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GENDER INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Case
Study

Keywords

*Discrimination;
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Management;
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JEL Classification

G32, J71, M14, Z10

Abstract

The latest trend pertaining to globalization is to decrease and eventually eliminate any kind of discrimination. Numerous researchers have closely followed this trend across different work fields and their studies have generated a clearer perception of the magnitude of the discrimination paradigm. In this respect, we analyzed the managerial field from the gender point of view, and we have also pointed out the benefits of gender diversity in an organization. The rapid developments in all spheres (economic, cultural, political, social, technological) generate challenges for managers across organizations if they don't adapt quickly enough. As the organizational culture is the context in which all the managerial processes are developed and structured, our research investigates how members of the management board can achieve real change through elements within the organizational culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is one of the most debated concepts of psychology. This paradigm was defined and analyzed in various forms and approaches. (Tylor E. , 1865, p. 92) defines the concept as “the sum of abilities and habits learned as a member of a society”. This definition was developed and became: the organizational culture is a dynamic system of implicit and explicit rules which were established by groups to assure survival. Those include the attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, as well as behaviors that must be adopted by individuals to form the group. Although they are applied differently by individuals, transmitted from a generation to another in a relatively stable form it is possible that they could suffer changes throughout time. (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004, p. 115)

Extrapolating, we can define organizational culture as a set of assumptions governed by the rules, attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors accepted, promoted and regulated into an organization which are known and transmitted to employees, collaborators, and clients with the aim of establishing a model regarding the methods of the past, the management of the present and the future development of the organization, but without limitations regarding the possibility of modifying those sets of rules.

Many empirical studies pointed out that the organizational culture has a direct impact on the organizational performance (Cameron & Ettington, 1988), (Denison, 1990), (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Cameron & Quinn Model

As the organizational culture represents the association between internal (direct implications on specific activities of HRM, financial-economic results, etc.) and external actions (taking action in extreme cases — recession, applying an adequate management style, types of approaching client/collaborator relationships, etc.) it is recommended that the organizational culture of the individuals such as the managers and the rest of the participants on the free market — clients/collaborators/competition be known. (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) found that in 2006 just 35% of the top managers clearly understood the organizational culture of the entities that they managed. (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2012) have exemplified in their research six dimensions that lead to ascertaining the particularities of the organizational culture: power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long term orientation versus short term normative orientation, indulgence versus restraint.

According to the six dimensions defined by (Hofstede, 2001), as well as formulating the

competing values framework, (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) defined four principal types of the organizational culture as follows:

- Hierarchical culture is the most authoritative type as the power is vertically distributed from top to bottom. The classical model of hierarchical culture is the army.
- Market culture is based on the external environment more than on the internal one. The primary focus in this culture is to create a competitive advantage through the completion of the exchanges, sales or contracts with external participants. This type of culture is focused on the needs of the clients, premium quality products and corporate competition.
- Adhocratic culture is characterized by communication. The personnel is highly encouraged to cooperate as the organization provides the proper environment that leads to innovative ideas. As a result, this type of culture promotes the highest level of risk-taking behavior among its employees.
- Clan culture is characterized by friendship. It is the widest-ranging agreed on culture by employees. They prefer to work in an environment dominated by friendship rather than one dominated by pressure and stress. The idea that everybody should be colleagues in the working hours and friends outside it is encouraged.

For completing the values framework proposed by (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), they developed a method (an instrument) to classify the existing organizational culture at a specific moment in time (OCAI – „Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument”) (Cameron, 2011) by applying a six-item assessment which explores the following particular dimensions: the dominant characteristics of the organization, the leadership style, the organizational binder — a mechanism adopted by an organization for the curdling of teams, the characteristics of the adopted strategies which are determined by the areas of interest, the evaluation criteria — it analyzes how the organizational performances are defined and how are they are respectively rewarded and promoted inside the structure, the human resources management aspects — it examines the work environment and how the employees are treated.

Each item of the OCAI assessment has four answer options, and each item should be answered with a number (from 0 to 100) representing the percentage that the respondent considers appropriate for that option with the condition that the sum of the four options be 100.

