

# ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY - A ROMANIAN CONTEXT APPROACH

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**A**bstract. In the field of scientific knowledge, through this research topic, we have aimed at building an index to diagnose organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society. Regarding the empirical research plan, the originality of the work is that of presenting a qualitative study that allowed for an outline of the Romanian context of organisational behaviour in this society. Among the qualitative methods with phenomenological, comprehensive orientation of the scientific research methodology, we used the focus group, and to identify Romania's position in international rankings that identify progress towards the knowledge-based society, we used the qualitative content analysis. The research was performed through secondary data analysis collected in reports and studies of international organisations.

**Keywords:** knowledge-based society; creative economy; organisational behaviour index in the knowledge-based society; knowledge-based organisation; national context

**JEL Classification:** O30, M10

## 1. Introduction

The need to reconstruct the structure of the economy and the necessary changes in the assumptions of economics occur more and more prominently in

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the economists' concerns. The current economic crisis has further precipitated these issues, producing timely and meaningful debates to demonstrate the need for the conceptual reconstruction of the economic science (Dinga, E., 2009, pp. 37-38), but also the growing importance of consciousness patterns and of spirituality (Dobrescu și Ioan-Franc, 1997, p. 152). The destruction of the "old economic mechanism" and the emergence of the "new economy" require the solving of a sensitive issue, that referring to the evolution towards a new form of existence, towards the ideal defined by the intersection of reason and human soul with nature (Dinu, 2011, p. 350). By making reference to all these, however, we dwell in the following pages on the new historical and economic phenomenon: the knowledge-based society and the creative economy.

Innovation, information, intellectual capital, production neo-factors represent some of the defining attributes of the knowledge-based society, characterized by "converting knowledge into raw material, capital, products, key factors of economic production and economic processes within which the generation, selling, buying, learning, storing, developing, sharing and knowledge protection become predominant and they decisively condition the profit and the long-term economic sustainability" (Nicolescu, O. and Nicolescu, L., 2005).

Providing computers, Internet access, use of new technologies, competitiveness on the international market represents strong features of the new economy. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of an important negative aspect, that of brain-draining from the less developed countries to the developed ones, to the detriment of the former (Neguț, S., 2011, p. 517). Small countries - small territories are brought into discussion, such as Netherlands, Hong Kong, Singapore, but which are real models of ICT use, ranking among the top 15 world exporters. For Romania, a small country itself, *which are the directions to meet the requirements of the knowledge-based society? Are there features that should be better exploited for the benefit of the competitive advantage in this direction?*

## **2. Sustainable integration of the knowledge-based society and the creative economy requirements in the organisational behaviour**

*The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) proposes the evaluation of the knowledge-based society through: ■ measuring the knowledge inputs, ■ measuring the knowledge stocks and flows, ■ measuring the knowledge outputs, ■ measuring the knowledge networks and ■ measuring*

the knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. However, such an assessment is difficult to achieve, OECD concluded even 1996. At company level, OECD mentions the need to promote change by: increasing flexibility, decentralization, multiple skills development of the workforce, particularly regarding employment agreements. The need for microeconomic indicators to measure the impact of forming and developing the human capital on companies' performance, by analyzing the formation costs by type of training: general, technical and managerial, but also on the categories of employees and types of firms is also emphasized (OECD, 1996). As such, *human capital* is central, due to the ability to exploit and develop the attributes of the knowledge-based society. The knowledge-based organisations are aware of the importance of human resources due to the knowledge and skills they have. However, *the structural capital* is also important, resulted in the organisation's internal processes and *the relational capital* materialised in the organisation's reputation. Therefore, *the intellectual capital is the sum of the human capital, of the structural one and of the relational one* (Suciu, MC et al. 2011, p. 338). Drucker, P. (1992, pp. 95-105) states that organisations should channel their efforts towards achieving: **Innovation** (knowledge creation), **Learning** (knowledge assimilation), and **Partnership interactivity** on knowledge. Strengthening university partnerships – the business environment is also critical to fulfilling the requirements of the knowledge-based society (Serbănică, CM, 2011, p. 431).

