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Human resources crisis: identifying future entrepreneur's profile in Romania

Cristina Nicolau^{a*} and Tiberiu Foris^b

^{a,b} *Transilvania University of Braşov, Colina Universităţii, corp A, sala AIII5, 500084 Braşov, Romania*

Abstract

This paper aims to highlight entrepreneurship's importance in today's world as a paradoxical field. On the one hand, human resources have always worked on the labour market as either employees or employers, but today, the migration between the two specific categories has started to be more intense and people have just been developing the needed skills to run their own business (even if they are at the beginning of their career, in late-career or even retired) and to cope with entrepreneurial risks. On the other hand, business gurus on heels have appeared and feminine entrepreneurship has started to provide more and more good practices of business strategies. Hence, irrespective of the motivation of every entrepreneur, this concept highly developed in theory shall be more supported by real data on specific sub-samples. In this regard, we undertook a quantitative research on the Central Romanian Development Region (CRDR) so as to identify the profile of the future Romanian entrepreneur and to describe its funding needs and the major areas of business activity it would operate a new business according to its knowledge and skills.

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* Cristina Nicolau. Tel.: +4-0746.108.138.
E-mail address: cristina.nicolau@unitbv.ro

1. Introduction

In our view, entrepreneurship may be defined as a process of improvising and adapting a new business to the opportunities appeared in the market according to the existing skills of the entrepreneur whereas developing other skills needed for running the new business. In this regard, theories on entrepreneurship may be divided into two categories: theories valuing the two herein expresses attributes, considering it simply too unpredictable (Lowe Nielsen, S, Klyver, K, Rostgaard Evald, M. & Bager, T., 2017:23) and theories stating that entrepreneurship is an intentional and planned process with a specific goal (Ajzen, 1991, Krueger & Brazeal, 1994 and Shaver, Gartner, Crosby, Bakalarova & Gatewood, 2001). If corroborating entrepreneurship with crisis management from the point of view of the people who want to start their own business or are employed with a company, our main issue is to determine what makes active population choose a job to running its own business or vice versa. In this respect, we shall analyse the consequences of gender and age gaps on entrepreneurship in the theoretical part of the paper focusing on the levels the human resources crisis appears, whereas in the second part we will present a piece of quantitative research aimed at identifying Romanians' perception on entrepreneurship and their intentions with regard to running own businesses.

2. Human resources under crises: European, Romanian, organisational and individual

We will analyse this topic on four levels, from macro-economic level to individual level, having as a starting point the European Union (the business environment where Romanian entrepreneurs shall competitively operate on a free market), then shortly presenting the Romanian crisis with a view to Romanian companies' crisis, presented as follows:

European Crisis - The opportunities offered by EU funding may increase the number of new companies, but deep studies should be undertaken so as to see the mortality rate of the newly created companies. Moreover, there should also be offered assistance not only during the funded project life cycle, but also a period of time after its implementation. Furthermore, The European Charter for Small Enterprises (2000) recommends, among others, education and training for entrepreneurship and skills availability. From our point of view, it is of outmost importance that national entrepreneurship shall follow European values and principles of healthy enterprises, the organizational forms regarding its development implying, as Ilie, Bălăceanu & Apostol (2015:441) state, the following: creation of entrepreneurship by entrepreneurial education and apprenticeship, its manifestation by launching, growing, expanding and stabilizing businesses and last, but not least, business configuration and stabilization by the national entrepreneurial eco-system.

Romanian Crisis: A study in the field, Yolaç (2015:1097), states that entrepreneurship measured by the number of newly created enterprises is influenced negatively by the total number of days required to register a firm, cost of procedures and corporate tax rate whereas positively by GDP per capita and entry density on one hand, and by voice and accountability on entrepreneurship, on the other hand. However, even if Romania is considered according to this research to have an entry density higher than the sample average of 2.595, we consider that Romanian government, when starting funding projects, should make more real and accurate research so as to create more reliable macro-economic strategies. This research should be highly based on the connection between education (academic and vocational) and working experience, on one hand, and on the fields of activity needing real business development so as to show economic performance. Baba (2016:224) shows that performance is not just about an entity's ability to make profit, but also its ability to pay its short and long-term debts and in our view, to absorb European funds and use them properly. Moreover, in Romania, there is also a national urban – rural discrepancy. There is an inequity between development of rural areas as compared to urban areas. Harpa, Moca & Rus (2016:1102) state that Romania has an important growth potential, but it is not sufficiently exploited and we understand that it is the rural areas (covering 87.1% of total Romanian surface) that shall generate substantial growth potential by their important social role.

