

Stereotypes in Business: Italy and Romania

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Abstract

Stereotypes have always been one of the most important barriers in every day communication. Substantial concern has been raised in international business that stereotypes bias perceptions of employees, customers, business people, and others. The present paper outlines the importance of stereotypes in business, with a particular emphasis on the business communication between two countries: Italy and Romania.

Keywords: *stereotypes, business communication, Italy, Romania*

Introduction

As Walter Lippmann argued in his book, “Public Opinion”, “for the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.”¹

Due to the fact that the World is becoming a Global Village, information and communication attract people’s attention more than ever. There is an increased urge to communicate and develop relationships with different people, many of them with different cultural backgrounds. However, there are so many factors that can influence an effective communication, and stereotypes are one of them.

The present paper, entitled *Stereotypes in Business: Italy and Romania*, analyzes how stereotypes can influence communication, with special emphasis on Business Communication. The analysis is focused on two countries: Italy and Romania.

I will start by a short presentation of the stereotypes that Italians and Romanians have about each other. Some of them are already well known, while others are not. Most of the paper is then dedicated to the case study. It is based on a questionnaire and an interview which were applied on people from two different companies, one from Romania and another one from Italy. The Romanian company is Accenture, more precisely Accenture Romania. The Italian company will be called VIE (the name given to the company comes from the name of the project) – do to confidentiality agreements its name cannot be revealed. The main objective in conducting this research was to observe if there were stereotypes between the people from the two companies, their nature,

positive or negative, and their influence on the business communication between them.

Stereotypes about Italians

Every culture is associated to stereotypes that are hard to dispel, and the Italian culture is no different. Some of them are very common, while some vary. People often seem to think of Italians along certain lines and expect stereotypical behaviors to be always true, but that is not always true.²

One stereotype about Italians is that they are short and dark. The fact is Italian vary in appearance from region to region. By observing Italian history it is clear to see that numerous influences have made an impact and it becomes apparent when visiting the country that the stereotypical short and dark-haired, olive-skinned Italian exists, but so does also the tall, big-boned and blonde one.³

Furthermore, Italian men are thought to be sexist. Most Italian men will tell that their behavior towards women stems from an unwavering awe of the opposite sex, not low regard or condescension. Italians are brought up to believe that they are responsible for the well-being of their wives. They perceive their attentions as healthy and normal, and believe that Italian women are flattered by them.⁴

Another stereotype is that Italians sing. It is true that Italy is well known for its singers and traditional music but this does not mean that they should be expected to sing at every occasion. This stereotype was born from a superficial knowledge of Southern Italian popular culture and is so deeply rooted in the collective imagery that it has generated strange situations: a musician in Venice on a gondola singing traditional southern arias.⁵

Italians are also perceived as being corrupt: “All Italians belong to the Mafia”. The truth is that most Italians go about their business without ever getting involved with a “Mafioso”. Foreigners doing business in Italy probably will not have the occasion to interact directly with the Mafia either, although they may experience some side effects of its long existence when dealing with the Government.⁶

Another well known stereotype is that Italians are overweight. Contrary to many images from television and magazines, such as thick-fingered men with napkins under their chins twirling heaps of spaghetti on their plates, most Italians are stylishly slim. Their diets revolve around healthy, low-fat foods and they do not snack between meals. They usually shop a little bit every day, and their ingredients are fresh and seasonal. Leafy salads, thin-cruised pizzettas, fruit,

vegetables, fish and light pasta dishes are the norm.⁷

Another food related stereotype is that Italians always eat pasta. It is true that they love pasta and they miss it when they are abroad, but foreigners should understand that Italians do not always eat it. Actually, this habit changes from family to family, some may eat pasta every day, some other only twice a week.⁸

Furthermore, Italians are perceived as good lovers. This is completely debatable and depends on who is arguing. Of course Italians think as good lovers but any nation, if asked that question, would answer the same. There are some definite differences in couple relationships in Italy as compared to other cultures. Due to extreme cost of divorce and the lengthy process, which can take sometimes up to five years, it is not uncommon to find a married couple who live together or apart, have children, but enjoy other partners.⁹

Italian men are rude. The stereotypical image of Italian chasing after foreign women pinching their butts is quite an old one. It is true that Italians are a little more vocal in their appreciation for a beautiful woman, but this can also be regional. Women are cherished and beauty is appreciated. Of course the country and its mentality are progressing so there may still be some old-fashioned chauvinistic ideas but women are certainly not oppressed in any way.¹⁰

Italians do not speak English. It is not always the fact that they do not speak English as it is that Italians do not want to speak English. They are a very proud nation with a rich culture and heritage and have the feeling that if they became more westernized they would lose something special. On the other hand, more and more Italians are realizing the importance of learning English and that in business this is a priority. Many Italians can speak a little basic English but they are just not confident in it and in most cases quite embarrassed to even try, so it is not uncommon to get an Italian response to an English question.¹¹

Italians gesticulate. It is true that Italians generally recur to body language to express themselves better, however, it must be noted that the habit of using hands to emphasize what one is saying belongs more to Southern than Northern Italians. Neapolitans are particularly famous for gesticulating when talking.¹²

Stereotypes about Romanians

One of the most frequent stereotypes associated with Romania is corruption. That does not mean that everyone will attempt to rob and no one is to be trusted, from public officials to law enforcement. Corruption in Romania has several sources: it is a legacy of the Turkish Empire, a consequence of the fact that Romania is still a personal relationship-based society, and it is also due

to the difficult times under Communism when basic goods could only be found under-the-counter dealings. One will find honest Romanians all through the society.¹³

