

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

DOCTORAL THESIS

- SUMMARY -

**INTREPRENEURSHIP - MEANS OF
STIMULATING INNOVATION WITHIN
COMPANIES**

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KEY WORDS

Intrapreneurship, entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity, employees, rewarding system, management support, organizational culture, organizational structure, competitiveness, competitive advantage, sustained competitive advantage.

INTRODUCTION

This work, entitled “Intrapreneurship – means of stimulating innovation within companies” was carried out with the belief that it will bring a significant contribution in raising the level of organizational performance in the Romanian economic context. The present times, dominated by continuous changes and transformations, pushes firms towards finding ways of maximizing their performance in order to be able to face the competition both nationally and internationally. In this regard we consider necessary to outline the role and importance of intrapreneurship.

Delimitation and motivation of the research

The global economy creates without any doubt profound and significant changes for companies worldwide. The market is changing increasingly rapidly, technologies evolve and the only thing that seems to be truer now than ever is change. According to Peter Drucker change is the only constant thing in the business world. To be able to cope with competition and to remain on the market, companies must comply with these changes, which tend to become part of their daily lives.

Companies in the 21st century are facing two immeasurable challenges. On the one hand, they need to be constantly innovative and ready for change, and on the other hand, they are expected to create a lasting identity, designed to draw attention in a world saturated by communication.

To stay competitive, companies need to bring something new to the market. The only way to achieve this is through continuous differentiation and innovation, whether it refers to the creation of new products and services, or it relates to the reorganization of processes or business models. This is actually the reason we have started our research, because intrapreneurship is a means through which companies can meet these challenges of continuous innovation. The entrepreneurial spirit continues to thrive in almost all corners of the world. The entrepreneurs are the ones remodeling the business environment, creating a world in which their companies play an important role in the vitality of the global economy. But it is not always necessary for a firm to be established in order to implement a new and innovative idea. Great potential lies in the application of the entrepreneurial principles within existing companies, which is called intrapreneurship, representing also our paper's area of interest.

Being motivated by the role and importance of intrapreneurship for companies we tried to investigate what exactly intrapreneurship implies, which are its peculiarities and characteristics, which are the factors that influence the way intrapreneurship can increase the profitability and the competitiveness of companies.

The current state of knowledge in the field

To find out the necessary information for our research we analyzed books and scientific articles available in the international databases.

The manifestation of entrepreneurship within existing companies started to become increasingly important for the private and public organizations who are trying to remain competitive and efficient in an ever-changing market. However, despite increased interest for the concept of entrepreneurship scientists have not reached a consensus regarding this concept. Different authors use different terms to describe the entrepreneurial activities within an existing organization. Thus analyzing the literature we find terms such as intrapreneurship (Kuratko, 1990), internal organizational entrepreneurship (Schollhammer, 1982), corporate companies (Ellis and Taylor, 1987), and new ventures (Roberts, 1980), all meant to describe aspects of corporate entrepreneurship. Starting

from this multitude of terms we have decided on using the term intrapreneurship. In choosing this term we have the moral obligation to mention Gifford and Elizabeth Pinchot, who came up with this term in 1978. Other authors worthy of mentioning, when talking about intrapreneurship, are Guth and Ginsberg (1990), Covin and Slevin (1991), Zahra (1993), Lumpkin and Dess (1996), Covin and Miles (1999) and Antoncic and Hisrich (2001). The variety of opinions regarding this concept as well as its complexity have motivated us in studying the concept of intrapreneurship and discovering its importance for the economy.

Further on we have considered necessary to present the link between intrapreneurship, innovation and creativity, because researches in this field have shown, that the survival and growth of a company nowadays, i.e. in a dynamic business environment, depends largely on the ability of the company to promote creativity and innovation.

If a company learns how to be innovative, so that it can generate a continuous string of successful technical and managerial innovations, it can generate a sustainable competitive advantage and can thrive even in a highly competitive environment. Innovation means implementation of creativity, therefore, we must not forget the principles of creativity when we try to be innovative. Creativity is a crucial part of the process of innovation, which in turn is the basic factor of intrapreneurship.

