groups	3.957	5	.791	2.729	.021
	Within Groups	45.814	158	.290		
	Total	49.770	163			
<i>Self-esteem</i>	Between Groups	.479	5	.096	.612	.691
	Within Groups	24.704	158	.156		
	Total	25.183	163			
<i>Risk-taking propensity</i>	Between Groups	1.988	5	.398	1.067	.381
	Within Groups	58.896	158	.373		
	Total	60.883	163			
<i>Proactive-ness</i>	Between Groups	2.536	5	.507	1.197	.313
	Within Groups	66.931	158	.424		
	Total	69.467	163			

Source: Authors' calculations

For a more in depth analysis we have applied the T-test to identify the differences between nationalities in terms of locus of control dimension. The results (see table 5) show that there are statistically significant differences between British and German (3.71, vs. 3.26), French and Russian (3.37 vs. 3.7), German and Romanian (3.26 vs. 3.6) and German and Russian (3.26 vs. 3.7).

Table 5. Independent Sample T-Test for locus of control dimension

		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
British/ French	Equal variances assumed	2.183	.147	1.858	40	.071	.33571	.18071
British/ German	Equal variances assumed	1.386	.246	2.471	41	.018	.44898	.18169
British/ Polish	Equal variances assumed	.077	.783	1.611	40	.115	.31429	.19505
British/ Romanian	Equal variances assumed	1.505	.224	.782	80	.437	.10952	.14011
British/ Russian	Equal variances assumed	1.198	.280	.074	41	.941	.01361	.18388
French/ German	Equal variances assumed	.145	.706	.756	39	.454	.11327	.14977
French/ Polish	Equal variances assumed	2.226	.144	-.130	38	.897	-.02143	.16513
French/ Romanian	Equal variances assumed	.698	.406	-1.743	78	.085	-.22619	.12976
French/ Russian	Equal variances assumed	.190	.665	-2.110	39	.041	-.32211	.15268
German/ Polish	Equal variances assumed	1.217	.277	-.804	39	.426	-.13469	.16758
German/ Romanian	Equal variances assumed	.148	.701	-2.625	79	.010	-.33946	.12934

<i>German/Russian</i>	Equal variances assumed	.005	.945	-2.798	40	.008	-.43537	.15562
<i>Polish/Romanian</i>	Equal variances assumed	.877	.352	-1.495	78	.139	-.20476	.13699
<i>Polish/Russian</i>	Equal variances assumed	.990	.326	-1.767	39	.085	-.30068	.17019
<i>Romanian/Russian</i>	Equal variances assumed	.086	.770	-.735	79	.464	-.09592	.13044

Source: Authors' calculations

From the achievement perspective, Romanians and Russians are generally having a greater desire to be high-achievers, with scores of 4.02 out of 5. Perhaps this comes as a result of the local economic and social environment, where the higher risk of living in relative poverty translates to a higher drive to be successful. Meanwhile, the lowest achievers are Germans, having the final value of 3.67. As the T-test shows there is a statistically significant difference in terms of need for achievement between Germans and Russians ($t=-2.555$, $df=40$, $sig=.015$) and between Germans and Romanians ($t=-2.809$, $df=79$, $sig=.006$).

Innovativeness, the ability to introduce something new and different on the market (Chen 2007; Gupta et al. 2004 in Ozaralli and Rivenburgh, 2016), is one of the cornerstones of entrepreneurship, as the skill of bringing forward an innovative product/service often means the difference between market failure and success. The average innovativeness score for all students was calculated at the value of 3.6799. The British are the most innovative nation, with an overall score of 3.7355, followed by the French (3.7227) and the Romanians averaging 3.7220 in this category. The results prove how students belonging to these two nations are generally more able to think outside the box and approach challenges in a unique, unforeseen way. German students are the least innovative group of the six selected nationalities, receiving an average of 3.4848 points.

Self-esteem, the confidence in your own abilities and competences in the quality of your work is very important for entrepreneurs. The highest score at this dimension was obtained by the Romanians (3.7) followed by the British (3.68) while the lowest score was obtained by the Russians (3.52).

The average score of risk-taking propensity for all the surveyed students is lower than for the other entrepreneurial dimensions (3.09). The nation with the highest score is Britain, with an average of 3.26 followed closely by the French (3.24). The nation less inclined to assume risks are the Polish with a score of 2.91. While risk-taking is perhaps something more difficult to teach and develop than the other dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation, it is still extremely important for students to be more familiar with the issues and challenges owning a business implies, but at the same time they should be encouraged to “fail” and learn from their mistakes. After all, the big majority of entrepreneurs have had to deal with some form of disappointment in their activities, but found success by not being afraid to try once more and taking the risk to fail before their breakthrough.

Proactiveness, the ability to foresee the future if specific steps are taken at a moment in time, could be vital for many current or potential entrepreneurs, especially for those dealing with volatile markets. The British and the Romanian students are the ones with the highest score (3.81), while the Germans score the lowest (3.44), the results of the T-Test showing a statistically significant difference between Germans and Romanians ($t=-2.269$, $df=79$, $sig=.026$) and between German and Russian ($t=-2.240$, $df=40$, $sig=.031$).

Table 6. Mean scores of EO dimensions depending on the nationality

Nationality		<i>Need for achievement</i>	<i>Innovative-ness</i>	<i>Locus of control</i>	<i>Self-esteem</i>	<i>Risk-taking propensity</i>	<i>Proactive-ness</i>
British	Mean	3.9708	3.7355	3.7143	3.6818	3.2652	3.8182
	N	22	22	22	22	22	22
	Std. Deviation	.52842	.38381	.67727	.34660	.49243	.70426
French	Mean	3.8964	3.7227	3.3786	3.6500	3.2417	3.7929
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Deviation	.44060	.38651	.46181	.34076	.56319	.57419

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German	Mean	3.6735	3.4848	3.2653	3.6488	3.0000	3.4422
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	.46870	.55546	.49546	.37836	.66458	.59745
Polish	Mean	3.8214	3.6000	3.4000	3.6500	2.9167	3.7500
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Deviation	.58650	.47596	.57630	.43792	.63176	.75717
Romanian	Mean	4.0226	3.7220	3.6048	3.7021	3.0667	3.8167
	N	60	60	60	60	60	60
	Std. Deviation	.49740	.49412	.51499	.41623	.64455	.66804
Russian	Mean	4.0204	3.7316	3.7007	3.5298	3.1429	3.8367
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	.40917	.40856	.51290	.40293	.58520	.54264

Source: Authors' calculations

We can conclude thus that the first hypothesis which states that *students' nationality influence their entrepreneurial orientation dimensions* is only partially supported.

H2: Students' education influence their entrepreneurial orientation dimensions

The Independent Sample T-Test was used to test whether the educational level of students influences the Entrepreneurial Orientation dimensions. The results (see table 7) highlighted that both self-esteem and proactiveness were influenced by level of studies. Post-graduate students were both more proactive, with score of 3.88 compared to that of 3.64 for Bachelor students, and poses a higher self-esteem, 3.76 mean score compared to 3.56 for undergraduates.

The master students show a slightly higher score for need for achievement, innovativeness and locus of control compared to bachelor students, while the latter show a higher score for risk-taking propensity

(see table 8), but the test showed that there were no statistically significant differences between master and bachelor students for these entrepreneurial dimensions.

Therefore we argue that H2 hypothesis was only partially supported.

Table 7. Independent Sample T-Test for Educational Level

		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
<i>Need for achievement</i>	Equal variances assumed	.889	.347	-1.860	162	.065	-.14453	.07769
<i>Innovative ness</i>	Equal variances assumed	.006	.938	-1.945	162	.053	-.14053	.07224
<i>Locus of control</i>	Equal variances assumed	.348	.556	.111	162	.912	.00962	.08672
<i>Self- esteem</i>	Equal variances assumed	.158	.692	-3.268	162	.001	-.19527	.05975
<i>Risk- taking propensity</i>	Equal variances assumed	.532	.467	.088	162	.930	.00846	.09592
<i>Proactive- ness</i>	Equal variances assumed	1.924	.167	-2.401	162	.017	-.24172	.10068

Source: Authors' calculations

Table 8. Entrepreneurial dimensions by educational level

		<i>Need for achievement</i>	<i>Inovative- ness</i>	<i>Locus of control</i>	<i>Self- esteem</i>	<i>Risk-taking propensity</i>	<i>Proactive- ness</i>
Bachelor	Mean	3.8629	3.6139	3.5402	3.5661	3.1015	3.647
	Std. Deviation	0.5231	0.46344	0.56028	0.39337	0.57922	0.67775
Master	Mean	4.0074	3.7544	3.5306	3.7614	3.0931	3.8887
	Std. Deviation	0.46459	0.45979	0.54736	0.36846	0.64916	0.60237
Total	Mean	3.9307	3.6799	3.5357	3.6578	3.0976	3.7605
	Std. Deviation	.50025	.46566	.55258	.39306	.61116	.65282

Source: Authors' calculations

CONCLUSIONS

As entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth, entrepreneurship education can promote an entrepreneurial culture also could help to develop and stimulate entrepreneurial skills while preparing students for a dynamic labour market where holding a university degree is no longer a guarantee of employment (Postigo, Iacobucci and Tamborini, 2006).