Answer options represent each dimension's adaptability to one of the four types determined in the values framework. After analyzing and calculating the averages of the percentages granted and positioning them on the values framework, we

can determine the characteristic (dominant) type of the organizational culture of the entity.

Also, the OCAI gives the possibility to study how employees want (feel the need) to change the type of the organizational culture they work in — in which direction they are heading and in what proportion.

The organizational culture need of change

(Porter, 1980) determines in his study six basic components which are considered success factors in a business as follows:

- The difficulty of entering the market in the chosen field (high production costs, special technologies, exceptionally developed knowledge).
- Monopoly providers of products/services (e.g.: a single provider of a specific good in the area).
- Holding a large market share (e.g.: the biggest furniture manufacturer from Romania can invest in more efficient equipment to generate fewer losses/rejected goods and a higher quality of the products delivered).
- Low capability of buyers to negotiate the price (when the buyer doesn't have an alternative).
- Low capability of distributors to negotiate the price (if suppliers have no one to deliver such goods to, then the price can be negotiated from a position of strength).
- Rivalry between competitors (they will fight each other so that they will not be able to attack the organization in a concentrated manner).

Even though those six elements are applicable nowadays for a new organization, the fulfillment of all items is very hard to achieve. Even the biggest existing companies on the market needed time and specific methods to fulfill those factors.

As we highlighted earlier, the organizational culture work as a vector characterized by the origin, direction, way and the measure in which an entity accomplish most of their activities. Even though this is determined by a set of rules, regulations and norms, they could be adapted in time, this characteristic being one of the most important of the organizational culture. Among time many researchers outlined this characteristic which they tried to explain in detail.

In his study (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) conclude „unpredictability, volatility and fast changes lead to a worsening of activities needed to be done for any organization or any manager to be up to date, anticipate the following direction of actions or to maintain a constant direction” as so, the organizational culture change is a need in the context of an economic and financial volatile and unstable markets. Furthermore, the technology development as well as computerization, automatization and newer the robotization of every branch creates a context and one more reason for the decisional factors to learn more on the organizational culture and to anchor it in everyday reality.

Big companies around the world make sustained efforts to ensure a set of laws which means to be applied suitably in any cycle of the market (even in times of recession) to attract investors. However, the political environment is uncertain, the reason why the organizations focused on development had realized its own management of the organizational culture applied.

Even though these six components are applicable nowadays for a new organization, the accomplishment of all factors is difficult to achieve. Even the biggest companies on the market needed time and precise methods to meet those factors.

As we highlighted earlier, the organizational culture works as a vector characterized by the origin, direction, way and the measure in which an entity performs most of its activities. Although this is determined by a set of rules, regulations, and norms, they could be adapted in time, this characteristic is one of the most important of the organizational culture. Many researchers described this characteristic throughout time and tried to explain it in detail.

In their study (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 1) concluded that „Unremitting, unpredictable, and sometimes alarming change makes it difficult for any organization or manager to stay current, accurately predict the future, and maintain constancy of direction” as such, the organizational culture transformation is a necessity in the context of economic and financial volatile markets. Furthermore, technology development, as well as computerization, automatization and recently the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) in every field creates a setting and one additional reason for the decisional factors to rely more on the organizational culture and to embed it in the everyday life.

Big companies around the world make continued efforts to ensure a set of laws that are designed to be applied suitably in any cycle of the market (even in times of recession) to attract investors. However, as the political environment becomes more uncertain gradually and steadily, the organizations focused on development realized that it is up to them to control the organizational culture management applied within.

In this regard (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008) determined three types of typologies of approaching the organizational culture change as follows:

- Organizational culture change is an aspect that exceeds the top management authority sphere (it is influenced just by the local culture, education, the organizational objective, group membership, personal interactions, life experience, etc.).
- Organizational culture change is a mission that can be realized with difficulty due to the unpredictability with which the person might respond to the efforts made to achieve the changing circumstances.

- Organizational culture change can be achieved by using expert skills and also by allocating sufficient resources for this purpose by the top management of the organization.