To be able to do a better analysis of the proper environment for intrapreneurship, we have analyzed the works of Birkinshaw (1999), Hornsby et al. (2009), Ireland et al. (2009), Kuratko et al (2009), Pinchot (1985), Morris and Kuratko (2002), Cooper et al. (2000), Antoncic and Hisrich (2001), Sathe (2003) and Oden (1997) in order to determine the factors that have an impact on intrapreneurship. Finally we have concluded that, if the company has an intrapreneurial culture, structure and strategy, the employees, being determined by unique intrapreneurial features, will lead to the success and growth of the companies' competitiveness.

Regarding the impact of intrapreneurship on the competitiveness of firms we have noticed a lack in the literature approaching this relationship. However we would like to

mention authors like Porter (1900), Barney (2002), Hoffman (2000), Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2007), and Wheelen Hunger (2010) that have addressed and clarified the concept of competitiveness and competitive advantage as well as the ways in obtaining a competitive advantage and also authors like Miller (1983), Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1995), Dess and Lumpkin (2005), Zahra and Covin (1995), Covin and Slevin (1989) and Covin and Miles (1999), who tried to present the specific dimensions and strategies of . intrapreneurship meant to bring a competitive advantage to the firm. By approaching this relationship we tried to emphasize the importance of intrapreneurship for the survival of any company.

Defining the objectives of the research

Through this research we tried to clarify a number of issues, which raise not only interest for the research field, but also represent a challenge, both in theory and practice. Given the complexity of the research, we considered it necessary to establish some goals.

The overall objective of this scientific work is to determine the way in which intrapreneurship stimulates innovation within the company and to analyze its impact on the competitiveness of the company, as well as to diagnose the intensity of intrapreneurship in the Romanian organizational environment.

The present research presents theoretical concepts regarding our area of interest and an empirical study, aimed at formulating proposals of good practice that are meant to contribute in improving the quality and competitiveness of companies through intrapreneurship.

In addition to the overall objective we have proposed a number of specific objectives, which we have divided into two categories namely the theoretical and practical objectives. We considered necessary to do this division because the present work aims in bringing a contribution both at a theoretical and at an empirical level.

Theoretical objectives

- Development of conceptual and theoretical distinctions between the concept of entrepreneurship and the concept of intrapreneurship. We will try to determine the usefulness, the role and the importance of these concepts for the companies and to determine the differences and similarities between the two.
- Development of conceptual and theoretical distinctions between the concept of creativity and the concept of innovation. We will try to define the two concepts and establish the link between them and intrapreneurship.
- Identifying the factors that influence intrapreneurship. To achieve this goal we will do an analysis of the literature and we will present a few environmental organizational and individual factors that have an impact on intrapreneurship.
- Determining the impact that intrapreneurship has upon the competitiveness of firms. We will accomplish this by presenting some dimensions and strategies of intrapreneurship meant in bringing competitive advantages to companies.

Empirical objectives

- Assessment of the level of innovation within companies by analyzing the dimensions that shapes an intrapreneurial climate.
- Analyze the links formed between the dimensions favorable to an intrapreneurial climate and the size and domain of activity of the company, management support, rewarding system, organizational culture, competitiveness and increasing labor productivity.
- Establish correlations between the analyzed variables and trying to determine the way in which some variables can influence the others.

Based on these objectives, the present study tries to find answers to the issues mentioned above and also to provide solutions for setting a proper framework for the development of intrapreneurship within the companies in Romania. We believe that the research results will contribute significantly to the completion of the existing approaches on intrapreneurship. Moreover we believe that the empirical research included in this work, will bring a plus of value to the area of intrapreneurship at a national level, due to the fact that this appears to be the first attempt to apply a tool for checking the intensity of intrapreneurship within the companies in Romania.

PART I – LITERATURE REVIEW

The doctoral thesis is divided into five distinct chapters. The first four chapters are of theoretical nature while the fifth chapter contains the empirical study and seeks to put the theory into practice and thus to uncover its applicability for the business world. In the end, the paper contains conclusions and personal contributions regarding the research area.

In the **first chapter** we designed a conceptual framework for our research theme, by analyzing the opinions of different authors. We primarily performed a conceptual boundary between the concepts of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship through defining the concepts and pinpointing their evolution during time, as well as by presenting their peculiarities. Finally, we presented the advantages and disadvantages of each concept and determined the similarities and differences between them.

The **second chapter** is presenting the concepts of creativity and innovation. By analyzing the concepts of creativity and innovation we wanted to emphasize the fact that, when we talk about intrapreneurship we cannot omit to consider the processes of creativity and innovation, as creativity is an essential part of the process of innovation, and innovation is the key factor of intrapreneurship.