Previous research on the psychological level shows a link between values, beliefs and behaviour so it can be argued that differences in national culture, in which these values and beliefs are embedded, may influence a wide range of behaviours including the decision to become self-employed rather than to work for others (Mueller and Thomas, 2001). Our research results show that there is a statistically significant difference across nationalities with respect to locus of control. Thus, British students are more internal than French students, Russian students are more internal than their French counterparts and Romanian and Russian students, on one hand, are more internal than German students, on the other hand.

Another finding was a statistically significant difference in terms of need for achievement and proactiveness, Romanian and Russian students scoring higher than Germans for these entrepreneurial traits. Therefore we might conclude that Romanian and Russian students possess a higher entrepreneurial orientation, this finding being consistent with the findings of Baum et al. (1993, in Hofstede et al., 2004) that 'entrepreneurial' individuals in countries with high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, low masculinity and low level of individualism have more difficulties in 'doing things their own way' as such being more inclined to start for themselves, and Acs, Audretsch and Evans (1994, in Hofstede, et al., 2004) who empirically confirm that high uncertainty avoidance and low individualism are related to higher levels of self-employment.

We have found a positive effect of education on proactiveness and self-esteem so we agree with other researchers findings that higher education levels can increase perceptions of person's own ability to exploit new business opportunities (Autio and Acs, 2010, in De Clercq, Lim, Oh, 2013).

In terms of further research, our purpose is to extend the sample size in order to include in our study more students from Great Britain, Germany, France, Poland and Russia and also to investigate the individual cultural values of students since research on culture's influence on entrepreneurship showed contradicting results. Consistent with the 'aggregate psychological traits' perspective PDI – (power distance index), UAI – (uncertainty avoidance index), MAS+ (masculinity) and IDV+ (individualism) stimulate entrepreneurship (Shane, 1992; 1993, in Hofstede, et al., 2004) while according to the social legitimation perspective regarding the level of entrepreneurship it could be argued that 'entrepreneurial' individuals in countries with PDI +, UAI+, MAS-, and IDV- might choose to start their own business (Baum et al., 1993, in Hofstede, et al., 2004).

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LA ROUMANIE, PEUT-ELLE ÊTRE UNE DESTINATION ATTRACTIVE POUR LES ENTREPRENEURS FRANÇAIS ?

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ABSTRACT. Could Romania be an attractive destination for French entrepreneurs? Today, most companies struggle to identify new partners, new places and new markets for their current and future projects. Despite the extremely painful past during the communist era and over the prolonged transition years, Romania faces its future with optimism. Once the difficult period after the 2008 crisis had come to an end, Romania started a new economic growth, with substantial foreign investment. This development was mainly due to the tertiary sector of the national economy and to the international support provided by institutions such as the European Commission (EC), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), combined with an ambitious adjustment program. Romania has understood that international relations play a crucial role in a country's development. Consequently, the state's goal has become that of developing and maintaining good political and economic relations with various states, all over the world. From a geographical point of view, the country is a gate to the East for the European Union (EU) and to the West for the Oriental states. Romania presents a real untapped potential and a great number of benefits, aimed at attracting new investors. The domestic market, the geographic position, the geopolitical stability or the youth, as an asset, combine with many opportunities in various economic sectors, providing investors with genuine reasons to take Romania into consideration, when thinking about new phases of internationalization. The attractiveness of the country as a destination for French investors and entrepreneurs is a widely recognized fact. Factors such as the labor cost, the fiscal policies, the cultural similarities or the sharing of Francophone values have already

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brought major French players (Dacia-Renault, Michelin, Groupe Société Général BRD, Lafarge, Cora, Carrefour or Accor) on the local market and many French investments. In this context, the present paper aims at identifying those elements that determine the attractiveness of this market for French entrepreneurs. An interview-based research has been conducted among the members of the CCIFER (Chambre Française de Commerce et d'Industrie en Roumanie).

Mots-clés: attractivité ; entrepreneurs français ; investisseurs français ; environnement d'affaires ; Roumanie.

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1. Introduction et revue de la littérature

Le monde est en perpétuelle évolution, la crise financière de 2008, bien qu'ayant commencé aux États-Unis, s'est étendue à l'économie mondiale en affectant particulièrement les pays du Nord. Dorénavant, nous vivons dans un monde où les entreprises recherchent les partenaires, les lieux, les marchés de demain pour s'y projeter et s'y implanter. La mondialisation de l'économie favorise les délocalisations et les entreprises profitent de ces opportunités sur le coût du travail et sur la fiscalité avantageuse de certains États pour transférer leurs moyens de production des pays développés. C'est critiquable, mais c'est aussi défendable, car la concurrence est féroce sur certains secteurs d'activité et la croissance est quasiment inexistante en Europe de l'Ouest ; seuls certains États émergents tirent la croissance mondiale vers le haut, et ces pays sont désormais assez puissants pour exiger de profiter, eux aussi, du développement industriel. C'est particulièrement le cas de la Chine, du Brésil, et de l'Inde (World Bank).

En ce qui concerne la Roumanie, malgré un passé extrêmement douloureux sous l'ère communiste, et pas si lointain, ce pays regarde le futur avec optimisme. La chute de l'URSS et la rentrée dans l'Union Européenne ont permis deux périodes de croissance extraordinaire afin de rattraper, dans une certaine mesure, le retard sur les pays d'Europe de l'Ouest. Les Roumains considèrent l'Union Européenne comme une chance et cet enthousiasme, combiné à une population jeune, dynamique et bien formée, donne naissance à des projets économiques intéressants et susceptibles d'attirer des entreprises étrangères. Mais, est-ce que la Roumanie a le potentiel nécessaire à ses ambitions ? (Pearce Hardt et Kaufman, 1995 ; Vorzsák et Coroş, 2007, pp. 251-256)

Comme de nombreux anciens pays du bloc soviétique, son économie s'est transformée en économie de marché. Après une forte période de croissance, 6,5 % de moyenne par an entre 2002 et 2008, l'économie roumaine a connu une période très difficile. La croissance d'avant-crise reposait sur un mécanisme dangereux, alimenté par diverses bulles, telles que les prix, les salaires, les crédits ou encore l'immobilier. Mais, également, sur un afflux important de capitaux étrangers et sur une politique budgétaire expansionniste. Cependant, bien que la Roumanie dispose d'un potentiel important, elle reste l'un des pays les plus pauvres de l'Union Européenne. Cette période a fait subir à la Roumanie un fort ralentissement de l'activité économique, en particulier dans le secteur de l'automobile qui est largement tributaire des commandes extérieures (Pearce Hardt et Kaufman, 1995 ; European Commission, 2016 ; Ministère des affaires étrangères français).

Suite à son adhésion à l'Union Européenne en janvier 2007, la Roumanie a commencé une nouvelle phase de croissance économique avec des investissements étrangers substantiels. Les difficultés connues au préalable ont obligé la Roumanie à faire appel aux bailleurs internationaux, tels que le Fonds Monétaire International (FMI), la commission Européenne et la Banque Mondiale, combiné avec un programme d'ajustement ambitieux (European Commission, 2016 ; Eur-Lex, 2006-2007).

Le PIB a augmenté de manière régulière et une classe moyenne s'est développée. La Roumanie est ainsi devenue le second pays le plus dynamique de la région, après la Pologne. Le taux de chômage, qui était relativement bas avant la crise financière a augmenté depuis 2008 (se situant à 7,5 % en 2013). La Roumanie affiche l'une des dettes publiques les

plus basses de l'UE (38,2 % du PIB en 2013). Le pays a réussi à ramener son déficit public à 2,4 % du produit intérieur brut (PIB) en 2013. Le pays a retrouvé le chemin de la croissance en 2012 (+1,5 %), puis en 2013 (+2,5 %) avec une prévision de +2,1 % pour 2014. La production industrielle a augmenté de 4,7 % en 2013 (Eurostat ; World Bank).

Les Roumains nourrissent de très fortes attentes vis-à-vis de l'Union Européenne. En effet, outre la source de développement économique que représente celle-ci (32,2 milliards d'euros ont été attribués à la Roumanie pour la période 2007-2013, et la Roumanie bénéficiera d'une dotation substantielle de 7 milliards d'euros pour la période 2014-2020) pour la population, cette intégration dans l'Union marque la rupture avec l'époque communiste (Romanian Government, 2016).

La Roumanie corrige les déséquilibres macroéconomiques responsables d'une crise qui s'est révélée avant tout interne. Le traitement des déséquilibres est passé par des mesures d'austérité drastiques (baisse de 25 % des salaires dans la fonction publique, baisse de 15 % des transferts sociaux hors retraites, augmentation de la TVA de 19 % à 24 %) et il s'est soldé par un succès. La Roumanie a par ailleurs mis en œuvre des réformes structurelles (loi de responsabilité fiscale, loi établissant une grille unique de salaires dans la fonction publique, loi de réforme du système des retraites), visant à pérenniser le retour vers la croissance. En vue de sa situation géographique, le rapprochement s'est fait naturellement avec l'Union Européenne. La Roumanie a compris que celle-ci pourrait lui apporter le support dont le pays a besoin pour exploiter son potentiel (Romanian Government, 2016).