Organizational Crisis: The need of entrepreneurs or employees within the Romanian business environment is an issue of debate. There are fields of activity highly developed by companies with many employees (for example IT&C and automotive industry) and fields where entrepreneurship is highly encouraged (service and professional companies and agro-tourism). This creates discrepancies with regard to the active population's income and skill development, multinational companies being very competitive on the labour market. As Alexe & Alexe (2017:957) state, certain industries of outmost importance worldwide are interested in Romanian human resources because of Romania's membership of the EU, high skills of foreign language knowledge, high level of training and interest in Western cultures, faster infrastructure and competitive costs. Strategic cost minimization, together with investment in human capital, is the major association generally made to the effectiveness of human resources management, according to Vardarlier (2016:464).

Individual Crisis: Entrepreneurship approaches have mainly presented differences on gender (men wish more than women to start their business), family background (it highly influences the risk-taking process on the basis that future entrepreneurs have home role-models and personal mentors), motivation (men tend to start a business for monetary rewards whereas women for the sense of their lives, according to Sasu & Sasu, 2015:580), attitude to work (controlling own life, being own boss and doing an interesting work), attitude to family (caring for children and elder and making own schedule), decision control (having full responsibility of running the business and taking risks) and business knowledge (interpreting accounting information as correlated to taxation, Anton, 2015:247). Sima & Gheorghe (2017:26) conclude that in Romania, the development of women entrepreneurship is correlated with the evolution of the image of women in society, on the background of the changes taking place in the national culture and mentality and propose the development of a national strategy for entrepreneurship education specifically focused on women and young people, drawing on the successful business model of the female entrepreneurship in Europe.

On the other hand, we remark the tendency of becoming an entrepreneur irrespective of age, meaning that people who have been employed for some decades, do start running own businesses with the premises of their expertise in a certain field and using their savings. Kautonen, T., Kibler, E. & Minniti, M. (2017:332) highlight in their research the importance of late-career entrepreneurship to active aging with positive consequences on income and life quality.

3. Descriptive statistics of Romanian entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship in Romania is generically presented with few figures by the Romanian Institute of Statistics. Romanian entrepreneurs are descriptively divided into two categories according to their legal type, as shown in Table 1 below, being considered legal units different from legal persons. There are family enterprises and natural persons authorised to run a specific activity, generally having the skills certified by a specific body or authority in their field. We can clearly observe that both at national and CRDR level, their numbers are rather constant, not existing major fluctuations for the period of time 2011-2015.

Table 1. Total number of entrepreneurs according to their legal type (source: www.insse.ro)

Region/Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Romania: Total	280,377	278,078	268,098	298,904	297,148
Family enterprises	17,767	16,979	23,691	24,380	23,083
Authorised natural persons	262,610	261,099	244,407	274,524	274,065
CRDR: Total	41,621	42,854	38,691	42,875	42,879
Family enterprises	2,152	2,402	2,886	3,024	2,886
Authorised natural persons	39,469	40,452	35,805	39,851	39,993

With regard to the fields of economic activity they operate on (Table 2), we observe that in the aforementioned period, the numbers of units choosing certain fields have changed: the number of units offering other services decreased by 26.26% whereas the number of units offering the other fields increased as follows: industry (by

28.28%), trade (by 30.87%), hotels and restaurants (by 43.68%), tourism (by 50.83%) and transportation (by 22.58%). In the same time, we remark that in 2015, at national level, family enterprises chose mostly trade (68.85%) and industry (10.89%) and less tourism (0.03% in 2015, their number decreased from 34 units in 2011 to 6 units). At national level too, authorised natural persons chose, in 2015, mostly other services (46.34%) and trade (33.64) and less tourism (0.17%). This can be explained as a result of the fact that in tourism, there were other legal forms encouraged and developed by EU funding.