In the **third chapter** we tried to analyze the factors that have an influence upon intrapreneurship. So, after we made a short presentation of the organizational, environmental and individual factors that influence intrapreneurship, we began to emphasize the role of employees in intrapreneurial companies as well as the importance of their rewarding system. We ended this chapter by analyzing the impact of the organizational structure and culture on intrapreneurship.

In the **fourth chapter** we have tried to determine the way in which intrapreneurship can increase the firm's competitiveness. In this regard, we first presented the concept of competitiveness and competitive advantage and then we presented a few strategies of intrapreneurship designed to bring competitive advantages to the firms that apply them.

PART II – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter five forms the second part of the thesis and entails an empirical research on the current status of intrapreneurship. The research is, according to Leedy (1997: 4), the systematic process of data collection and analysis, with the purpose of increasing the degree of understanding the object of research. So, to better understand our research subject, we have structured our research into two parts:

- The first part consists of a qualitative analysis, which aims at clarifying some aspects of the literature based on the experiences of some experts from the business environment.
- The second part consists of a quantitative analysis, whose aim is to check the current status of the intensity of intrapreneurship within the Romanian companies.

Empirical research through qualitative analysis regarding the opinion of experts on intrapreneurship

In this part of the paper we tried to do an empirical research through a qualitative analysis, namely through expert interviewing.

In our research, we used the structured interview, which means that we used the same set of questions in the same order for all participants to the interview. Basically, the questions that have been used in the interview were predetermined. The structured interviewing provided not only candidates with equal opportunities to provide information but also gave us the possibility to evaluate the received answers fairly and with great accuracy.

The empirical research had two main objectives, namely:

- Seeking more information on issues on which there is little information in the literature;
- Wanted to compare the information acquired during the study of the literature with the practical experience of experts.

The aim of the research was:

- To learn more about the experts' opinion upon the creative environment within an organization and the way the organization can sustain innovation.
- To see the knowledge of experts regarding the concept of intrapreneurship and if their company has a program to stimulate employees' creativity.
- To see if intrapreneurship is influenced by certain characteristics of the firm.
- To see if there is any connection between intrapreneurship and the size of the firm, the field of activity and the growth and profitability of the company

Recruitment of participants:

As participants to the study, companies with the headquarters in Vienna, Austria were chosen. Firms from both, the production and service field were included in the research,

with the aim to see if there is a difference in their conception regarding our research theme. The firms that have participated to the interview are UNIQA, VIG (Vienna Insurance Group), Erste Bank Group and Siemens AG.

Questions of the interview:

1. Is your company intrapreneurial? Is there a program meant to stimulate entrepreneurship within the company?
2. What do you understand under the term creative environment and to what extent does your company stimulate creativity and innovation?
3. How can you tell if your company can initiate and sustain innovation?
4. To what extent do organizational characteristics influence intrapreneurship?
5. In your opinion, is there a connection between intrapreneurship and the field in which your company is active?
6. Do you believe there is a connection between intrapreneurship and the size of the company?
7. Is there a connection between intrapreneurship and the company's economical growth and profitability?

Interview results

All companies that have participated to the interview are intrapreneurial although some more than others, depending on how much the company structure allows it.

The companies create an environment that allows employees to act entrepreneurial within the company. Workplace environment can have a dramatic impact on how the employees work. It can affect mood, motivation, creativity and productivity of staff. Employees must be given the freedom to come up with new ideas and to not be punished if they do mistakes, because through mistakes the company can learn and prosper. Therefore we can say that the essence of a company are the employees, because they are the ones behind a business and have a lot of creative ideas that can be put into practice.

In view of this, firms have different methods to stimulate employees' creativity but we believe that an important role is to adapt these creative ideas to the market needs. Certain structures are needed in order to allow the company to exploit the creativity of employees at maximum intensity and to initiate and sustain the innovation process. Financial resources are also essential in the innovation process, because without money it is very hard to support innovation.

Through a regular control of their activities the companies are able to support innovation and thus remain competitive in the market. The feedback received from customers, the number of sold products and the analyses of information from the past allow firms to identify their market position and to determine whether innovation must be improved or not. Innovative ideas are usually loaded with high risk and as such more easily inclined to fail. An important aspect is to analyze the cause of this failure. Failure must be seen here in a constructive way because companies can learn from failure and they won't do the same mistake a second time.