Concernant les relations internationales de la Roumanie et avec l'Union Européenne, on peut dire que le premier pays d'Europe centrale et de l'Est à avoir établi des relations contractuelles avec l'UE (accord d'association en 1993, dépôt de la candidature en 1995) est la Roumanie qui avait fait de l'adhésion à l'Union européenne, intervenue le 1^{er} janvier 2007, un objectif majeur de sa politique étrangère et, également, de son développement économique à long terme (Romanian Government, 2016).

Aujourd'hui, la priorité européenne de la Roumanie est son entrée dans l'espace Schengen. À la suite de son adhésion à l'UE en 2007, la Roumanie a engagé le processus permettant son entrée dans l'espace de

libre circulation des marchandises et des citoyens qui constitue l'un des éléments fondateurs de l'espace économique. Ce travail technique s'est achevé en juin 2011 par l'adoption des conclusions du Conseil Européen relevant le niveau suffisant de préparation (Vorzsák et Coroş, 2007, pp. 251-256 ; Coroş, 2012 ; Ministère des affaires étrangères français).

Toutefois, considérant la persistance de problèmes de corruption et de dysfonctionnement du système judiciaire, l'Allemagne et la France ont remis en cause l'entrée de la Roumanie dans l'espace Schengen, puis ont proposé à l'automne 2011 une solution en deux étapes : dans un premier temps, l'ouverture des frontières aériennes et maritimes, puis dans une décision ultérieure l'ouverture des frontières terrestres. Un exemple prouve que la Roumanie a fait de gros efforts pour rentrer dans l'espace Schengen : elle a intensifié ses démarches pour la lutte contre la corruption en se dotant d'institutions telles que l'Agence Nationale pour l'Intégrité (ANI) ou la Direction Nationale Anticorruption (DNA) (Ministère des affaires étrangères français ; *Business Review*, 2016 ; Doaré, 2014).

L'aide de l'Union Européenne fait beaucoup de bien à l'économie roumaine et il est vrai que celle-ci s'améliore depuis 2007. Mais, c'est également grâce à l'État roumain et à ses citoyens qui s'efforcent d'atteindre les objectifs fixés par les institutions européennes. En plus de son appartenance à l'UE, la Roumanie a des relations avec de nombreux pays dans le monde, dont la Chine qui est un de ses principaux partenaires économiques (Coroş, 2012 ; Ministère des affaires étrangères français ; KPMG Roumanie).

Les relations de la Roumanie avec le reste du monde et avec les États-Unis sont cordiales. Les deux pays sont liés par un partenariat stratégique depuis 1997. La Roumanie accueille, en vertu de l'accord du 6 septembre 2005, deux bases américaines. Cet accord a constitué un succès extérieur et intérieur pour le Président Băsescu. Le 13 septembre 2011, Hillary Clinton (alors secrétaire d'État du gouvernement américain) et son homologue roumain Teodor Baconschi ont signé un accord intergouvernemental prévoyant la mise en place d'éléments du système de défense antimissile (ABM) sur la base roumaine de Deveselu (Sud du pays). Cet accord a été signé au cours de la visite aux États-Unis du Président Băsescu qui s'est entretenu avec Monsieur le Président Obama, visite au cours de laquelle une « Déclaration commune sur le partenariat stratégique pour le 21^e

siècle » a été signée. Mais, outre sa dimension militaire, on peut voir dans ce partenariat une réelle détermination des États-Unis et de la Roumanie d'entretenir des relations, et la confiance qui existe entre ces deux nations (Romanian Government, 2016 ; Doaré, 2014).

La politique régionale de la Roumanie se base sur la diplomatie de bon voisinage et l'ouverture sur la mer Noire. Bucarest s'investit, depuis la transition démocratique, à établir de bonnes relations avec ses voisins et à jouer un rôle régional. Le pays soutient le renforcement de la présence de l'Union Européenne dans la région à travers la « Synergie mer Noire » lancée en Avril 2007, qui vise à améliorer la coopération régionale, notamment à travers l'Organisation de Coopération Économique de la Mer Noire (OCEMN ou BSEC selon l'acronyme anglais), dont elle est membre (Romanian Government, 2016 ; Doaré, 2014).

Avoir de bonnes relations politiques et économiques avec la République Populaire de Chine est l'un des autres objectifs majeurs de la politique extérieure roumaine. En 1968, la Chine a pris la défense de la Roumanie auprès d'un de ses grands voisins. Depuis cette date, les relations entre ces deux pays se sont intensifiées. La Chine est, désormais, le plus important partenaire commercial de la Roumanie dans l'Extrême-Orient, soit un élément qui confirme l'intérêt particulier de la Roumanie pour cet État. Malgré la distance entre ces deux pays, plus de 9 000 compagnies chinoises sont enregistrées actuellement en Roumanie, pays qui est devenu attrayant aux yeux des hommes d'affaires chinois (Romanian Government, 2016 ; Doaré, 2014 ; World Bank).

La Chine affirme, de son côté, être prête à travailler en coopération avec la Roumanie pour développer l'échange et la coopération dans divers domaines, tels que le commerce, l'investissement, l'énergie renouvelable et même la culture. Par exemple, le numéro un chinois des technologies de l'information de la communication (TIC) Huawei, a aidé à promouvoir le marché de l'emploi local et fourni un soutien technologique à la Roumanie. Sa situation géographique dans la péninsule balkanique fait de la Roumanie le portail oriental de l'Union Européenne. Elle travaille activement afin d'intensifier les relations entre la Chine et l'Europe centrale et orientale, ainsi qu'avec l'Union Européenne. L'influence de la Chine au niveau mondial ne peut qu'être bénéfique à la Roumanie (Romanian Government, 2016 ; Doaré, 2014).

Il semblerait, donc, que la Roumanie ait réussi à adapter une politique équilibrée dans ses relations extérieures, en attachant simultanément une grande importance aux pays occidentaux et à la Chine. La Roumanie est un pays qui a de l'influence dans sa région, malgré sa situation de deuxième pays le plus pauvre de l'espace économique européen. Elle fait en sorte d'améliorer ses conditions grâce aux aides fournies par l'Union. Ses relations solides avec les États et la Chine lui permettent de s'appuyer sur celles-ci pour l'avenir.

Aujourd'hui, le PIB de la Roumanie par secteur se divise de la manière suivante : le secteur primaire représente 7 % (28 % de la population active), le secteur secondaire 37,3 % (33 % de la population active) et le secteur tertiaire 55,7 % (39 % de la population active) (Ministère des affaires étrangères français ; Institut National de Statistique de Roumanie).

2. Matériel et Méthode

Pour effectuer les recherches, nous avons utilisé des sites officiels afin d'obtenir les résultats les plus précis, mais également pour que les données soient fiables. Notre travail est le résultat des recherches d'informations et d'analyse de celles-ci pour déterminer le potentiel économique de la Roumanie dans les années à venir. On a décidé de faire une recherche qualitative, basée sur l'utilisation de l'interview direct ou à distance (par téléphone ou électronique). Pour sélectionner les participants, nous avons utilisé la base des données de la Chambre Française de Commerce et d'Industrie en Roumanie (CCIFER), contenant plus de 500 entreprises, dont 60 % sont PME. Nous avons choisi un échantillon d'approximativement 300 entreprises, en assurant une dispersion équilibrée des entreprises françaises établies en Roumanie (Annuaire ; Chambres de commerce et de l'industrie française à l'étranger). Nous avons invité les membres de l'échantillon établi à prendre part dans notre étude qualitative et nous avons effectivement interviewé 36 chefs d'entreprises ou représentants (positions exécutives). En utilisant le questionnaire et les données obtenues *via* les interviews, les informations collectées ont été analysées d'une manière interprétative-diagnostique. L'objectif principal de notre recherche était de fournir une présentation détaillée et complète du sujet.

Ensuite, nous avons construit une enquête pour les entrepreneurs et les managers français du marché roumain, enquête basée sur les recherches de KPMG, PWC, Deloitte et EY.

La combinaison qualitative et quantitative enrichit la recherche et permet d'atteindre l'objectif établi au début du projet. L'un des autres objectifs majeurs était de voir si la Roumanie était une destination attractive pour faire des affaires, du point de vue des investisseurs et managers français. L'outil de l'enquête était un questionnaire incluant des questions fermées, mais aussi des questions à échelle (permettant de noter de 1 à 10, par exemple) et quelques questions ouvertes. L'enquête a été faite et partagée en français.

Les plus importants problèmes couverts durant cette recherche ont été :

- les avantages et les inconvénients de la Roumanie en tant que destination d'affaires ;
- les clés du succès en Roumanie ;
- des conseils pour les PME : comment venir en Roumanie ;
- l'évolution du marché en Roumanie ;
- les secteurs clés futurs de la Roumanie.