We adhere to the opinion of Ridderstrale, J. and Wilcox, M. (2010, p. 57-62) who apply **the kinetic energy equation in economics**, concluding that the speed is a function that depends on mass and energy:  $V = f(M, E)$ , energy is directly proportional to the body mass and to the square of speed. In other words, the lower the mass and the higher the energy is, the higher the speed of movement of bodies is. This function can be applied to economics and it can streamline economic affairs. Trying to adapt to change and be as flexible as possible, many Western companies, through an intense process of demassification, have outsourced business processes, have reduced the staff, have restructured, etc., losing sight of the other variable of the function, the energy. *In the knowledge-based society, the company's energetic dimension must be based on intellectual capital*. As such, when access to the physical and financial resources is difficult, the organisation's energy must be channelled to increase the recognition of the psychological capital, of the social one and of the intellectual one. A possible solution to the crisis? Probably!

In the creative economy, the human resource is given more importance. The results of a study conducted in 16 countries, on a sample of 86,000 employees

of large and medium companies have concluded that the vast majority of employees at all hierarchical levels of a company are less than fully involved in the work they perform. The researchers have found that the most important skills required for value creation are, in descending order of importance: passion (35%), creativity (25%), initiative (20%), intellect (15%), diligence (5%) and obedience (0%) (Hamel, G. and Breen, B., 2010, pp. 86-87). The findings are alarming because they show that, often, companies are less able than the internal human resources.

The understanding of organisational behaviour is also ensured by studying and evaluating the corporate personality; a concept resulted from the transposition of the brand personality, at company level, and imposed in the literature by G. Davies, R. Chun, R. DaSilva R. and S. Roper in 2001. They proposed a corporate personality scale based on the following attributes: *agreeability, enterprise, competence, elegance, robustness, power, informal spirit*. Later, Keller K. and Richey K. (2006), associated even more human characteristics to the company and proposed an assessment model of the corporate personality traits, including the following components: *heart* - the company must have **passion** for customer service and market action and **compassion** in the relation to the public, *mind* - an organisation must be creative and disciplined, and *body*, respectively be agile to take advantage of opportunities and to give a participatory spirit. We notice attributes specific to the creative economy and to the knowledge-based society.

Based on Romania's position in international rankings reflecting the fulfilment degree of the knowledge-based society indicators, rankings that disadvantage us, we try to find some niches that could be better exploited. Although literature offers various macroeconomic evaluation methodologies for the knowledge-based society, it is not as generous in the diagnosis, at company level, of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based economy. That is why we propose an index of five indicators, each being developed on five levels.

*The purpose of the research* was represented by the organisational behaviour determinants in the creative economy and in the knowledge-based society, conditioned by the national context and by the social-economic one.

*Research objectives:*

- the level and quality of the Romanian managers' perception of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society;
- the key attributes according to which the managers in Romania consider the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society;

- the extent to which the managers of a less developed country, such as Romania, consider the creative potential dimensions based on the same criteria as those in developed countries.

### 3. Research Methodology

Our work is built both on the qualitative content analysis (Adams, J. et al., 2007) and on the focus group (Chelcea, S., 2004, Morgan, D.L., 1998; Lofland, J. and Lofland, L.H., 1995). Thus, respecting the classic algorithm of the content analysis, we considered *the unit of analysis used* to be Romania's position in international rankings that identify the progress towards the knowledge-based society, *the chosen set of categories* – the indicators that determine Romania's poor position and those that aim directly at the Romanian companies' behaviour in the knowledge-based economy, then *summarizing and illustrating the findings*. Secondary data analysis materialised in the reports and studies of the European Commission, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Economic Forum represented the main area of research.

Taking as reference a state-of-the art of the knowledge-based economy indicators developed by the European Commission through the Knowledge-based Economy Indicators project (European Commission, 2008), but also by understanding the Romanian context of the knowledge-based society, discussed above, **we propose a set of indicators**, applicable at firm level. In our approach we have transposed some existing indicators, from the macroeconomic level to the microeconomic level, while adapting and introducing new indicators.