To become more innovative, companies must have a clear picture of the company, they must be able to identify the weaknesses and the strengths of their company. This will allow the company to prioritize areas of activity on which it should focus its efforts.

The organizational characteristics are part of the organizational culture and may stimulate or hinder the creative ideas and innovation. In this sense the interviewed companies believe that organizational characteristics influence intrapreneurship. The organizational structure plays an essential role for intrapreneurship, as the evolution of creative ideas is dependent of the processes in the organization.

Intrapreneurship is important no matter the field of activity or the size of the company and it has a significant influence on the profitability and growth of the company.

The interviewed companies consider that there is in some way, a connection between the field of activity of a firm and intrapreneurship, in the sense that in some areas, greater emphasis is placed on intrapreneurship or this is just simply more visible to the outside world.

Regarding the connection between the size of the firm and intrapreneurship, opinions are divided, namely:

- The economical impact affects differently large firms and therefore they must be more innovative to stay competitive on the market.
- Although small and medium sized enterprises give employees more freedom to come up with innovative ideas, they lack the financial resources needed to support intrapreneurship. Large firms have the infrastructure and financial resources to develop the creative ideas of employees.
- There is no connection between the firm size and intrapreneurship, because any business can be intrapreneurial if the management supports it and if the company culture allows it.

All four firms believe that there is some connection between intrapreneurship and the profitability and growth of the company. If something brings you profit you are more willing to invest in it. You should also always be aware of market changes to meet customer requirements. In conclusion we can say that intrapreneurship leads to profitable growth of the company.

After analyzing the results of the interview, we can say that, in the current economic climate, innovation is more important than ever, because it can increase the efficiency of the company and can bring new streams of income. There is however the temptation, that, in a difficult business environment, companies tend to reduce the expenses for innovation, which is often counterproductive. Innovation means finding new and better ways of doing things to support the improvement and growth of the company. Thus, a planned innovation process is vital to any company.

The results obtained during the interviews are very important for our further research as they help us in formulating the hypotheses for the empirical research through quantitative analysis.

Empirical research through quantitative analysis upon measuring the existence of intrapreneurship in the Romanian companies.

After doing a qualitative analysis to see the experts opinion upon the concept of intrapreneurship we tried to further analyze the organizational climate within the companies in Romania, namely those in the Northwest region of Romania, aimed at measuring the quality and intensity of the intrapreneurial behavior within companies.

At this stage of the study we decided on a quantitative analysis to gather as much information on the degree of development of intrapreneurship in Romania mainly in the Northwest region of Romania. In order to do this, we have decided to do an analysis based on a survey, because the survey offers a more affordable opportunity from a financial point of view and it can also gather a high number of information from a wide geographical area.

The **hypotheses of the research are** as follows:

- ✓ **H1:** In the current economical context intrapreneurship is not influenced by the size of the company and neither by the field in which this is active.
- ✓ **H2:** The intrapreneurial spirit is dependent on the support that the managers offer to employees through rewards for creativity and innovation.
- ✓ **H3:** The professional experience of the managers do not influence the way in which these provide support to employees.
- ✓ **H4:** The companies in Romania have an organizational culture that allows the development of intrapreneurship, leading to a better innovation of the firm.
- ✓ **H5:** An intrapreneurial culture can increase the employees' confidence in their own forces.
- ✓ **H6:** Companies that have an intrapreneurial culture put a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction.

- ✓ **H7:** Firms that invest more in research and development are generally more innovative.
- ✓ **H8:** A more intense competitiveness causes firms to be more innovative.

Design of the survey

Our survey is based on three internationally applied and validated surveys, namely Corporate Entrepreneurship Assessment Instrument (CEAI), Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (III) and Innovation Climate Questionnaire. The survey is structured in two parts, of which the first part includes questions regarding the identification of intrapreneurship within companies and the second part is intended for information regarding the respondents.

The first part of the survey entails 54 items, structured in six classes, as follows:

- ✓ Innovation within the company – *13 items*
- ✓ Rewarding system – *6 items*
- ✓ Management support – *8 items*
- ✓ Organizational culture – *7 items*
- ✓ Employees – *14 items*
- ✓ Clients' satisfaction – *6 items*

As scaling technique for the survey we used a Likert scale, which is a scale with semantic support. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents specify their level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree-disagree scale for a series of statements, as it is shown: 1-strongly disagree; 2 –disagree; 3 – indecisive; 4 – agree; 5 – totally agree.