3. Résultats et Débats

Les avantages et les inconvénients de la Roumanie comme destination d'affaires pour les entrepreneurs français ont constitué un premier sujet de cette recherche pour déterminer les raisons d'investir en Roumanie. Malgré le ralentissement subi à cause de la crise de 2008, la Roumanie est de nouveau sur de bons rails pour évoluer. Il existe un réel potentiel encore inexploité ou très peu ; mais, aussi, un très grand nombre d'avantages mis à la disposition des investisseurs pour les attirer, puisque la Roumanie a envie de voir s'installer des investisseurs, tout en étant motivée pour continuer sa progression (Awex, 2016).

Avant d'aborder le potentiel par secteur d'activité, on démontrera le potentiel global qu'offre la Roumanie par son marché intérieur, sa position géographique, sa situation géopolitique ou encore sa jeunesse. Le pays offre des opportunités de croissance par la taille significative de

son marché et par son stade de développement qui n'a pas encore atteint la maturité. Au carrefour entre l'Europe et l'Asie et ayant son ouverture sur la mer Noire – l'exemple avec le port de Constanța sur la mer Noire, qui est en fait une porte d'accès au marché européen par le Sud-Est –, le pays se trouve à l'intersection des routes commerciales européennes Est-Ouest, mais aussi Europe-Afrique du Nord-Moyen Orient-Asie et à environ 300 km du Bosphore.

Comme conséquence du printemps arabe, la Roumanie est aujourd'hui une destination de choix pour les entreprises qui avaient fait le choix initial de délocaliser leurs activités dans les pays du Maghreb (Maroc, Tunisie, ...) et qui souhaitent aujourd'hui relocaliser ces activités vers une zone plus stable. La Roumanie étant membre de l'UE ainsi que de l'OTAN, les investisseurs ne s'inquiètent pas de la stabilité du pays.

La Roumanie dispose d'une jeunesse de qualité et qui a envie de réussir. Leurs parents ayant connu le communisme, les jeunes roumains connaissent la chance qu'ils ont de vivre à notre époque. Le système scolaire et universitaire est de qualité et reconnu. Les jeunes roumains ont de l'ambition et veulent réussir. Pour donner un exemple : « Je n'ai pas de rêve dans la vie juste des objectifs. » ; voilà l'une des phrases qu'un jeune roumain a dit quand on lui avait demandé ce que serait le travail de ses rêves (Doaré, 2014).

Par contre, il y a un point qui doit être souligné : c'est la capacité de la Roumanie de garder cette élite florissante. Étant donné que ces jeunes ont la chance de voyager et de côtoyer des étrangers, ils peuvent imaginer le salaire et le niveau de vie qu'ils pourraient avoir dans un autre pays comparé à leur pays natal et ils sont donc naturellement attirés par l'étranger (surtout l'Allemagne et les États-Unis). Mais, les Roumains sont attachés à leur pays et sont fiers de leurs origines. Même s'ils partent un moment, pour commencer leur carrière, ils ont pour objectif de rentrer en Roumanie.

Les avantages de la Roumanie sont adaptés aux différents potentiels du pays. L'État ne se concentre pas sur un seul secteur, et veut donner à tous les secteurs la chance de se développer (Pearce Hardt et Kaufman, 1995 ; Coroș, 2012 ; Doaré, 2014).

L'agriculture représente près de 7 % du PIB de la Roumanie et emploie un quart de la population active. Les principales ressources et productions agricoles sont les céréales, les betteraves à sucre et les pommes de terre. Toutefois, le rendement reste très bas par rapport aux

capacités du pays. Pour prendre l'exemple des céréales, en 2012, le nombre de kilogrammes produit par hectare était de 2 364. Pour comparaison, la France était à 7 524. Ce qui révèle un réel potentiel d'augmentation de la production. Par ailleurs, environ 25 % du pays est couvert de forêts (particulièrement autour de la Transylvanie) et l'industrie du bois se développe très rapidement (Business France, 2016 ; Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Tunis, 2016).

La Roumanie sera un « paradis agricole » de plus en plus convoité par les investisseurs. Les terrains y sont fertiles et en grande abondance. Il existe une grande marge de progression grâce à l'amélioration de la productivité avec l'accès aux machines les plus performantes que l'on peut trouver sur le marché. Cette agriculture est également beaucoup subventionnée par l'Union Européenne. Le pays dispose d'un avantage majeur dans le domaine de *l'agriculture biologique* du fait qu'elle dispose d'un terrain agricole varié, mais aussi et, surtout, propre. Aujourd'hui encore, il y a plusieurs millions d'hectares qui ne sont pas cultivés ou cultivés sans engrais. Les petits paysans, qui pratiquent l'agriculture de subsistance, font d'ailleurs déjà du bio et la conversion au bio certifié est plutôt simple. Dans les régions vallonnées où l'on fait surtout de l'élevage, on est habitué à répandre le purin des bêtes sur le pâturage ou bien dans le potager. Un autre exemple, celui des fermiers des grandes plaines du Sud, eux, ils répandent depuis toujours leur paille directement sur les champs après la récolte du blé (Doaré et Coroș, 2015).

La Roumanie présente la caractéristique d'être un pays producteur de *gaz et de pétrole*, et bénéficie d'une bonne *autonomie énergétique*. Les réserves cumulées de gaz et de pétrole lui assurent, à paramètres constants, 28 et respectivement 16 années de consommation. Elle est dépendante du gaz russe pour 30 % de ses approvisionnements (*via* l'Ukraine). Les 70 % restant sont fournis par sa production nationale (10-12 milliards de m³).

Cependant, le pays disposerait d'importants gisements de *gaz de schiste*, évalués à 1 444 milliards de m³ par l'agence américaine EIA, équivalents à 100 ans de consommation actuelle, concentrés en Transylvanie et en Dobroudja (Sud-Est entre Danube et mer Noire), ainsi que des gisements *offshore* en mer Noire, qui pourraient lui assurer l'indépendance énergétique. De plus, la Roumanie dispose d'eaux de surface et souterraines, ainsi que de mines d'or et d'argent, qui sont, d'ailleurs, un sujet de débat

national puisqu'il y a eu de grandes manifestations contre le pillage de ces ressources par des entreprises étrangères.

La Roumanie bénéficie d'une géographie favorable au développement des *énergies renouvelables*. Selon sa Stratégie énergétique pour la période 2007-2020 et son Plan National d'Action dans le domaine de l'Énergie de sources Renouvelables (PNAER), la Roumanie disposerait d'un potentiel important en matière d'énergies renouvelables : énergie solaire, énergie éolienne, énergie hydroélectrique (Doaré et Coroş, 2015 ; Ministère des affaires étrangères français).

Ce potentiel s'explique par des conditions naturelles particulièrement adéquates (relief, climat, ressources, géographie), favorisant le déploiement des technologies dans les régions suivantes :

- pour *l'énergie solaire* – le Delta du Danube, la Dobroudja et la Plaine du Sud ;
- pour *l'énergie éolienne* – la Dobroudja et la Moldavie (région de plaines et de collines) ;
- pour *le petit hydraulique* – le plateau de Transylvanie, la Moldavie, les Carpates, ainsi que les régions au pied des Carpates Orientaux et Méridionaux ;
- pour *la biomasse* – la Plaine du Sud, la Moldavie, les Carpates, ainsi que les régions au pied des Carpates Orientaux et Méridionaux ;
- pour *l'énergie géothermale* – la Plaine du Sud et la Plaine de l'Ouest (Doaré et Coroş, 2015 ; Ministère des affaires étrangères français ; CCIFER, 2016).

L'industrie a un rôle important dans l'économie roumaine, représentant en 2012 plus de 28 % du PIB. Les différents secteurs industriels emploient plus de 23 % de la main d'œuvre active en Roumanie et sont en général localisés dans les zones urbaines et périurbaines, en particulier dans les Sud et Nord-Ouest du pays. Les grands groupes industriels européens et mondiaux sont bien représentés en Roumanie, surtout grâce aux investisseurs étrangers qui ont rachetés la majorité des facilités de production industrielle. Cependant la majorité des acteurs dans le secteur sont de petites et moyennes entreprises (Coroş, 2012 ; Doaré et Coroş, 2015 ; CCIFER, 2016).

Le principal secteur industriel est *l'automobile*, situé à la 4^e position en Europe. Le secteur automobile roumain accueille deux grands constructeurs mondiaux (Renault et Ford) et plus de 500 équipementiers et sous-traitants. En 2011, la contribution du secteur au PIB national a été de plus de 11 milliards d'euros (CCIFER, 2016 ; *Wall-Street*, 2016).

Il existe des besoins majeurs et une réelle volonté en faveur du développement des *infrastructures de transport*, qu'elles soient routières, ferroviaires ou aéroportuaires. Actuellement, la Roumanie compte 80 000 km de voies, dont 20 % de routes nationales (au sens de celles que l'on trouve en France), ce qui représente la plus faible densité européenne du réseau routier (Awex, 2016).

Il existe 17 *aéroports* opérationnels en Roumanie, et la priorité du gouvernement est de développer des aéroports régionaux pour intensifier le volume de passagers par an et l'accessibilité du pays par voie aérienne. Grâce à ces efforts, une enveloppe de 39,2 milliards d'euros a été promise sur la période de 2014 à 2020 par l'Union Européenne, dont une partie conséquente sera allouée aux transports afin de continuer de rendre la Roumanie plus performante dans ce secteur (Awex, 2016).