Table 2. Total number of entrepreneurs according to their fields of activity (source: www.insse.ro)

Field/Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Industry	16,584	14,166	21,206	22,973	23,061
Family enterprises	1,487	1,630	2,586	2,677	2,513
Natural persons	15,097	12,536	18,620	20,296	20,548
Trade	74,704	65,874	98,822	107,394	108,065
Family enterprises	10,833	10,556	16,109	16,698	15,869
Natural persons	63,871	55,318	82,713	90,696	92,196
Hotels and restaurants	6,590	5,962	10,301	11,332	11,702
Family enterprises	745	758	1,322	1,398	1,313
Natural persons	5,845	5,204	8,979	9,934	10,389
Tourism	236	246	375	457	480
Family enterprises	34	13	6	6	6
Natural persons	202	233	369	451	474
Transportation	19,025	18,402	23,317	24,204	24,555
Family enterprises	434	709	1,070	1,075	1,098
Natural persons	18,591	17,693	22,247	23,129	23,457
Other services	163,238	173,428	114,077	132,544	129,285
Family enterprises	4,234	3,313	2,598	2,526	2,284
Natural persons	159,004	170,115	111,479	130,018	127,001
TOTAL Romania	280,377	278,078	268,098	298,904	297,148

The highest increases were registered as follows: family enterprises operating in transportation (by 60.74%), natural persons operating in tourism (by 57.38%), both family enterprises and natural persons operating hotels and restaurants (by 43.26%, respectively by 43.74%) and industrial family enterprises (by 40.83%).

4. Research scope and objectives

This paper hereinafter presents an empirical study on the Central Romanian Development Region consisting of the following six counties: Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş and Sibiu. We chose this Romanian macro-region as it is a diverse area, a mixture of geographical units, economic disparities and cultural diversity.

The aim of this research was to identify and characterize the Romanian future entrepreneurs, mainly the sample of population who would like to develop a new business in this macro-region. We have identified other pieces of research on Romanian entrepreneurship (Scarlat, Rozell, & Scroggins, 2011, Vlăduţ, & Seprodî, 2013, Pânzaru, 2013, Jianu. & Bara, 2014, Rusu. & Roman, 2016, Dumitru & Dumitru, 2017) and more specifically, studies undertaken on Romanian student entrepreneurship (Volkman & Tokarski, 2009, Brad, Drăgeanu & Avram, 2015).

The importance of this research is given by the fact that it analyses in detail the economic need of increasing the number of entrepreneurs. Hence, we had the following general objectives:

GO1 – identifying people who were interested in starting their own business

GO2 – identifying the ideal profile of the future entrepreneurs according to their labour market status and their segmentation on gender, age, residence, education and needs of entrepreneurial skills development

GO3 – identifying future entrepreneurs' preferred fields of activity

GO4 – identifying the future entrepreneurs' funding needs so as to develop a new business.

5. Quantitative research methodology

This research was undertaken in October-December 2016. After its aim and objectives were defined, we designed a research instrument, more precisely a questionnaire which was created and spread with google forms:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0yc31Wb2kWU9YDuyHVKHxxrH3c7eW4SnRsbJkHp6oM5ctLg/viewform>. It consisted of 23 questions, of which four are for sample characterisation and two are for contacting subjects if needed. As form, there were 12 open questions, 11 multiple choice questions with only one answer (of which, 6 were dichotomic). The questionnaire starts with a general question regarding Romanian business environment and ends with a question assessing the respondent’s degree of interest and motivation to start a new business. But hereinafter we will present only the data regarding the expressed objectives. Hence, we centralised all the primary data into a database, underlining the real and original character of this research.

6. Quantitative research results

We received 138 answers to our questionnaire, but because we spread nationally our research instrument, we rectified our sample so as to herein present only the results meeting the objectives of this paper. Thus, we took off the questionnaires which were not filled in at least 75% for all the questions, offering a higher degree of accuracy to the research. Then, we eliminated the questionnaires filled in by respondents who did not reside the counties of the Romanian Central Development Region (Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş and Sibiu). Hence, there were left 119 valid and fully completed questionnaires (83.23% of all the questionnaires received), the respondents’ answers being analysed as follows, into two parts:

A. Description of the researched sample according to respondents’ county of residence, gender, labour market status, age and field of activity

According to the variable “county of residence”, our sample highly consists (50.00%) of respondents residing in Braşov county whereas the smallest number (4.24%) is represented by people from Harghita county. From the raw data we obtained, we observe that 6.94% of the subjects who are unemployed or inactive are 44.45% of Alba county, the rest of them being from Mureş, Braşov and Sibiu.