Establishing the sample method and the sample size

In order to determine the sample we used, as a first step, data provided by the Statistical Yearbook of Romania on 2011. We did so because we tried to determine the total volume of statistical population in the northwest region; so, we found out the total number of firms in the northwest region by size according to the number of employees.

Table 1. Companies from the northwest region of Romania by size

Companies by size, taking into account the number of employees	Number of firms
Small companies (10-49 employees)	6.756
Medium-size companies (50-249 employees)	1.050
Big companies (peste 250 employees)	182
TOTAL:	7.988

(Source: data taken from the Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2011)

Knowing the total volume of the population, we tried to determine the optimal number of statistical units that needs to be covered in the survey so that the sample will be representative. In this sense we have calculated the sample size on the basis of Taro Yamane's formula. Taking into account a probability of 95% and a maximum allowed error of +/-5%, for our population of 7.988 companies we obtained a sample size of 381 companies. We decided to question the managers of these companies so as to get more concrete data on the entrepreneurial spirit within the company.

Taro Yamane Formula: $n=N/(1+N*e^2)$, where

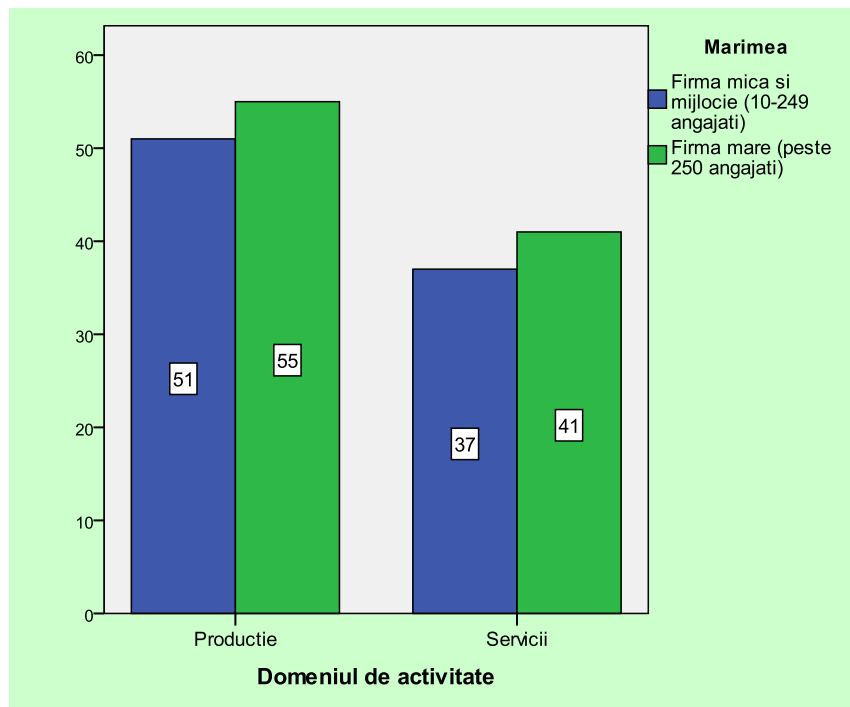
N – total population (in our case 7.988 companies)

e – maximal allowed error (+/- 5%)

The interpretation of the research results

This chapter focuses on the interpretation of the research results. The evaluation of the data obtained is based on the theoretical framework, and the process of the responses has been achieved with the help of the statistical models and methods, using SPSS 17.0 and MS Office Excel 2007.

Following the distribution of the questionnaires, we have obtained a valid number of 184 questionnaires, which represent a response rate of 48%. Our research is based on a sample comprising 184 managers from companies in the northwest region. The structure used by us in this research can be seen in the graph no. 1, where the participants to the study are presented depending on the size of the company and its domain of activity.



Graph 1. Participants depending on the size of the company and the domain of activity

After doing a descriptive analysis we go further and try to analyze the internal consistence of the questionnaire with the help of Cronbach alpha.