The practice has shown that a lack of awareness of the organizational culture by the management team as well as the lack of awareness of the need for change undoubtedly leads to failure from a managerial point of view. The most relevant example is Nokia's mobile phone business which has had tremendous success in the field of mobile phone production, lost to the start of the "smartphone revolution". The management promoted a bureaucratic system where decisions were made consensually without focusing on the product or technology development/innovation. "I did nothing wrong, however, I lost" - Stephen Elop (Nokia CEO).

In conclusion, there is no doubt about the fact that changes in every field - whether of science, technology, social life or biology – are a reality determined by research, development, and innovation, and this should be considered an omnipresent activity on which anybody can intervene directly, therefore unpredictable. Furthermore, researchers speculate that the rate of change will increase exponentially in the next period. So, the problem that remains to be solved is how the organizational culture needs to be changed to increase its effectiveness amongst companies.

Approaches of changing in the sphere of organizational culture

Although the need to change the organizational culture has been highlighted, it should not be extensively altered from the origin. The foundation must be constant over time, regardless of the habits of the times or the approaches of other companies, as (Collins & Porras, 1994, p. 63) stated in their study "the basic values must be the cornerstone for the visionary organizations". Collins addresses the unitary anthropological paradigm of the organizational culture. However, there are also supporters of the concept of the combined organizational culture which includes elements of different subcultures within the groups that have developed within the organization. Advocates of this approach are the authors of the paper (Frost et al., 1991, p. 15) who believe that "an organizational culture fails to coagulate the specific issues at a general or subcultural level but only in a transiently way".

To change the organizational culture, a plan must be put into practice. The strategy must be designed, conducted and supported by a set of methods and means that would contribute to implementing a change management system.

The management of the change of the organizational culture is based in principle on a complex system of activities that combines both hard and soft

organizational practices (Shah & Ward, 2007). Hard practices refer to technical and analytical attributes, while soft practices address the issue of concepts, personnel, relationships, etc.

Given that most theoretical studies address changes in the organizational culture in a managerial manner by applying hard practices (quantifiable objectives and performance indicators, orientation to technical systems, limited number of possible solutions, clear definition of problems, clear need for resources, structural methodological solutions, a reasonable static environment, clear deadlines, delimitation of problems with minimal external interactions), it is found that an equally significant impact has soft practices. (Samson & Terziovski, 1999), (Predișcan, 2001), (Taylor & Wright, 2006), (Fotopoulos & Psomas, 2009), (Bortolotti, Boscarì, & Danese, 2015).

Some examples of attributes of soft practices are people orientation, a large number of possible solutions, variable methodological solutions, dynamic environment.

The two methods of transforming the organizational culture used in tandem, in conjunction with direct links and their impact on organizational performance, are empirically demonstrated and analyzed in the study conducted by (Rahman & Bullock, 2005).

For a faster change of vision and orientation of the organizational culture, changes can be implemented at a managerial level by applying soft practices determined through a hard type approach - changing the management board and introducing the female element.

GENDER

The gender issue has been and is being debated in many fields of activity, but in most cases, it has been studied from the perspective of discrimination. Also, in this regard, in the field of management, a new paradigm has emerged, called "glass ceiling" which briefly defines "discrimination" as the invisible barrier imposed on certain categories of people (mostly women) in order to prevent them from being promoted.

It can be observed that both at the European level and at the level of our country, the employment rate of female persons is much lower than the average of the employed persons, which causes a higher rate of women without an income, so a higher risk of social exclusion (Chart no. 1 and 2) Regarding the trend of these indicators, it is possible to determine a faster growth of the employed population in Romania than the average growth of the European Union, but a lower rate of growth of the employed women than the average growth rate in the European Union.

We can conclude that in Romania we cannot talk about a phenomenon of the "glass ceiling" effect

regarding the employed women and their access to managerial positions, their share being close to the European ones, with an even more accentuated tendency of growth (Chart no. 3). However, by examining the generated graphs we can say that in Romania 18% of the employed female population owns a management function within the organizations, while in the European countries 21% of the employed female population has a management function within the organizations. Studies conducted over time have analyzed both the advantages and disadvantages of managers according to gender, defining three concepts, as follows:

- one according to which men possesses the skills and characteristics necessary to hold top management positions (Goktepe & Schneier, 1989) (Schein, 2004)
- one according to which women have qualities that are more valuable for a position of a top manager (Helgesen, 1990) (Rosener, 1990) (Burke & Collins, 2001) (Powell, Butterfield, & Bartol, 2008)
- one according to which the position of a top manager is not affected by the gender of the occupant. (Kabacoff, 2000) (van Engen, van der Leeden, & Willemsen, 2001) (Oshagbemi & Gill, 2004) (Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008).