L'activité de construction, après un *boom* sans précédent, a été un peu ralentie, touchée comme tous les autres secteurs par la crise économique mondiale. Cependant, une forte progression est réapparue depuis 2011. De plus, le salaire brut est également en augmentation dans ce secteur. Les prévisions pour le domaine de la construction sont bonnes, car il retrouve son dynamisme d'avant la crise grâce aux fonds européens. Dans le domaine de la rénovation, le gouvernement roumain estime que 2,5 millions de logements en zones urbaines et 2 millions en zones rurales vont faire l'objet de travaux importants. Les nouvelles constructions concernent, quant à elles, aussi bien les bâtiments industriels que résidentiels (multiplication spectaculaire dans la construction de résidences secondaires en milieu rural, à la montagne par exemple). Mais, la reprise de ce secteur sera également soutenue par le projet d'amélioration des infrastructures de transport (Awex, 2016).

L'économie de la Roumanie est principalement axée sur les **services**, qui représentent près de 60 % du PIB, et emploient environ la moitié de la main d'œuvre nationale. La Roumanie n'est plus seulement un pays industriel et agricole, mais son secteur tertiaire pèse un réel poids

dans son économie. Ce qui devrait se traduire par une modification de la demande et des attentes des Roumains, mais également par un changement de mode de vie (Le MOCI, 2016).

Le marché roumain de la *santé* est l'un des plus dynamiques de la région avec une réforme du système public plus avancée que jamais (réorganisation du système hospitalier, révision du paquet de base de services médicaux, etc.), et un secteur privé avec des taux de croissance annuels à deux chiffres. Bien que les dépenses de santé soient encore en dessous de la moyenne européenne, les initiatives récentes du gouvernement pour réformer le secteur de la santé devraient permettre une meilleure gestion de l'argent public (actuellement autour de 5,5 milliards d'euros dépensés annuellement dans le système public), un désengorgement des hôpitaux et des investissements conséquents. Pour ce qui est des services privés de santé, ce marché a été estimé à environ 530 millions d'euros en 2012. Les professionnels du domaine estiment que, dans les 2 à 3 années à venir, le phénomène prendra plus d'ampleur avec la consolidation des opérateurs déjà présents sur le marché, l'ouverture de nouvelles cliniques et d'hôpitaux privés et, pourquoi pas, l'entrée de nouveaux acteurs sur le marché (Actual de Cluj, 2016).

Concernant les *luxes* et *distribution spécialisée*, il s'agit d'un marché de près de 20 millions de consommateurs parmi lesquels 2,5 millions de Bucarestois, dont une part importante de revenus comparables à ceux des Européens de l'Ouest. Ils épargnent peu et consomment souvent pour afficher leurs statuts sociaux. Le marché du luxe en particulier n'a cessé de croître au cours des dernières années. Les segments dominants sont l'automobile de luxe (55 %), la mode et les accessoires (30 %). Dans ce contexte très porteur, de nombreuses enseignes internationales prestigieuses ont ouvert des boutiques dès 2012 à Bucarest et même auparavant. Certaines activités qui suscitent une forte demande locale sont encore sous-représentées en Roumanie, souvent traitées de façon informelle et/ou mal structurée : instituts de beauté et salons de coiffure, lavage et entretien automobile, distribution de produits culturels.

Les analystes affirmaient unanimement que les sorties de la crise économique préfigurerait dans les pays d'Europe de l'Est un envol de la consommation (AWEX, 2016).

La grande générosité de la géographie roumaine permet d'envisager de multiples formes d'expériences *touristiques*. Il peut être balnéaire avec les stations qui existent sur le littoral de la mer Noire ; naturaliste avec les nombreux paysages qu'offre la Roumanie (montagnes, grandes étendues, plaines ...) ; mais également urbain, pour découvrir la culture et l'architecture de la période communiste ou des périodes antérieures. Le tourisme rural est aussi très important, car il offre des expériences vraiment authentiques dans des cadres pittoresques (Doaré et Coroș, 2015).

De plus, on peut voir le développement d'un tourisme médical spécialisé dans les soins dentaires. Pour l'exemple de la France, le premier avantage indéniable du tourisme médical est sans aucun doute la prise en charge par l'assurance maladie française des soins, si tant est que ceux-ci sont réalisés dans un pays de l'Union Européenne : la Roumanie faisant partie de l'UE, le remboursement est équivalent à celui auquel l'assuré peut prétendre pour des soins réalisés en France (Actual de Cluj, 2016).

On parle de la région de Cluj comme de la nouvelle Silicone Valley. Le nombre de développeurs de très grandes qualités est un fait et non plus une hypothèse. De nombreuses entreprises de l'Europe de l'Ouest délocalisent leurs activités dans des sociétés d'informatique ici, en Roumanie. C'est également devenu un pôle reconnu dans la création de *Start-ups*. Les événements liés aux jeunes entreprises sont de plus en plus nombreux et attirent des personnes de toutes les nationalités qui savent que tous les acteurs du domaine de l'informatique gardent un œil très attentif sur l'évolution de la Roumanie dans ce domaine.

La consommation est le principal moteur de la croissance pour l'année 2014. Le secteur automobile a été un des leviers de la croissance en 2013. Celle de 2014 sera portée par la reprise de la demande interne. La baisse des prix des biens alimentaires, suite aux récoltes exceptionnelles enregistrées en 2013, a conduit à la baisse de la TVA de 2013 sur le pain (de 24 % à 9 %) et à la hausse du salaire minimum réalisée en 2014 et 2015, permettant d'augmenter le pouvoir d'achat des ménages. Le taux directeur de la banque centrale a été progressivement abaissé jusqu'à s'établir à 3,50 % depuis février 2014, soit son plus bas niveau historique. Cette évolution devrait encourager la consommation des ménages et l'investissement, en rendant les emprunts en monnaie locale plus attractifs (baisse de 3 % des crédits au secteur privé en 2013) (Romania Insider, 2016).

Les relations que le pays entretient avec les différentes parties du monde citées dans la première partie peuvent être un véritable atout en matière de commerce. La puissance des États-Unis et de la Chine, mais également en matière de confiance pour les autres pays voulant négocier avec la Roumanie. On peut voir que le potentiel de la Roumanie est extrêmement diversifié et ne se cantonne pas dans un seul secteur. En plus de toutes ces possibilités qu'offre le pays, il existe de nombreux avantages pour s'y établir. Les avantages de la Roumanie sont adaptés aux différents potentiels du pays. L'État ne se concentre pas sur un seul secteur et veut donner à tous les secteurs la chance de se développer.

Pour les entreprises étrangères, l'un des avantages est le coût très attractif de la main d'œuvre (le coût horaire de la main d'œuvre a été en Roumanie en 2013 de 4,6 euros ; en France de 34,3 euros ou en Suède de 40,1 euros). À noter pour la Roumanie : les coûts horaires de la main d'œuvre dans l'ensemble de l'économie, exprimés en monnaie nationale, en Roumanie + 32,8 % depuis 2008 (Tableau 1). Lorsque quelqu'un voit les salaires moyens et minimums, ils ne peuvent être comparés avec ceux de France ou d'autres pays de l'UE.

Tableau 1. Exemples de rémunérations moyennes nettes mensuelles

Salaire net d'un directeur général	à partir de 1 500 €
Salaire net d'un ingénieur spécialisé	à partir de 800 €
Salaire net d'une secrétaire bilingue	à partir de 300 €
Salaire net d'un employé	à partir de 200 €
Salaire net d'un ouvrier spécialisé	à partir de 200 €

Source : LPG Roumanie (société de conseil en Investissement en Roumanie)

Le double avantage de la main d'œuvre en Roumanie est qu'elle n'est pas chère et qu'elle est compétente. Malgré toutes les difficultés engendrées par le communisme, l'un des avantages tirés de cette période est une tradition de l'industrie, ce qui se traduit par une grande compétence des travailleurs roumains. C'est une force de travail hautement qualifiée, avec de très bonnes

connaissances de langues étrangères (beaucoup de francophones), formée en technologie, IT, ingénierie. De plus, les infrastructures industrielles fortement développées incluent celles de l'industrie pétrolière et pétrochimique. Il existe plus de 40 parcs industriels en Roumanie (World Economic Forum, GCR, 2015).