Table 2. Cronbach alpha for verifying the internal consistence of the questionnaire

Variable	Cronbach alpha
Innovation within the company	0.840
Rewarding system	0.905
Management support	0.714
Organizational culture	0.728
Employees	0.930
Clients' satisfaction	0.858

According to the table we can see that the values of the Cronbach alpha are over the threshold of 0,70. We can thus; say that our questionnaire has a very good measurement precision, and the answers provided by the participants to the study are not just subjective and superficial, but they provide representative results.

After we examined the internal consistency and reliability of our questionnaire we tried to do a more thorough analysis by testing the hypothesis.

Thus trough our analysis we could figure out the following:

- ✓ As regards to the size of the company, researchers such as Schollhammer, Burgelman, Pinchot, Kuratko, consider intrapreneurship as a phenomenon that exists only in large companies (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001). Zahra and Pearce (1994) argue, however, that intrapreneurship is essential for small companies. Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) however think that intrapreneurship is vital to all companies regardless of their size, because trough intrapreneurship companies manage to thrive in a competitive environment. We thus notice that the opinions related to the influence of the size of the company on intrapreneurship are different; therefor we tried to give an answer to this dilemma.

Based on the statistical analysis carried out through the Pearson correlation coefficient, we could realize that intrapreneurship does not depend on the size of the company and

neither of the domain in which this activates. Therefore we can say that, hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

- ✓ The intrapreneurial spirit depends on the support of the management, because management is the one that promotes an intrapreneurial culture in an organization (Cornwall and Pelman, 1990). The role of the rewards is to motivate individuals to engage in innovative behaviors (Hornsby et al, 1993).

In our case we determined that management regardless of their professional experience is willing to facilitate and promote entrepreneurship within an existing organization, leading to an increase of the intrapreneurial spirit. The rewarding system doesn't play a crucial role in increasing the intrapreneurial spirit of the employees if the management knows how to do their job properly. Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

- ✓ There is no connection between the experience of the manager and the way these offer support to their employees.

On the basis of our analysis we have noticed that there has not been a clear relationship of dependence between the variables, although the research showed that managers with a professional experience between 0-5 years give greater support to their employees. This can be explained by the enthusiasm and desire of young managers to achieve more at work. We can thus say that there is no necessarily a correlation between the two. The management support is fairly constant at a professional experience over 6 years. Hypothesis 3 is confirmed, there is no connection between the variable "professional experience" and the variable "management support".

- ✓ The culture is a determining factor and the first step in promoting entrepreneurship within an organization (Cornwall and Perlman, 1990).

In our research we could determine that the companies in Romania have an organizational culture that promotes the entrepreneurial activity within the company, giving employees greater confidence in their skills. Hypothesis 4 is confirmed.

- ✓ Employees' trust in their skills is higher in an organization that has an intrapreneurial culture; fact confirmed through hypothesis 5.

According to the analysis we found out that there is a clear relationship of dependence between the variables "organizational culture" and "employees". Companies with an intrapreneurial culture create a familiar environment for employees so that these become more confident in their forces, leading to an increase in their productivity.

- ✓ Companies that have an intrapreneurial culture are more familiar with their customers' needs and respond better to their desires. They also maintain long-term relationships with customers and they are very satisfied with the products and/or their services, which we tried to demonstrate in hypothesis 6.

Based on these results we can say that hypothesis 6 is confirmed. Companies that demonstrate intrapreneurial culture know better how to meet customer needs, which is a significant advantage for them.

- ✓ Companies that invest more in research & development are more innovative, a fact that we tried to analyze and managed to confirm in hypothesis 7. Continuously looking for new opportunities, the company places a strong emphasis on new and innovative products and services, and employees are constantly encouraged to work in new way.
- ✓ Through hypothesis 8 we analyzed and confirmed that, the bigger the competition is the more innovative the companies are, due to the continuous impulse to maintain its place on the market, to always try to come up with something new and thus to overcome competition .

In conclusion we can say that the results obtained, having as purpose to test the intensity of intrapreneurship in the Romanian context is a gratifying one, because the innovation level of the companies included in our research is very satisfying.

Finally, we would like to mention the fact that the true competitive advantage arises from radical innovation (Kemelgor, 2002), so we would like to suggest all firms to encourage employees to be innovative at the workplace if they want to be successful.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Throughout the research, our attention was focused on achieving our primary objective as well as the secondary objectives designed in the initiation stage of the project. For this purpose we used a methodological approach that aimed, firstly, to demonstrate the use of theoretical information and secondly, to validate the research hypotheses statistically.