With the theory of the "glass ceiling" two other concepts have been developed:

- The glass cliff - which refers to the fact that women are preferred to be elected to leadership positions (to exceed the "glass ceiling") in times of crisis when the probability of failure is very large (Haslam & Ryan, 2008) - this concept is not meant to diminish the impact of the "glass ceiling" phenomenon, but to accentuate and perpetuate the stereotype and discrimination.
- The glass escalator - which refers to the fact that women are less likely to be promoted in sectors where they are the majority or are in the same proportion as men than in sectors where the majority are men (Hultin, 2003)

In her study (Sealy, 2010) points out that women in general management positions have acknowledged that they have had problems obtaining management positions because of the meritocracy system that is not functioning properly and she also points out that throughout their career, women lost their feminine abilities and adopted behaviors similar to their male counterparts in the hope that they would be judged on the same criteria used in their male colleagues, but found that they were wrong.

In the membership theory, it is specified that men are more task-oriented, more impersonal and have a more autocratic leadership style – they adopt a transactional leadership type - while women tend to be more oriented towards collaboration, towards familiarity, they have a more democratic leadership style - adopts a transformational or even

participatory leadership type. (Eagly & Johnson, 1990)(Pounder & Coleman, 2002) (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003) (Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Moreover, the characteristic of transformational leadership highlights the social values of the female personality, which include the achievement of human connections, communication, constructive consensus, the power used as influence and teamwork for a common purpose. (Rosener, 1990) (Druskat, 1994) (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996) (Kark, 2004)

MASCULINE MANAGEMENT VS. FEMININE MANAGEMENT

Masculinity and femininity in the management field are not determined by the gender membership of the decisional factors from an organizations, but by the dominant personal characteristics of the board as a whole as well as organizational culture.

(Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2012) defines masculinity as an organization's preference to be competitive, with the growing will of achievement, assertiveness which is based on material rewards, whereas the feminine organization is characterized by cooperation, modesty, quality of life and care about the weakest, it being more oriented towards consensus than competitiveness.

(Hofstede, 2001) characterizes the organizations according to the level of masculinity/femininity as:

- A high rate of masculinity:
 - larger gender pay gap.
 - preference for a higher salary.
 - a low number of women in the management of the organization.
- A high rate of femininity:
 - lower gender pay gap.
 - reference for a low number of working hours.
 - a greater number of women in the management of the organization.

We can say that in a high masculine organization there is a predisposition to the emergence of discrimination issues unlike the case of an organization with a higher degree of femininity.

The characteristic qualities associated to the masculine style are: aggressiveness, independence, goals, logical, reason, analytical, decisive, confident, assertive, ambitious, opportunistic and impersonal while the qualities associated to feminine leadership style are characterized by emotion, sensitivity, expressivity, cooperation, intuition, warmth, tact, receptivity to ideas, openness for discussion, empathy and submission. (Park, 1996)

The basic principles around which the concept of High Performance Work System (HPWS) was shaped – in other studies determined as High Involvement Work System (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2011) – are communication, interaction and personal

abilities. Those characteristics are known as „soft skills” and are characteristics of feminine style.

Moreover, the growing orientation towards developing the package of benefits linked to the workplace to attract new talents and the human resource management tendency to apply the concept of a healthy work-life balance (Kato & Kodama, 2016) make those strategies and implicitly leadership practices to outline a feminine style of management.

In the current socio-political and economic context, we can witness an expansion and an improvement of practices with a direct impact on the society in which the organizations operate. The proof being that in 2011 a program entitled „The National Strategy for Promoting Social Responsibility” was initiated which draws the priorities, objectives and principal implementation directions of the social responsibility concept in Romanian society.