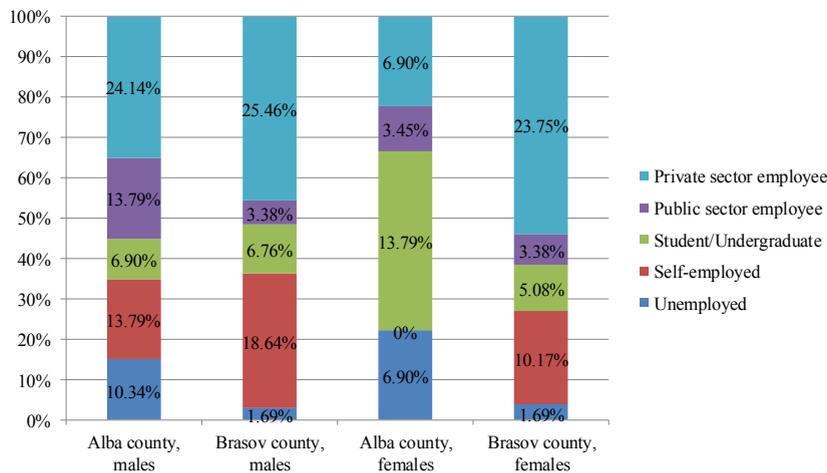


Fig. 1. Comparison between two sub-sample populations of Alba and Braşov counties.

Moreover, we present a more detailed analysis regarding the counties of Alba and Braşov, highly represented in our sample (74.58% of the total number of respondents is from these two counties). We remark in Fig. 1 that female population of Alba county who owns a business is not represented in this sample, whereas feminine entrepreneurship is 10.17% of the total number of respondents of Braşov county (by 8.87% smaller than the number

of masculine respondents of the same county). With regard to the number of the unemployed, we observe that the male unemployed of both counties are well represented (10.34% in Alba and 6.90% in Braşov). Within the collected data, 85.71% of them do have the necessary diplomas, qualifications and professional experience needed to start their own business.

The sample characterisation according to the variable “gender”, shows that this sample is 60.50% formed by male subjects and 39.50% of female subjects. Out of the all subjects, according to the variable “labour market status”, the employed in the private sector (40.28% male subjects and 44.68% female subjects) are the best represented.

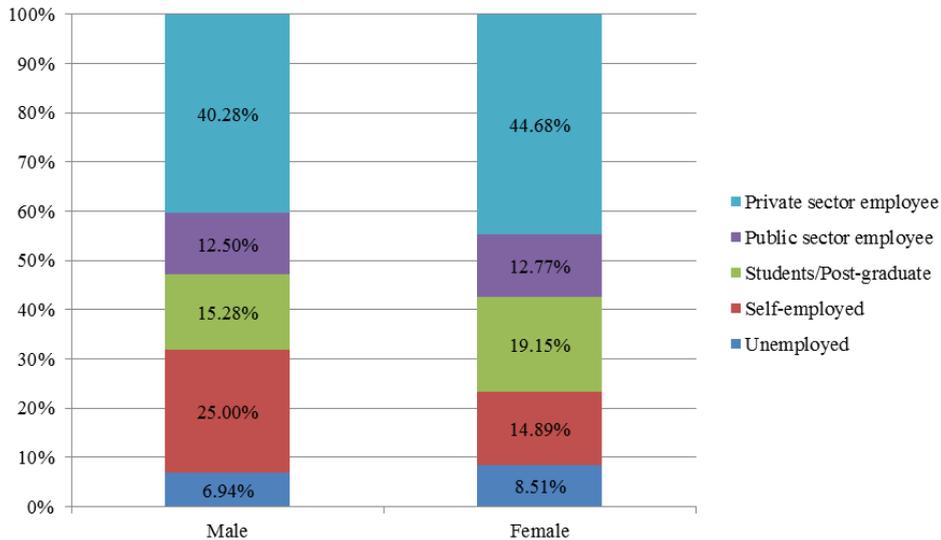


Fig. 2. Distribution of researched sample population on gender and labour market status.

But we observe that, according to Fig. 2, that with regard to entrepreneurship, the population running own businesses is better represented within male subjects (25.00%) than within female subjects (14.98%) which underlines the need of generating opportunities for starting anew business within females (more vulnerable in finding a job, as the percentage of 8.51%, female unemployed, presents).

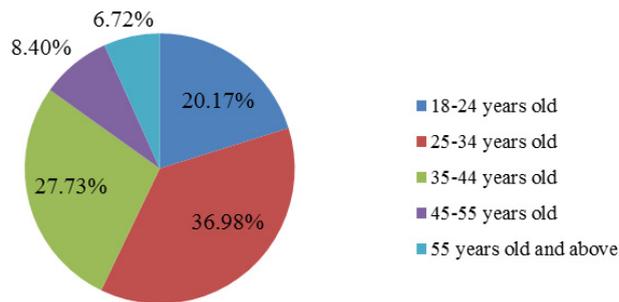


Fig. 3. Distribution of researched sample population on age.