Regarding the main objectives of the research, whether theoretical or practical, they were, as follows:

- conceptual and theoretical delimitation of some basic elements for intrapreneurship;
- highlighting the most important factors influencing intrapreneurship;
- examining how intrapreneurship can yield a competitive advantage;
- examining the impact that management support, rewarding system, organizational culture have on the innovation within the company and their impact on the intrapreneurial spirit.

Based on these objectives, through the study of the literature as well as on the basis of the empirical research, we have seen the following:

- differences and similarities between entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship;
- the relationship between creativity, innovation and intrapreneurship;
- factors influencing intrapreneurship and how the latter leads to an increase in the competitiveness of companies;
- expert opinions on intrapreneurship;
- lack of relationship between intrapreneurship, firm size and domain of activity;

- Correlation between intrapreneurial spirit, management support, rewarding system, organizational culture and competitiveness.

Based on the key findings of this paper we emphasize the importance of studying and deepening our topic of interest. Moreover, by analyzing and exposing the research literature, the results of the survey and the expert opinions regarding our research subject, we believe that the information provided in this paper is essential and interesting for companies. If the research results are properly acknowledged, they can significantly contribute to improving the performance of companies, helping them to cope with challenges and competition.

Personal contributions to the scientific knowledge

The scientific papers and the empirical studies dealing with intrapreneurship are relatively few both nationally and internationally. The interest we have shown to this research theme has resulted in scientific papers (Maier and Pop, 2012, Maier and Pop 2011, Pop and Maier, 2011) as well as in the research papers prepared in supporting the final thesis. We hope that not only our vision on this subject, but the actual results of the study will contribute significantly to the extension of the research area.

Next we present our contribution aimed at improving the knowledge in this field.

At a theoretical and conceptual level

- *Defining and clarifying some basic concepts that should be taken into account when discussing about intrapreneurship.*

The first part of the definition and clarification of the basic concepts has been made in the first chapter, by exposing some conceptual boundaries between the concepts of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. Concepts of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship were studied over time by different authors, because of their importance in the global economy. The same reason led us to focus on intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship and to try to make a synthesis of the literature on these two concepts. Thus, we tried to

identify the scope of these two concepts by analyzing their defining elements, their characteristics and their peculiarities and also the similarities and differences between them as well as their strengths and weaknesses. During this chapter we have tried to emphasize the importance of intrapreneurs, who just like entrepreneurs take ideas and develop them into solid, functional and profitable businesses. They possess the same entrepreneurial spirit as entrepreneurs, but unlike them, they act within an existing organization. In our opinion, intrapreneurship is necessary for any company, because it succeeds in bringing something new to the market and develop new skills, helping companies to compete on the market and meet its requirements.

The second stage of defining and clarifying concepts takes place in the second chapter. In this chapter we tried to analyze the defining characteristics and peculiarities related to the concepts of creativity and innovation and to show the connection of these concepts with intrapreneurship. We considered necessary to address this issue because, several studies have shown that the survival and growth of companies nowadays, i.e. in a dynamic business environment depends largely on the company's ability to promote creativity and innovation. Therefore, if a company learns to be innovative so that it can generate a continuum of successful technical and managerial innovations, it could generate a sustainable competitive advantage and can thrive even in a highly competitive environment. Innovation is the key driver of intrapreneurship and it implies the putting into practice of creativity. Therefore, we must not forget one second of the principles of creativity when we try to be innovative and of course when we approach the subject of intrapreneurship..

- *Identifying and presenting the factors that influence intrapreneurship and setting the right environment for it to develop.*

This contribution may be seen in the content of chapter three. We wanted to identify those factors that influence intrapreneurship, because by consulting the literature we found out that organizational structure, organizational culture, and management support may have some influence on intrapreneurship. This brings us to the conclusion that employees are extremely important for companies because they are the source of

innovation in the company and thus the ones that support intrapreneurship. But to be motivated to express their ideas within the company they should be given broad support from management and also rewards according to their merits. Organizational culture and organizational structure must also enable the development of intrapreneurship.