The social responsibility concept consists of creating the structure or the necessary conditions for organizations to apply the practices responsible for the environment in which they operate (society). Although the public administration supports the development of this concept, it seems that it is not sufficiently aware and utilized by the organizations

because of the value systems promoted by managers. For this reason, a causal link can easily be created between the value system and the rate of organizational implication in promoting the corporate social responsibility concept.

The studies in the field concentrate on the conclusion that the organization with a high level of femininity is more involved in the development of corporate social responsibility. (Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010) (Mallin & Michelin, 2011) (Post, Rahman, & Rubow, 2011) (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013) (Ding, Zhu, & Zhang, 2013) (Kato & Kodama, 2017).

Moreover, it was found that 58% of managers responsible for human resources consider that the lack of soft skills of the personnel included in the organizations (especially the occupying staff of management positions) generate directly a limitation of the company's productivity. Also, over 90% of the managers consider that the soft skills of the personnel are just as important or even more important than the professional/technical skills (Engwall & Kipping, 2013). All the soft skills correspond to an organizational culture with a high level of femininity.

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Figures

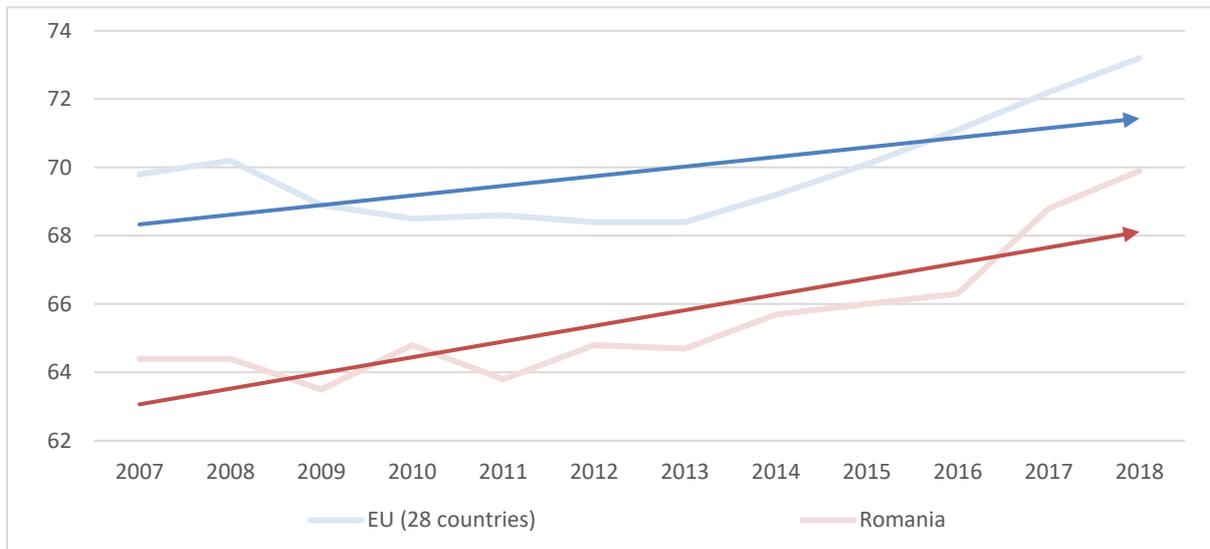


Chart No. 1
Comparative evolution of the employed population rate in the period 2007-2018 in the EU countries. and Romania (%)