For the specific determinants of the information and communications technology (ICT) we used as landmark the European strategic framework and the Romanian one. Among the objectives of the I2010 Initiative, we mentioned those directly aimed at the economy, namely: the establishment of a European information space, i.e. of a true single market for the digital economy, enabling the full exploitation of the potential of the diverse and distinct previous economies, as well as increasing the innovation and investment in ICT research, representing the main engine of the economy (European Commission, 2010). A report on ICT stated that, in 2010, the business sector in the EU allocated more than 20% of the ICT investments (European Commission, 2010). To support the e-economy development through the Operational Programme Increase in Economic Competitiveness (OPIEC) it is envisaged to provide support for:

- integrated business systems;

- electronic applications for doing business;
- the introduction of the electronic auction systems;
- conducting secure electronic transactions (Fonduri – structurale.ro, 2011).

We have also analyzed the landmark projects of the Romanian Academy (Albu, L.L. and Chilian, N., 2001; Ciutacu, C., Chivu, L. and Ioan-Franc, V., 2001; Dragomirescu, H., 2001; Guran, M., 2001; Iancu, S., 2001; Suciu, M.C., 2008.)

To determine the financial performance indicators, we used the assessment of the operating risks of companies based on the following classes of risk (Maniu, A., Ene, S., Tudose, G.G., 2004, p 166).

**Table 1. Financial performance key indicators**

Performance Indicators	Risk category				
	A	B	C	D	E
1. Debt degree%	0 - 30	30,1 - 50	50,1 - 65	65,1 - 80	> 80
2. Immediate liquidity%	>110	65 - 85	65 - 85	50 - 65	<50
3. Patrimonial solvency %	>50	40 - 50	30 - 40	20 - 30	<20
4. Return%	>10	5 - 10	3 - 5	1 - 3	<1
5. Coverage of revenue costs%	>120	100 - 120	9 - 100	70 - 90	<70

Source: *Isaic-Maniu, A., Ene, S., Tudose, G.G., 2004. Assessment, feasibility, business plan and business risks. Pitesti: Independența Economică Publishing House, p. 166.*

These classes of risk match the levels that we propose, as follows:

**A - Level 5:** High financial performance and maintenance prospects;

**B - Level 4:** Satisfactory performance, but with instability trends;

**C - Level 3:** Good performance, but with trends to get worse;

**D - Level 2:** Low financial performance and risky developments;

**E - Level 1:** Negative states and default risk for loans and interests.

All these projects, studies and real academic research have allowed us to develop fundamental and applied research directions specific to our research theme. Therefore, **we propose an index** by which organisational behaviour can be assessed in the knowledge-based society. The index consists of five indicators; each indicator in its turn is developed on five levels (Table 2).

**Table 2. The index of organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society**

Indicator	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1. ICT Production and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company does not have a website.</li> <li>■ The transactions are done traditionally through written documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company owns a website and uses the Internet to disseminate information among customers.</li> <li>■ There is availability of the company to support the administrative tasks by using ICT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are applications for ordering and high availability of the company for the access to Internet services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company has a high rate of introducing new information and communication technologies to maintain relationships with other companies and public institutions.</li> <li>■ The company integrates the order processing in the networked systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ICT is a priority in the business strategy.</li> <li>■ Web technology is integrated into the sales, marketing and customer service system, the website being promoted by advertisements in the media.</li> </ul>
2. Human resources, skills and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investing in human resources development is not a priority for the company.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company assesses the staff distribution on training levels but does not support professional development.</li> <li>■ The company complies with the employees' social and economic needs, through the pay policies that encourage performance and creativity, through security and labour safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company is concerned about the rise in the employees' training hours.</li> <li>■ One aim is to continuously improve all the employees' activity in order to achieve the business objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessment of the job satisfaction is a priority for the company.</li> <li>■ The company greatly encourages the participation of the human resources in the long-life learning programs.</li> <li>■ Teamwork is promoted by harmonizing the relations between employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The degree of assigning responsibilities is very large and closely linked to the training and creativity level of the human resources.</li> <li>■ Talent acquisition and development represent objectives of the human resources strategy.</li> <li>■ Recruitment is based on the convergence of the personal values and interests and the organisational ones.</li> <li>■ Innovation is a constant concern of the human resources.</li> </ul>
3. Production and dissemination of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company neither has a research - development department nor considers such need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is a research - development department with early form or minimum resistance activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company cooperates with research universities or institutes, but not regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Company cooperation with the academia is permanent and there are joint projects in progress or completed, which have resulted in innovations or new technologies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company encourages creativity and innovation at all hierarchical levels.</li> <li>■ Investing in the research development activity is a priority for the company.</li> <li>■ The company has a competitive advantage as a result of the dissemination of knowledge.</li> </ul>