According to the variable “age”, presented in Fig. 3, we notice that within our sample, population aged 25 - 34 years (36.98%) and 35 - 44 years (27.73%) are best represented. By cross-analysing data with variables “age” and “labour market status”, we underline that of our entrepreneur respondents, 44.00% are aged 25 - 34 years (gender

differences not being relevant), whereas 36.00% are aged 35 - 44 years (these subjects are all men). Furthermore, we must underline that 44.44% of the unemployed subjects are aged 25 - 34 years, so the middle career strategies play important role in future development of Romanian human resources.

Thus, we herein highlight that females are misrepresented in the total number of entrepreneurs in the Romanian Central Development Region, even if within raw data we clearly observe that the number of female students is 3.97% higher than the male students'. Corroborated, such data determine us to conclude that encouraging feminine youth to start a business is a real need so as to increase competitiveness and business environment diversity in the region herein analysed.

Furthermore, by cross-analysing the variables "gender" and "county", we underline the fact that a feminine sub-sample 25 - 34 years (14.29%) and a masculine sample aged 35 - 44 years (10.92%), both residing in Braşov county, do differentiate within the total sample. Hence, for a more accurate analysis, we shall present the sample according to the variable "labour market status". As observed in Fig. 4 below, this sample is formed by 54.62% employees in the private and public sector and by 24.37% inactive population which may be targeted within training programmes on entrepreneurship and funding.

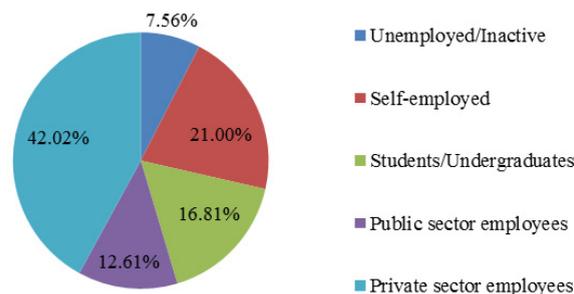


Fig. 4. Distribution of researched sample population on age.

From the point of view of their fields of activity (they work or wish to work after graduation), respondents centred on the following social and professional areas (the figures offered represent the relative frequencies in all the responses received):

- economic sciences, e.g. trade, financial, auditing and accounting, management, marketing – 29.27%
- professional services, e.g. engineering, public relations, computer-aided design, urban design, human resources, consultancy, photography – 21.13%
- tourism and public food – 15.47%
- IT – 11.38%
- industry, e.g. energy, electricity, civil and automotive engineering, food industry, forestry – 9.75%
- other: education, research, agriculture, public administration, medicine, culture and arts – 13.00%.

With regard to the studies graduates or on the point of graduation, 70.59% of respondents state they studied in the area they work or wish to work after graduation, underlining their high motivation in choosing a field offering real future opportunities. Hence, we do consider that there is a high correlation between the fields of study and the fields they work. This point of view seems to encourage the population's will to access European funds and to embrace entrepreneurship.

B. Characterisation of researched sample's entrepreneurial approach and needs

For this research, it was of outmost importance to identify the fields in which our subjects would like to start their own business (the figures offered represent the relative frequencies in all responses received):

- professional services, e.g. engineering, social and medical services, financial and accounting, art and culture, body art, car washing, business consultancy, human resources, advertising, photography and public relations – 31.20%
- tourism and public food, e.g. medical tourism, off-road trips, event planning, tourism crowdsource services, organisation of sport, leisure and adventure activities for adults and children, design of public relaxation areas, fast-food/restaurant – 26.40%
- IT – 12.00%
- trade, inclusively e-commerce, e.g. trade, instalment and maintenance of water filtering systems, agricultural and automotive spare parts sale, flower and gift shops – 9.60%
- production (slag bolts), processing (wood) and automotive industry – 6.40%
- agriculture and food industry, e.g. bakery, mushrooms cultures, quail growing for meat and eggs, different types of chicks growing, milk processing – 4.8%
- education, research and vocational training – 4.00%
- design, fashion and crafts (interior design and accessories) – 3.20%
- civil engineering – 1.60%
- waste collection and processing – 0.80%.

Furthermore, with regard to the budget needed for starting their own business, the average amount expressed was of Euro 49,815.13 euro for 112 respondents (7 subjects did not offer data to this question), the highest estimated figure being 1,000,000 euro in the field of automotive production (the maximum value of non-reimbursable funds offered by Romania Start Up Plus being of 40,000 Euro, but the future entrepreneurs have the opportunity to contribute to make higher investment from their own sources).