- *Establishing the importance of intrapreneurship for companies by demonstrating how it can increase their competitiveness.*

We tried to highlight this issue in chapter four of this paper. The first part is intended to describe the definition and characteristics of competitiveness and competitive advantage as well as the way to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage, while the second part of chapter four presents intrapreneurship dimensions and strategies that help in bringing competitive advantages to companies. We considered necessary to address this issue to highlight and demonstrate the importance of intrapreneurship for companies.

At an empirical level

The series of personal contribution materializes in the second part of the paper, specifically in chapter five, through the results obtained after the empirical research.

- *Clarifying some issues from the literature and comparing the information acquired during the study of the literature with the practical experience of experts.*

In the first part of the empirical study we wanted to clarify some aspects of the literature and to discover the actual manifestation of intrapreneurship by resorting to the opinion of experts. Thus, we conducted a series of interviews, which helped us to find answers to the questions proposed and helped us to see the experts' suggestions on issues that should be taken into account when talking about intrapreneurship.

- *Develop a questionnaire that will allow us to check the intrapreneurial intensity in the Romanian organizational context.*

To determine the level of expression of intrapreneurship in the Romanian organizational context we considered necessary to develop a questionnaire containing several important dimensions designed in determining the existence of intrapreneurship. We decided on a combination of three validated instruments designed at identify intrapreneurship, namely Corporate Entrepreneurship Assessment Instrument (CEAI), Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (III) and Innovation Climate Questionnaire.

- *Testing the measurement accuracy and the internal consistency and reliability of our research instrument, with the aim in showing the significance of the questionnaire.*

Before we begin the actual analysis we wanted to check the internal consistency, accuracy and reliability of the instrument developed. For this purpose we used Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) according to which we confirmed the effectiveness of our instrument.

- *Assess and highlight correlations established between the instrument's variables that determine a favorable climate for the development of intrapreneurship.*

Trough our questionnaire we have established six significant classes of questions necessary to develop a favorable environment for intrapreneurship, which we correlated to determine the form and intensity of the correlation and to see the relationships that are formed between the analyzed variables. To achieve this we used several tools of inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation coefficient and ANOVA.

Limitations and future research perspectives

The present paper, being one of the few studies, if not the only one who uses a measuring instrument for the intensity of intrapreneurship at a national level, we believe it can be improved through further research. But before presenting some suggestions for improving this research we would like to point out the main limitations that influenced the research results.

Among the most important limitations of the research are:

- errors due to the answers given by the respondents.
- reluctance in completing the electronically questionnaire, so that we had to use several different methods of application of the questionnaire in order to obtain a large number of responses and thus to increase the representativeness of the study.

Despite the difficulties encountered, we believe that the research can be extended and consider it as having significant potential for future scientific study. In order to expand the research horizons we allow ourselves to make some suggestions for future scientific research.

As **future research perspectives** the following can be taken into account:

Theoretical perspectives:

- expanding the research by analyzing the link between intrapreneurship and franchising, to determine how franchising could help develop entrepreneurship within companies.
- extending the research by determining the importance and relationship between leadership and intrapreneurship.
- extending the theoretical research to analyzing social intrapreneurship in order to see the implications of this phenomenon on the society.

Empirical perspectives:

- extending the empirical research to a larger sample with a greater geographical spread, even extending the research to the whole country. We believe that extending the study will help considerably to increase the representativeness of the results.
- including in the questionnaire also other dimensions designed to determine the intrapreneurial climate in an organization, such as resources, organizational constraints, time to develop innovative ideas.

- applying the questionnaire also to employees in order to see if there are some differences in the way intrapreneurship is perceived by people from different hierarchical positions.
- doing case studies on companies that have successfully implemented intrapreneurship in order to identify possible similarities between them so as to establish the key to successfully implementing intrapreneurship.

Because this paper addresses a fairly new research topic and is very little discussed and explored by Romanian researchers we believe that our research results can contribute to the improvement of understanding the importance of intrapreneurship, both from an academically point of view as well as a practical one.

Regarding the research ethics we can say that the participants to the study were informed about the purpose of starting this research and were asked to consent to participate to the research, but at the same time they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study if wanted. Participants were also informed that the data provided will be used only for research purposes thus keeping their answers confidential and also assuring them of their anonymity.

Finally, through the theoretical documentation as well as through the empirical research, we want to contribute to the enrichment of the researched area. In conclusion we like to think that our research results are useful to companies in Romania and will increase the interest given to intrapreneurship.

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