Indicator	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4. Entrepreneurship and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introducing new products/services on the market is not an objective of the company.</li> <li>■ There are no registered trademarks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In total company sales, the new products sales dominate.</li> <li>■ Although there are no trademarks, people become aware of this need and take steps in this process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The company encourages the acquisition of new technologies.</li> <li>■ There are trademarks/patents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identifying new technologies and their integration into the production process is an important goal of the strategy.</li> <li>■ The company has a leading position on the market as a result of the pace of introducing new products/services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Technological competitiveness is due to innovation determined by its research development activity.</li> <li>■ The company has technological eco-innovations.</li> </ul>
5. Economic performance (financial and nonfinancial), by social and environmental level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Negative state of economic performance and default risk for loans and interests.</li> <li>■ Capital structure indicators and the multiplication factor reflect a very unfavourable situation.</li> <li>■ The company does not invest in environment protection.</li> <li>■ There is not a policy of social responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Low financial performance and risky developments.</li> <li>■ There are no fines paid for environmental pollution.</li> <li>■ Although there are regulations governing the social responsibility policy, the company does not start, except periodically, such actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Satisfactory performance, but with worsening trends.</li> <li>■ There are systems of environmental management.</li> <li>■ There is compliance in the gender equality in income distribution.</li> <li>■ There are procedures for evaluating communication and corporate reputation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Satisfactory performance, but instability trends.</li> <li>■ Capital structure indicators and the multiplication factor reflect a very favourable situation.</li> <li>■ Systems are used to monitor customer satisfaction.</li> <li>■ The company uses renewable resources.</li> <li>■ The company uses a system of indicators to measure the effects of economic communication in business.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High financial performance and maintenance prospects.</li> <li>■ Very large financial investment capacity.</li> <li>■ The company's strategies integrate the impact of industrialization on biodiversity.</li> <li>■ Methodologies for assessing the effects of communication and relational capital measurement business are used.</li> </ul>

**The index of organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society** is determined by means of the following algorithm:

- assigning scores from 1 to 5 for each indicator, where 1 represents the minimum level and 5 is the maximum level;
- the overall arithmetic mean is calculated;
- the following ratings are given:
  - **A** - very good level, difficult to achieve, for 5 points;
  - **B** – high level, for 4 – 5 points;
  - **C** – acceptable level, for 3 – 4 points;
  - **D** – low level, but with improvement premises, for 2 – 3 points;
  - **E** – very poor level, undesirable, for 1 – 2 points.

Therefore, our index proposes the diagnosis, at company level, of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society, with indicators developed on relevant levels.

We have also reviewed studies that refer to our research topic. We further present a few methodological aspects of the study which aimed at building an index of creativity used to determine Romania's creative potential, as well as its positioning in relation to the other EU member states. The following dimensions were retained: *Talent Index – TLI*, *Technology Index - TI* and *Tolerance Index - TOLI* (Bobircă, A. et al., 2009).

■ The Talent Index - TLI - is a composite index that comprises three sub-indices: the *Class Index - CCI*, which represents the percentage in the total population of the number of people employed in work involving the performance of creative actions or which use creative inputs, the *Human Capital Index - HCI*, the percentage of people who hold a higher education degree, and the *Scientific Talent Index - TSI*, the number of researchers per thousand of inhabitants who work in the scientific field.

■ Technology Index – TI - comprises in its turn three sub-indices: the *Innovation Index - II* - calculated as number of applications for patents submitted to the EU Patent Office, per 1 million inhabitants, the *Technology Innovation Index - TTI* - that represents the number of applications for patents for high technology per million of inhabitants, and the *R&D Index - RDI* – which means the share of the research–development expenditure in the made by of the states analyzed.

■ The Tolerance Index - TOLI - comprises in its turn three sub-indices: the *Tourism Openness Index - TOI*, calculated as number of tourists who arrive in a state, the *Students Index – STI* - and the *Creative Trade Index - CTI*, which means the share of the trade with creative goods and services in the total trade of a state.

In the second part of the work we sought to identify the Romanian context of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society, using, as we mentioned before, the focus group, which, although it does not allow generalizations, provides inputs that can later be tested by empirical research (Asandi, M. et al., 2011, p. 75). We could thus identify the individuals' options and behavioural tendencies concerning the perception of the Romanian context of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society.