Source: Eurostat data processing

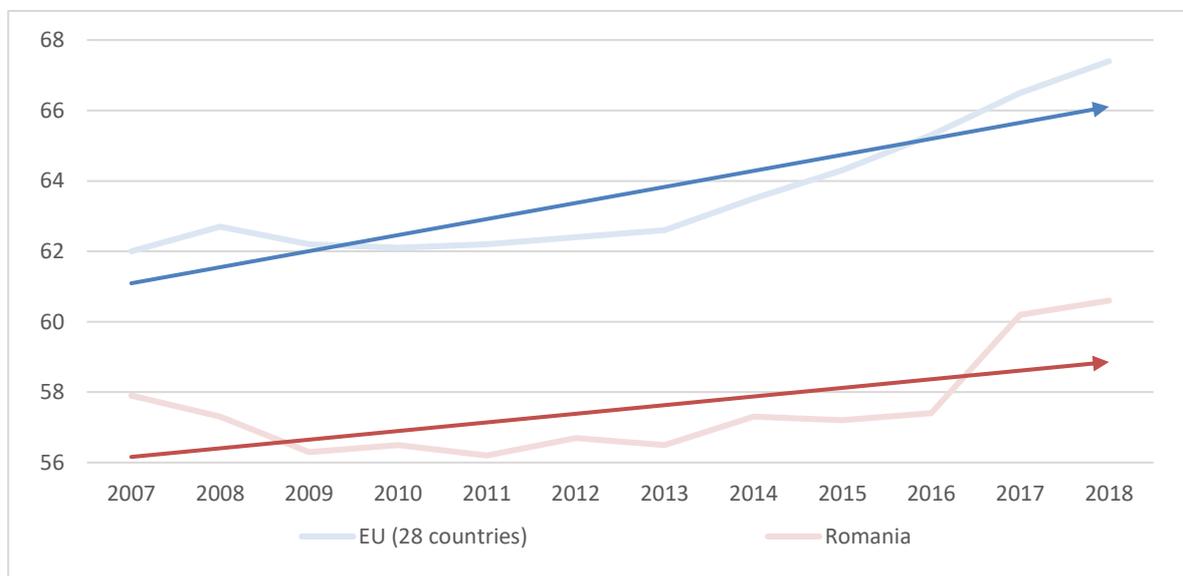


Chart No. 2
Evolution of the rate of employed female persons in the period 2007-2018 in the EU countries. and Romania (%)

Source: Eurostat data processing

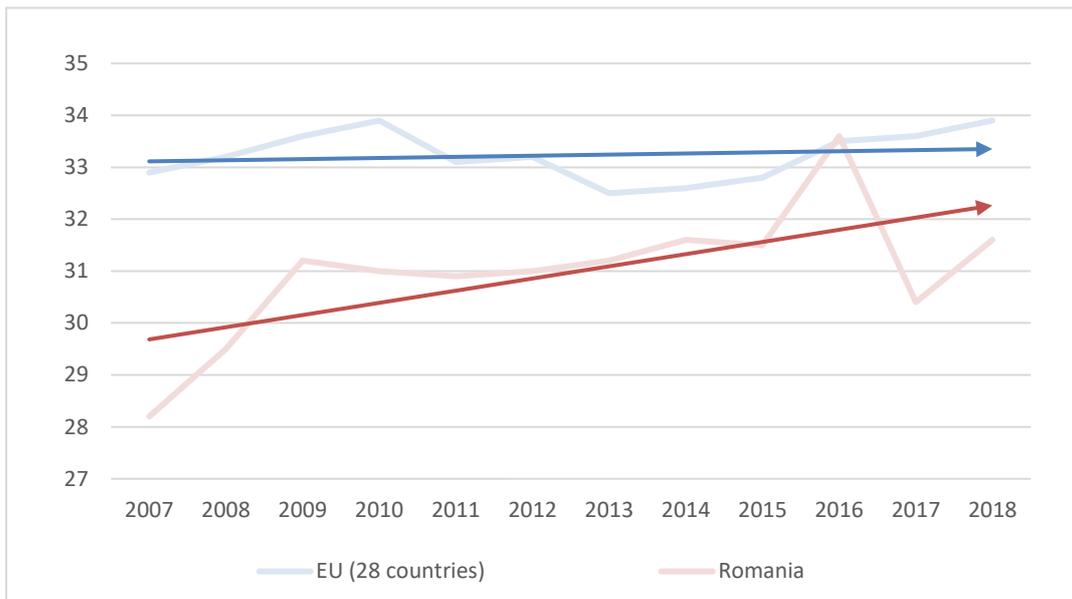


Chart No. 3
The comparative evolution of the of the share of employed women holding a managerial role in the period 2007-2018 in the U.E. and Romania (%)
Source: Eurostat data processing