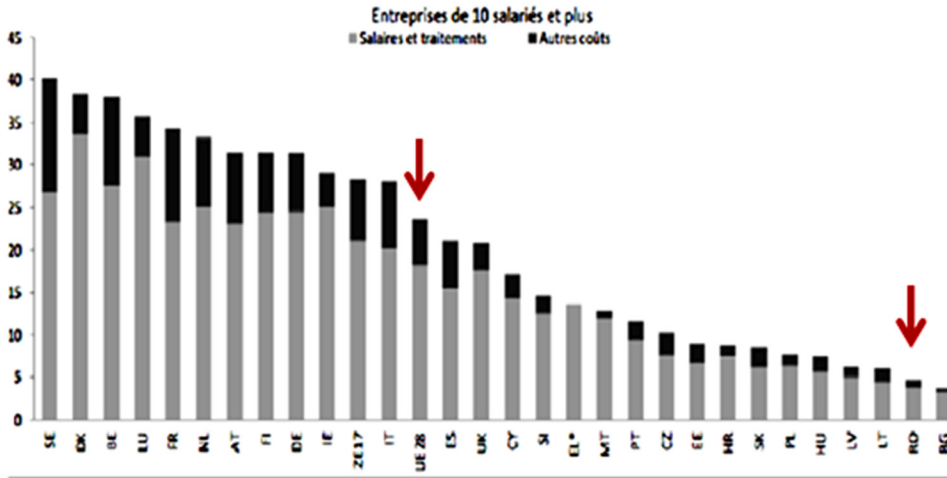


Figure 1. La Comparaison des coûts horaires de la main d'œuvre dans l'ensemble des pays de l'Union Européenne en 2013

Source : Eurostat

En combinant le premier avantage avec des mesures favorables à l'implantation des entreprises, l'État joue la carte de la séduction des entreprises étrangères au maximum quand il adopte des lois pour attirer les entreprises étrangères. Le gouvernement a approuvé l'exonération de l'impôt sur les bénéfices réinvestis des sociétés (impôts 0 sur le bénéfice réinvesti). L'impôt sur les sociétés est seulement de 16 % contre 33 % en France, par exemple. Les barrières à l'entrée sont faibles. La législation roumaine prévoit des dispositions spécifiques pour les investissements étrangers. Elle autorise les investisseurs étrangers à participer à la privatisation et à accéder au marché domestique. Il n'y a aucune limite sur les participations étrangères dans les sociétés commerciales roumaines. Elles peuvent être 100 % étrangères, bien que les partenariats soient plus fréquents, et elles peuvent rapatrier à l'étranger 100 % des bénéfices après impôts.

Tout est fait pour l'installation de nouvelles entreprises et, par la même occasion, la création de nouvelles richesses en Roumanie. Par exemple, les implantations durables des sociétés incitent les créations d'emplois. De plus, le marché du travail et les relations de travail sont réglementés par le code du travail et les normes européennes. On peut également citer le déficit syndical qui, du point de vue des entreprises, facilite les négociations avec les travailleurs.

La décision de s'établir en Roumanie peut être prise aussi pour copier certaines entreprises de renom qui l'ont déjà fait. Si des entreprises tellement prestigieuses s'établissent dans ce pays c'est qu'il doit y avoir des avantages. À titre d'exemple, voici quelques sociétés déjà présentes en Roumanie et leurs projets : « Daimler va investir 300 millions d'euros dans son usine de Sebeș, afin d'y accueillir la production d'une nouvelle boîte de vitesses d'ici à 2016. Ces capacités supplémentaires viennent compléter les capacités de l'usine d'Untertürkheim (Allemagne). En effet, en produisant en Roumanie, Daimler limite ses coûts de distribution et de production. Le coût du travail horaire en Roumanie est presque 10 fois moins élevé qu'en Allemagne. Les boîtes de vitesses produites dans l'usine de Sebeș équiperont les voitures et véhicules de loisir de la marque Mercedes. » (Lavrut, 2014). Un autre exemple est : « Le plus grand élevage de bisons d'Europe inauguré à côté de Cluj, en Roumanie : La plus grande ferme de bisons d'Europe a été inaugurée dans le département de Cluj (centre). Surnommée le BT Ranch, cette exploitation s'étend sur une surface de 400 hectares et accueille 277 animaux. Deux hommes d'affaires, l'un allemand et l'autre autrichien, sont à l'origine de cet investissement d'un million et demi d'euros. Les deux propriétaires souhaitent par ailleurs étendre leur parc pour ouvrir cet automne un zoo, ainsi qu'un hôtel pour accueillir les amateurs de chasse. Ils prévoient enfin de créer une chaîne de restaurants où sera vendue leur viande. » (Le petit Journal, 2014).

Un autre aspect essentiel qui conditionne la décision d'internalisation d'une entreprise est la compatibilité du style de management. C'est un équilibre très difficile à trouver pour une entreprise qui s'implante : quel style de management doit être utilisé, quel pourcentage de locaux et d'expatriés. Il faut jauger plusieurs techniques avant de choisir la bonne solution. Il n'y a pas de vérité dans ce domaine, car une technique de management qui marche dans le pays du siège du groupe peut être totalement inadaptée à un nouveau pays. Grâce à ses « ressemblances » culturelles, la transition peut être simplifiée en Roumanie.

Tableau 2. Les Dimensions culturelles de Geert Hofstede

Pays	Roumanie	Autriche	Chine	Danemark	France	Inde	Hollande
Index							
Distance par rapport au pouvoir	90	11	80	18	68	77	38
Individualisme vs collectivisme	30	55	20	74	71	48	80
Évitement-incertitude	42	79	66	16	43	56	14
Masculinité contre féminité	90	70	30	23	86	40	53
Orientation à long terme contre orientation à court terme	52	60	87	35	63	51	67
Plaisir contre modération	20	63	24	70	48	26	68

Source : The Hofstede Centre

Les deux pays latins (la Roumanie et la France) ont des dimensions culturelles assez proches, comme on peut le constater des résultats du tableau ci-dessus. De la sorte, les Français comprennent mieux les ouvriers roumains et, par conséquent, le travail ensemble devient plus facile en comparaison aux possibilités d'autres pays du monde. Ainsi, l'internationalisation des entreprises françaises sur le marché roumain est beaucoup facilitée, fait expliqué aussi par les relations politiques, économiques et culturelles de longue durée (Wall-Street, 2016).

La Roumanie est un pays francophone, mais les gens ont aussi de très bonnes connaissances de langues étrangères : en premier l'anglais, mais ensuite, le français, l'italien, l'espagnol et l'allemand. C'est une qualité assez rare dans un pays tel que la France de parler 3 langues parfaitement, mais en Roumanie cela semble être assez banal.

La double qualité de membre de l'UE et de l'OTAN démontre également une stabilité géopolitique. Pour un pays émergent, il est très intéressant de pouvoir s'appuyer sur le fait qu'il n'y aura pas de conflits armés.

Un autre avantage est généré par la stabilité du leu par rapport à l'euro. Encore une fois c'est une sécurité pour tout investisseur ou entrepreneur de s'assurer que la monnaie dans laquelle les transactions sont effectuées a une stabilité : il n'y a eu aucune baisse ou hausse significative du leu comparé à l'euro depuis environ trois années.

Les investisseurs étrangers, sociétés ou personnes physiques d'un État membre de la Communauté Européenne, qui sont résidents en Roumanie, peuvent acquérir des terrains depuis la date d'entrée de la

Roumanie dans l'UE. Néanmoins, ils n'ont pas pu acquérir directement des terres agricoles, des forêts et des terres de sylviculture pendant une période de sept ans après la date d'entrée de la Roumanie dans l'UE. En ce qui concerne les sociétés ou personnes physiques d'un État qui n'est pas membre de l'UE, ils sont autorisés à acquérir des terrains sous les conditions prévues par les traités internationaux et sous réserve de réciprocité. Quelle que soit leur nationalité, les personnes physiques ou les sociétés étrangères peuvent contourner ces contraintes et acquérir des terrains en Roumanie par l'intermédiaire de la mise en place d'une société roumaine dont ils ont le contrôle.

Pour la compréhension de l'environnement roumain des affaires, on a réalisé une étude avec l'aide de l'interview. Cette analyse est basée sur un échantillon d'environ 400 entreprises. Suite à un taux de réponses trop peu élevé, on a décidé d'obtenir des réponses *via* des interviews physiques, en réalisant un recherche qualitative et non pas quantitative. De la sorte, on a réussi à en faire 36, ce qui permet d'obtenir un taux de réponses de 9 % à cette enquête en ligne. La cible est vraiment spécifique et, parfois, elle ne veut pas être connue du grand public pour certaines activités (il existe encore de trop nombreux préjugés sur la Roumanie).