To meet the rigors of the chosen research method (Morgan, D.L., 1998; Krueger, R.A. and Casey, M.A., 2005, p. 21), we participated in four focus-groups of 12 participants each. The duration of a focus group was 120 minutes. The data were collected between October 10 and November 10, 2011. The selection criteria for setting the sample was given by the relevance of the information the subjects could offer. To do this, the focus-groups were attended by the managers of some companies in Argeş County, at different hierarchical levels. The recording of the information was carried in a specially equipped room, in the Master Centre of "Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Pitesti, the managers being Master students at the same time.

#### **4. Is Romania creative in terms of requirements of the knowledge-based society?**

*The World Bank* analyzes the progress towards the knowledge-based society with the help of four pillars. The variables are normalized on a scale from 1 to 10. Of the 147 countries covered by the performance analyzes, Romania ranks 47<sup>th</sup> and it obtained, according to the latest assessment performed by the World Bank, the following scores: ■ The economic and institutional incentive regime - 6.98, ■ Education - 5.74, ■ Innovation - 6.47 and ■ Information and Communications Technology - 6.55 (World Bank, 2009).

From the latest *Report on the competitiveness of the World Economic Forum: Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011*, we retained only the indicators that directly concern the behaviour of companies in the knowledge-based economy.

Regarding *the ethical behaviour of firms*, Romania ranks 92<sup>nd</sup> in 139. This indicator which reflects the interaction with the public officials, politicians and other enterprises has a score of 3.6 (where 1 - is among the world's worst behaviours, and 7 – among the best in the world).

Concerning the characterization of the *corporate governance* by investors and boards of directors, Romania ranks 88<sup>th</sup>, with a score of 4.4 (where 1 means that management has a low accountability to investors, and 7 - that investors strictly supervise the management decisions).

In its turn, *the Global Competitiveness Index 2010 - 2011* analyzes the innovation through the following indicators.

We further present the position occupied by Romania in the global ranking, according to these indicators: *Capacity for innovation* – 72<sup>nd</sup>, *Quality of scientific research institutions* – 83<sup>rd</sup>, *Company expenses on research&development* – 103<sup>rd</sup>, *Collaboration between research and industry in research&development* - 103<sup>rd</sup>, *Government acquisitions of advanced technology* – 105<sup>th</sup>, *Availability of scientists and engineers* – 55<sup>th</sup>, *Patentability of inventions per million inhabitants* – 62<sup>nd</sup> (World Economic Forum, 2011).

*Europe 2020 Strategy* shows the following concrete actions for the member countries' overcoming of the crisis and readiness for the next decade: *smart economic growth, developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; sustainable economic growth, promoting a competitive economy, with low carbon emission and an efficient use of the resources; as well as inclusive economic growth, promoting a highly labour employment economy, generating social and territorial cohesion* (European Commission, 2010). Romania, through *the National Reform Programme 2011 - 2013*, based on the reference indicators proposed by the European Union had as national objectives: *an employment rate of the population aged 20-64 years of 70%, the share of expenditure on Research& Development in the GDP of 2%, the reduction in the greenhouse gases emissions by 20%, the share of renewable energy sources in the gross final energy consumption by 24%, reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion – 580,000, reducing the early school leaving rate to 11.3%, the share of the population aged 30-34 years which graduated a tertiary education to 26.7%* (European Commission, 2011).

The positions occupied by Romania in the international rankings show the obvious failure to fulfil these objectives, the only hope for change remaining the Romanians' social profile. As long as the level of satisfaction of the people in Romania is low, according to the most recent European Commission

Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2011), although facing problems at work, arising from uncertainty, from modest income (Soros, 2008), with an often hostile business environment (Nicolescu, O., Haiduc, I.C. and Nancu, D., 2011), Romanians are still a creative people. The prerequisites to success seem to come from our internal structure, from our specificity. These are but mere assumptions. To put them into practice, it needs a concerted effort both at the microeconomic level of the company and at government level. In order to bring arguments in favour of these statements, we further present the results of the study we have previously referred to, which, although reflecting a not very favourable current situation, offers development prospects for creative economy in Romania. From this study, we noted the conclusions concerning Romania, which highlight the following:

- Romania has low values of the Scientific Talent Index - TSI, with the lowest number of researchers in Europe, but there is room for a higher advance rate, caused by the growth of the Creative Class indices, which ranks first, and of the Human Capital.
- Concerning the Technology Index - TI, Romania ranks last among the European countries due to the low number of patent applications filed and to the reduced share spent on research-development in the GDP. The rhythm-hope of growth positions Romania in the middle of the ranking.
- Regarding the Tolerance Index - TOLI, although Romania has a better position, mainly due to the trade in creative goods and services, placing it in the middle of the ranking, the growth rate is negative.
- The study also shows a strong correlation, for Romania, between **the creativity and economic growth index**.
- Romania is placed, globally, in the group of countries with low scores of the creativity index, but it offers the prospect for improvements due to the significant growth rates. We believe that these low scores of the creativity index, but with high growth rates are mainly due to the fact that in Romania there has not been a developed entrepreneurial culture, the transition from the centrally planned economy to the market economy failed to refill the negative gap inherited from the period before 1989. The main problem is not, in our opinion, the lack of creativity, but rather the lack of formalized activities: the registration of patents, of the Romanian trade marks, of the technological innovations, etc.

Another study analyzing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) correlated with the ones of the human resources in Romania between

2004-2009 offers a profile of the organisation that learns. In short, its dimensions are:

- *a flexible organisational structure*, a formal one, that fosters learning;
- promoting *an organisational culture* that enables the personal development and that perceives training as an investment and learning as a crucial element that ensures the success of an organisation, valuing and rewarding value;
- *organisational communication* that develops both the internal communication and the external one, stimulating inter-group communication and minimizing the occurrence of the inert points of information storage;
- *organisational management* based on shared vision, on leaders' stimulation of self-control in learning, on the development of the skills of knowledge transfer and on learning by sharing experiences;
- *and the organisation's performance* is related to efficiency and effectiveness, stability and dynamic evolution (Sánchez, A.G. et al., 2011, p. 60).

## **5. Results and conclusions of the research**

Coming back after this foray into the literature of this field up to the present, and given that we intend to build a tool for obtaining information, i.e. of a set of indicators at company level by which to assess the extent of achieving the requirements of the knowledge-based society and taking into account the many aspects of the situation analyzed, we considered necessary a qualitative research at the level of the Romanian companies through the focus group method. The research has enabled us to identify how the Romanian managers perceive the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society, it has allowed us to understand the main attributes according to which the organisational behaviour is judged in this context, but also to explain the criteria by which the creative potential dimensions of Romania are appreciated. It is known that investigation in qualitative research is done on small samples, but carefully selected and, therefore, we thought it advisable to initially investigate managers, who are directly accountable for the performances or failures of the companies.

- Although all respondents have heard about the knowledge-based society, *they do not have a very clear image on this concept*. Moreover, there has been a certain division in the sense that, in their opinion, the academia through researchers, research institutes and higher education institutions must deal with the advancement of society through developing knowledge,

while the business environment must meet the requirements of overcoming the negative effects of the economic crisis. Only the managers of the top companies in the Argeş County mentioned that they are taking steps to meet the requirements imposed by the knowledge-based society.

- Concerning *the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society*, most respondents perceive it as the way in which the organisation should act, possibly to use some computer and marketing knowledge, so that to improve its customer relationships. Again, companies with the highest turnover mentioned that through organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society they understand the way in which the company uses knowledge for profit, but also to increase its visibility. In this respect, it was found that some of the organisational behaviour objectives should be those of getting involved in community issues, in charity actions, but also in respecting the environment. *Strategic behaviour* is perceived by respondents as the ability to meet the company's objectives by providing quality products or services.
- Most respondents perceive *Information and Communications Technology* as being very important for business development. Some of the answers were: "Nowadays, in order to exist, you must have a website for people to know you from anywhere in the world ..." or " You must have as many employees who know how to work with a computer as possible, if you want to find orders and participate in tenders." However, to the question how much your company invested in the last three years in information and communications technology, managers brought up the economic crisis and that "when you only have funds to pay salaries, to pay taxes and to buy raw materials, it is difficult to make investments in new technologies."
- *Investing in human resources development and stimulating their creativity* was also unequally perceived. Company managers said they encourage such behaviours that focus on the concern for human resources. However, the economic crisis was brought up again and the unstable economic environment. It was argued that in this respect, the crisis also had a positive effect because it helped them get rid of the "ballast" through better performed assessment of the staff. "We train the ones who stayed, but within budget limits, which were lower in this period." Referring to stimulating the creativity of employees, a manager brought up the pyramid of needs developed by Abraham Maslow, arguing that "only after employees have provided for the basic needs - food, safety, etc., they are able to be creative." However, most respondents felt that "Romanians are a creative people," which is considered to be a powerful advantage.