Referring to the number of jobs respondents would create within their own business in the first year of operation, the average number of jobs is 4.72 jobs (the highest estimated number is 60 employees in automotive production). We remark thus that the respondents are centred on micro-enterprises, which from our point of view represent a real opportunity to promote successful entrepreneurship (within Romania Start Up Plus, it is mandatory that every new business create at least 2 jobs).

Another very important issue for this research was to know whether the respondents had expertise in the field they wished to start a business. We asked respondents if they had the professional experience and diplomas/qualifications needed in that business area. We observe in Fig. 5 below that the number of respondents who are experienced (80.67%) is higher than the number of respondents who have specialty diplomas and qualifications (67.83%, respectively 62.93%).

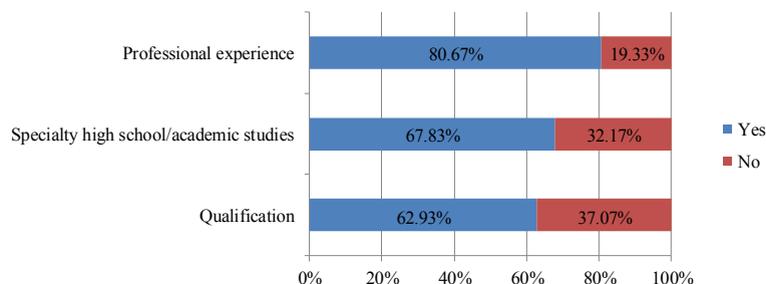


Fig. 5. Distribution of researched sample population on professional experience, studies and qualifications.

However, we underline that out of all the respondents, it is only 10.92% who considered they have no theoretical and practical knowledge in the field they wanted to start a business. They are characterized as follows: all are under 45 years old (69.23% are aged 25 - 34 years), there are no significant differences on gender (46.15% are females) or on residing county (all the counties are represented). The businesses they want to develop are generally, in the field of agriculture, tourism, trade and food.

7. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship generates higher stability on the labour market by expressing population's motivations, intentions, hobbies and personal working experiences and studies. But, we have to underline that feminine entrepreneurship should be more encouraged both at national level and at Central Romanian Development Region (in the counties of Alba, Covasna, Mures and Harghita) whereas recommending women to start businesses in the service sector of activity.

Moreover, increasing the enterprises' life cycle should be a national objective, by assisting and helping them survive crises, in general financial ones. Another crisis to cope with is the human resources one, herein analysed, so investing in training and development is mandatory. For qualitative entrepreneurship, training should be centred on working panels for people with mutual interests and needs, also including mentorship and promotion of good practices.

In this research, apart from meeting its objectives, we remarked that there is a high discrepancy between the entrepreneurial development of Alba and Brasov counties and the other four counties, Covasna, Harghita, Mures and Sibiu. In this respect, entrepreneurship should be highly promoted by including the unemployed (aged over 25 years old and of which, 66.67% do hold a diploma of graduation from specialty secondary or academic institutions and do have professional experience in the field they wish to start a business.

In comparison to other studies in the field, we consider our sample representative for the whole Romanian population as the disparities and diversity of the development region analysed reflect the country's. Romania is a developing country promoting entrepreneurship starting with education and investment is needed for sustainability of new businesses.

8. Limitations and future research

This research features, in terms of limitations, the small number of respondents to the questionnaire, more precisely there was not a uniform representation of all the six counties forming the RCDR. A second issue is the lack of face-to-face discussions and debates with respondents. A qualitative research undertaken before the quantitative would have increased the level of accuracy of the research instrument and would have brought more value to this research, as in-depth aspects are not highlighted within self-administered survey questionnaires.

Our major future research objective comprehends firstly a deep descriptive analysis of the Romanian newly created businesses so as to present their evolution in time identifying whether European funds have encouraged not only business start-up, but also business development with strategical objectives (on more than 5 years). Secondly, we would like to study feminine entrepreneurship in Romania corroborated to the academic and vocational training that human resources benefit from so as to develop profitable businesses. Last, but not least, we shall research within the Central Romanian Development Region if there is any significant difference between new businesses focussing on only one activity and new businesses centred on diversification. Driucă & Grigore (2017:53) state in their study that during a period of crisis, companies with multiple NACE codes are more successful, but are entrepreneurial strategies of companies appeared as a result of spotting market opportunities different from general business strategies?

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