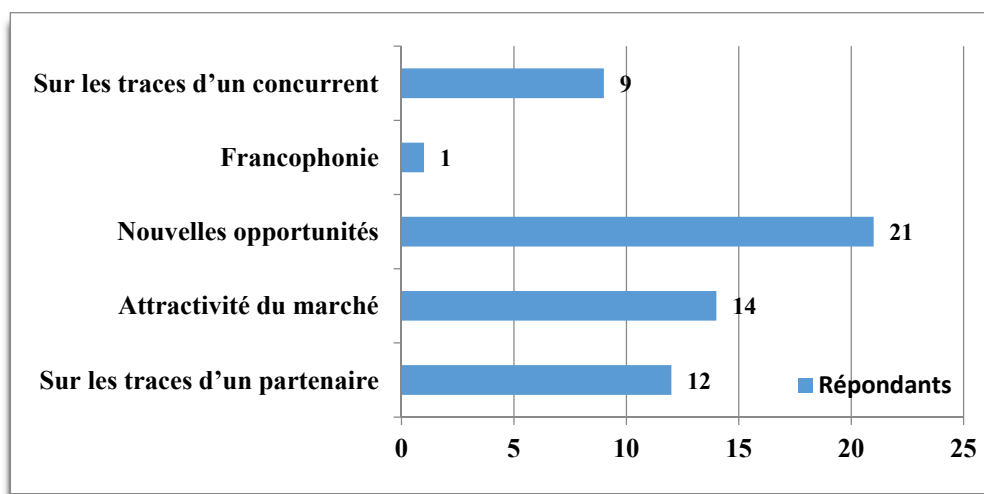


Figure 2. Les Raisons pour investir en Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

Dans ce graphique (plusieurs réponses étaient possibles), nous pouvons voir que :

- 33,3 % des participants sont venus pour suivre un partenaire ; les grands groupes français se sont installés, puis de nombreuses PME les ont suivis ; de plus, avoir un partenaire déjà établi permet grandement de faciliter l'implantation : la nouvelle société arrive avec des certitudes et non en tant qu'explorateur ;

- 38,9 % pour l'attractivité du marché, ce qui confirme la tendance déjà vue ci-dessus ; c'est un marché qui a grandi jour après jour et qui, contrairement aux pays de l'Ouest, n'est pas saturé ;

- 58,8 % pour les nouvelles opportunités : l'internationalisation est une question quotidienne et récurrente pour chaque entreprise ; aujourd'hui, nous vivons dans un monde global et il est, donc, assez normal de venir dans les pays en plein développement pour trouver de nouvelles opportunités (c'est une démarche entrepreneuriale) ;

- 2,8 % seulement pour la francophonie, ce qui peut être compréhensif parce que la haute maîtrise de la langue anglaise par le peuple roumain facilite grandement les communications ;

- 25 % pour suivre un concurrent : l'avantage de suivre un « modèle » est d'en tirer les enseignements pour éviter de reproduire les mêmes erreurs ; les meilleures innovations sont des choses qui existent, mais qui sont retravaillées pour devenir le plus performant possible dans un nouveau contexte.

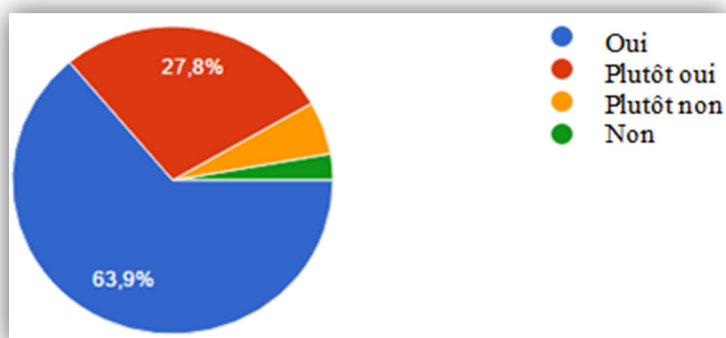


Figure 3. L'Évaluation de la décision de venir en Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

À la question « *Diriez-vous que venir en Roumanie a été une bonne décision ?* », 63,9 % des répondants trouvent que oui. De plus, le pourcentage de personnes non satisfaites est très bas et non représentatif. Dans cette question, des requêtes de clarifications ont été demandées. Les facteurs mis en avant par les personnes ayant répondu sont ceux présentés plus bas (dans les figures sur les éléments positifs et négatifs).

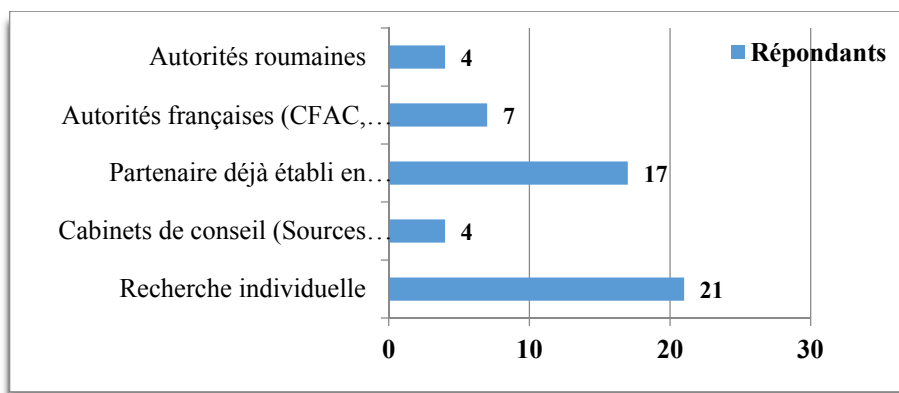


Figure 4. La Manière d'obtenir des informations sur la Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

La réponse la plus fréquente à la question « *Comment avez-vous obtenu vos informations sur la Roumanie ?* » a été la suivante : par des recherches personnelles avec 58,3 % ou grâce à un partenaire déjà établi (ce qui confirme la tendance de la première question). De plus, en vue des discussions que l'on a pu avoir avec certains entrepreneurs, beaucoup d'entre eux ont des origines roumaines (eux-mêmes ou quelqu'un de leurs familles). On peut voir que les autorités roumaines et françaises doivent faire un effort sur la promotion de leur existence.

Un pourcentage de 61,1 % des investisseurs ont un capital totalement français. Quand des entrepreneurs français viennent en Roumanie, la plupart du temps, ils créent leurs sociétés de zéro, c'est-à-dire qu'ils préfèrent commencer une nouvelle société plutôt que d'investir dans une déjà existante. Cela peut être une question de confiance car, en général, les Français (les individus et non pas seulement les entrepreneurs) ne font pas confiance les uns aux autres.

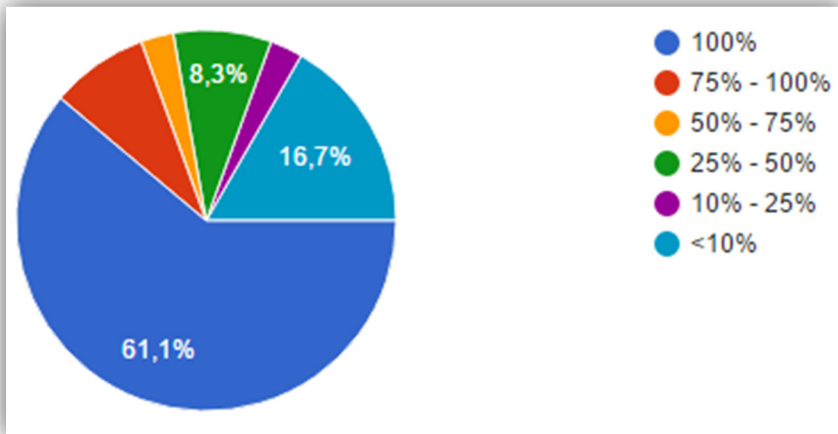


Figure 5. Le Pourcentage du capital français dans la compagnie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

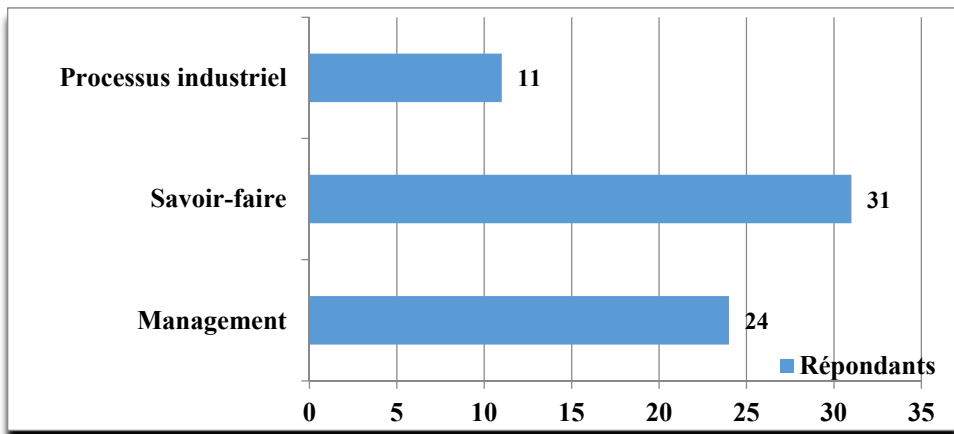


Figure 6. L'Apport des investisseurs français en Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

Il s'agit incontestablement du savoir-faire et du management, avec 86,1 % et, respectivement, 66,7 %. Il est très différent de travailler dans une petite société avec un cadre régional (ou national) comparé à un acteur international. La méthodologie et les processus doivent absolument être parfaitement maîtrisés et bien établis, tout comme le management, si la société veut être performante face à la compétition internationale.