- Production and dissemination of knowledge has polarized, again, the answers. Managers of large companies in the charts, on the basis of their turnover, perceive as very important the existence of research&development departments and of investment in these activities, unlike the other respondents. Concerning the cooperation with research universities or institutes, the respondents unanimously considered that they do not capitalize significantly these relations.
- The indicator described by us through *entrepreneurship and innovation* was best perceived by managers. The pace of introducing new products/services on the market, trademarks, but also the acquisition of new technology represented the items to which managers turn their attention. *Economic performance, on social and environment level*, was also perceived differently. While most managers channel their efforts to obtain bigger profits, minimizing the importance of promoting sustainable development, being more concerned with short periods of time than with the strategic aspect of the economic affairs development, there were also respondents who were at the opposite end. They came either from large companies with financial strength, or from medium-sized companies, but with export activity.
- Concerning the dimensions of Romania's creative potential, the focus-group allowed the synthesis of the following ideas. The respondents agree with the assessment dimensions: *the Talent Index – TLI, the Technology Index – IT, and the Tolerance Index - TOLI*. However, a certain dissatisfaction was noticed, arising from the fact that the Romanian entrepreneurs, although they do not have too many patents, they have a high know-how, materialised in the technical ability and experience, in the technical knowledge and in the procedures that they have transferred and used over the years, but unsystematically and rather informally. According to the respondents, the prospects for meeting these indices will be favourable to Romania, because "Romania is a very tolerant country, it is the country of all opportunities," one respondent said, while most entrepreneurs have realized that in order to be evaluated and compared in international guidelines the industrial or intellectual property should be patented and registered properly. "The problem is not that Romanians were not and are not a creative people, but that they have not yet formalized this area, they have not put too much emphasis on the registration of trademarks, on patents of inventions and therefore we have low scores in international rankings" was another generally accepted opinion.

**In conclusion**, in the respondents' perception of the organisational behaviour in the knowledge-based society is closely linked to the level of economic-social development of a country, to the political stability, and to the easing of the fiscal policy. The results have also concluded that in Romania, when each new-born child carries a significant burden of the national debt, it is hard to talk about sustainable development and knowledge-based society. The conclusions have also reflected a duality between the top companies (fewer in number) and the others. The former are very receptive and interested in achieving the indicators of the knowledge-based society, they aim at a sustainable development, they try to develop more sophisticated policies to motivate the personnel, public relations policies, social responsibility, they have codes of ethics, they have regulations that they observe for the environment protection, etc., while the companies from the latter category try to survive in an environment often hostile and they are more concerned with the short-term goals, arguing that they are aware of the benefits of the knowledge-based society, but the lack of funds and the uncertainty of the economic environment hinder them from making progress in this direction. However, the respondents were optimistic about Romania's development based on the creative economy. The company's development degree decisively conditions the achievement of the criteria of the knowledge-based society; this is another conclusion of the study. The stronger the company is, the higher the degree of compliance is. The political and legal macro environment also has a significant influence. The frequent changes in the legislation, the instability of these environments, the excessive tax burden on the Romanian entrepreneurs minimizes the attention they give to the knowledge-based society and to the creative economy.

The future research directions may produce improvement in relation to the conceptual dimensions of evaluation and of the attributes specific to the organisational behaviour oriented towards reputation, in the context of sustainable development. In this sense, one can analyze the reputation antecedents and determinants and can identify the performance - organisational behaviour - corporate reputation relation.

### **Acknowledgement**

This work was supported by the project "Post-Doctoral Studies in Economics: Training program for elite researchers - SPODE" co-funded from the European Social Fund through the Development of Human Resources Operational Programme 2007-2013, contract no. POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61755.)

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