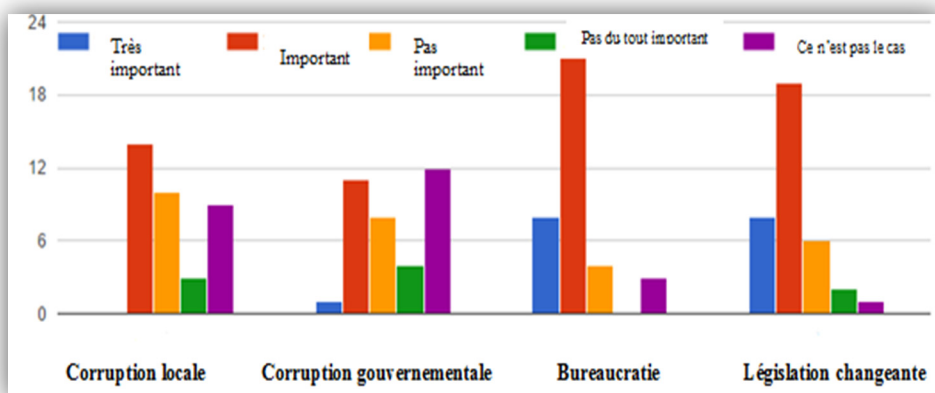


Figure 7. Les Éléments qui génèrent des difficultés pour l'entreprise

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

Dans ce graphique, nous avons pris en compte les critères les plus représentatifs des réponses. On peut voir que la législation changeante et la bureaucratie sont plus représentées que la corruption (aux deux niveaux – local et gouvernemental), ce qui est une bonne chose pour la Roumanie, car le pays a mis en place de nombreuses réformes et des institutions pour la lutte contre la corruption. De notre point de vue, cela signifie que le travail du gouvernement porte ces fruits et que, même si la corruption existe encore (comme dans tous les pays du monde), ce n'est plus le problème le plus important lorsqu'on fait des affaires en Roumanie.

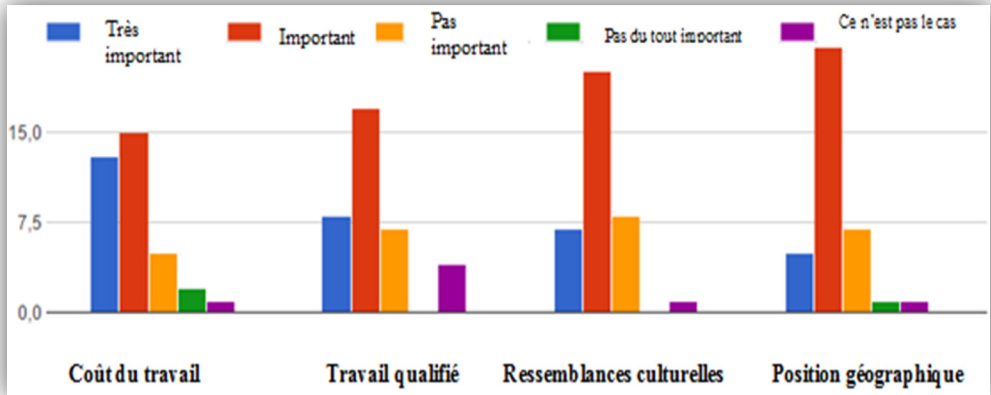


Figure 8. Les Éléments positifs pour faire des affaires en Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

On peut voir que les réponses des interviewés, formulées dans ce diagramme, confirment les affirmations faites auparavant. Le coût du travail combiné avec la qualité et les similarités culturelles donnent un énorme avantage à la Roumanie. Le fait que le pays est également très proche de la France en termes de distance (2h30 d'avion) est le facteur le plus important.

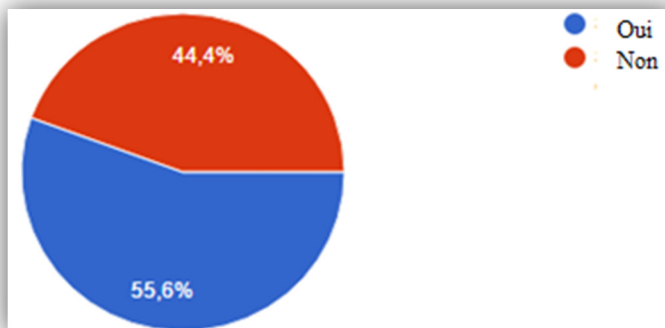


Figure 9. L'Existence d'une communauté francophone forte

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

Les personnes interrogées ont répondu que *Oui* dans un pourcentage de 55,6 %. À cette question, des clarifications ont été demandées. Voici un résumé des précisions apportées par certains participants à l'enquête : oui, nous ressentons une communauté française, grâce à l'existence de la CCIFER et UBIFRANCE, qui aide beaucoup ; une communauté très forte est présente à Bucarest et cela dû à la présence de grands groupes français ; merci également au poids de l'histoire et aux courtes distances géographiques qui séparent nos deux pays ; l'aide des entrepreneurs déjà établis est un véritable accélérateur pour les nouveaux arrivants. Pour conclure, on voudrait citer un participant à l'étude dont la citation correspond à de nombreux autres cas : « Je suis plus Roumain que Français, je suis intégré. ».

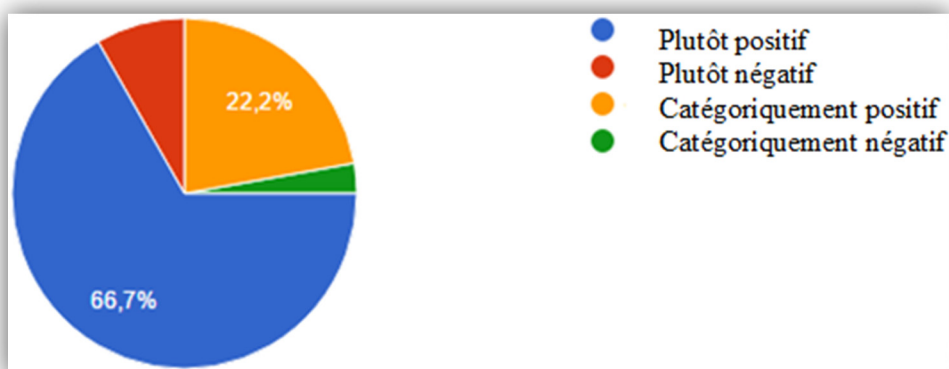


Figure 10. Sur le changement de la perception de l'investisseur depuis l'arrivée en Roumanie

Source : Enquête en ligne et interviews

Cette question de notre enquête montre que 9/10 des entrepreneurs qui sont venus en Roumanie sont satisfaits de leurs décisions. Même si c'est ce que l'on fait d'une opportunité qui compte le plus, les presque 89 % démontrent que la Roumanie, de manière générale, a un climat d'affaires favorable aux investisseurs venus de France.

4. Conclusions

Malgré la situation économique du pays, et son avant-dernière place dans l'Union Européenne, la Roumanie a un vrai potentiel. Ce retour à la croissance, en s'appuyant sur les bailleurs de fonds internationaux et sur l'UE, en est une preuve. Les relations internationales développées au fil du temps, sont de très bons atouts pour le futur. Grâce à ces relations et aux restructurations effectuées par la Roumanie, les investisseurs étrangers font confiance à ce pays. Les objectifs clairement affichés d'étendre ses relations internationales confirment que la Roumanie comprend l'importance de ses échanges. La prédominance du secteur tertiaire et la relance de la consommation détermine un changement du niveau de vie de la Roumanie qui tend à se rapprocher de celui des Européens de l'Ouest. Les ménages changent leurs priorités de consommation, ce qui intéresse les investisseurs, car le marché n'a clairement pas atteint sa maturité. L'augmentation des investissements directs à l'étranger est l'un des facteurs qui déterminent la politique du gouvernement roumain, celui-ci ayant compris que la pérennisation de la croissance passera par une ouverture du pays et des mesures pour rendre le pays de plus en plus attractif.

La combinaison entre le potentiel du pays, dans les trois secteurs de l'économie, et les avantages d'investir en Roumanie sont la clef de l'avenir. Que ce soit pour les affaires ou pour l'économie, la Roumanie est un pays qui regarde vers l'avenir. En s'appuyant sur l'Union Européenne et ses solides relations internationales, le pays peut envisager un futur plus serein. La Roumanie est un pays qui attire et qui a le potentiel pour attirer, et celui-ci ne se cantonne pas seulement dans un seul secteur de l'économie, mais dans tous. La question qui se pose est : « La Roumanie évoluera-t-elle assez vite pour garder sa jeunesse de qualité ? ». Cette jeunesse est l'atout majeur pour pérenniser ce retour vers la croissance et constituera la base des futurs consommateurs de demain.

Les relations que le pays entretient avec les différentes parties du monde peuvent constituer un réel atout – par exemple le pouvoir économique des États-Unis et de la Chine –, mais également en terme de confiance pour les autres pays qui veulent négocier avec la Roumanie. On peut voir que le potentiel de la Roumanie est extrêmement diversifié et ne se cantonne pas dans un seul secteur. Derrière toutes ces opportunités dans le pays, il y a de nombreux avantages pour s'y installer.

Les investisseurs sont intéressés par le fait que le marché n'a clairement pas atteint sa maturité. L'augmentation des investissements directs à l'étranger est un facteur déterminant de la politique du gouvernement roumain qui a compris que le développement durable de la croissance passera par une ouverture du pays et par des mesures pour le rendre plus attractif. Comme nous avons pu le voir lors de l'analyse de l'enquête, c'est également le point de vue partagé par la majorité des entrepreneurs français présents en Roumanie. Ils sont en Roumanie pour changer les choses, pour trouver « l'opportunité » de demain, et ils pensent réellement que celle-ci se trouve en Roumanie.

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