Romanians are also stereotyped as immigrants who steal jobs. However, immigration is not a new fact. People always migrated in order to look for better lives, due to economical reasons, climate change, or political reasons. Not only people from poor countries migrate, but also people from highly developed countries migrate to study, work, and experience new cultures or for many other reasons.¹⁴

Another stereotype associated with Romanians is poverty. This is due to the fact that the '90 brought a breakdown in the relative egalitarianism that characterized Romania during the Communist era. This means that a large percentage of the population has seen its living standards plummet. Transition to capitalism dealt a severe blow to that part of the population whose salaries did not rise with the prices.¹⁵

Romania is also stereotyped for the way it treats children and has made a name for itself through its orphanages. This is also due to the news in the media and because of the international pressures in order to allow international adoption of Romanian children. However, accusing the country of systematically mistreating children is unfair.¹⁶

Furthermore, when people think about Romania, and especially Transylvania the name of Dracula is usually the first one that arises. Transylvania is seen as a mysterious, dangerous and far-away land full of vampires and bats. Today there are many tourists that come to Romania especially to visit Dracula places.¹⁷

Another common stereotype is that Romanians are Gypsies. The Gypsy population is a difficult social problem that has not been solved yet. They are not exclusive to Romania, but they live in larger numbers in Romania compared to other countries from Europe.¹⁸

Case study

The case study's main purpose is to illustrate whether or not there are stereotypes between Romanians and Italians from the two companies presented below, and if their presence is revealed, which are those stereotypes and how they can influence the business communication between the parties.

The key concepts in building the questionnaire and the interview were the specific features of each culture, the differences and similarities between them.

These generated three research questions. The research questions are: i) Are there any stereotypes between Italians and Romanians from VIE and Accenture?; ii) If there are any stereotypes between them, are those stereotypes positive or negative?; iii) If the presence of stereotypes is revealed, which is their influence on the business communication between the two companies?

The research instruments used were a mirror questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was composed of six questions, while the interview of five. Both of them were applied during 1 May 2014 and 15 May 2014. Demographic data, submitted on a separate sheet, constituted a filter. These questions included: gender, age and nationality. The one that was given high importance was nationality, as it played a major role. According to it, the respondents received the appropriate questionnaire and interview. For example, the Romanians were asked to say which the first word that came to their minds when they thought about their Italian counterparts was, while the Italians were asked to mention which the first word that came to their mind when they thought about their Romanian counterparts was.

The questionnaire for the Romanians was applied on nine respondents, eight of whom were women. Their age was between 25 and 32. The average age was 29 years. The interview with the Romanians was applied on three respondents, all of the women. The main reason why they were chosen for the interview was their constant interaction with the Italian counterparts, as they participated daily in call conferences. Also, all of them have been at least once at the headquarters from Italy.

The questionnaire for the Italians was also applied on eight respondents, five women and three men. Their age was between 28 and 50. The average age was 34.9 years. The interview with the Italians was applied on three respondents, a woman and two men. The main reason why they were invited to participate was their constant interaction with their Romanian counterparts and the fact that they had come to the headquarters in Romania at least once.

The work procedure consisted in applying the questionnaire at the Accenture Headquarter from Bucharest for the Romanians, while for the Italian counterparts the questionnaires were sent via e-mail. Because of the distance, the interviews with the Italians were conducted during a call conference.

The questionnaire

In the first question the respondents were asked to mention the first word that comes to their minds when they think at their Italian/Romanian counterparts. From the nine Romanian respondents, two mentioned pasta, two mentioned fashion and two the word nice. The other respondents mentioned that the words that come to their mind are elegance, calm, nationalists.

As it can be observed most of the answers are positive, however they illustrate some of the stereotypes about Italians such as the fact that they are very famous for their sense of fashion or the fact that they eat pasta every day.

These two stereotypes can be both positive and negative when it comes to business communication. They can be positive because, if a Romanian business man expects his Italian counterpart to be very elegant, fashionable and he is, than the expectations are met. However, if the same Romanian business man expects to meet a very fashionable Italian and his expectations are not met, the disappointment on his face can be quite obvious and can make the other person feel uncomfortable without an obvious reason.

Furthermore, the same happens when it comes to food. A Romanian may expect an Italian to eat pasta, even when he is in a foreign country. In spite of this, it would be better to ask if he is willing to try local food.

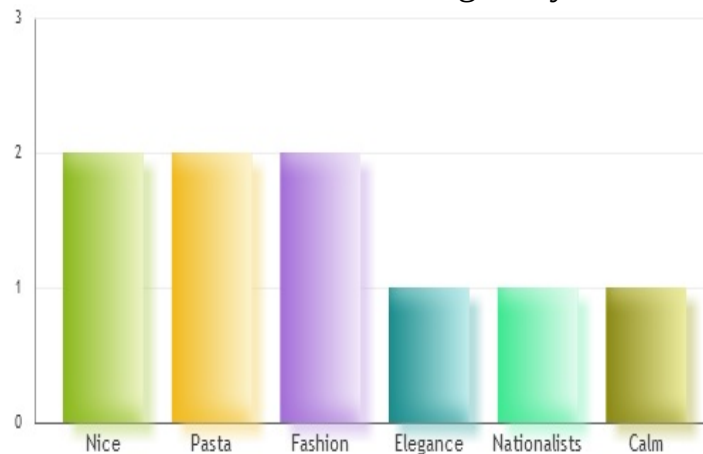


Chart 1. Answers received from the Romanians

It should be mentioned that the Romanian business people from Accenture have met their counterparts in Italy on several occasions so the fact that the word fashion came to their mind when they were asked to indicate a word may not be casual. Maybe at every meeting with the Romanian counterparts their counterparts dressed very elegantly and fashionably, but this does not offer a guarantee that all their future meetings will be the same.

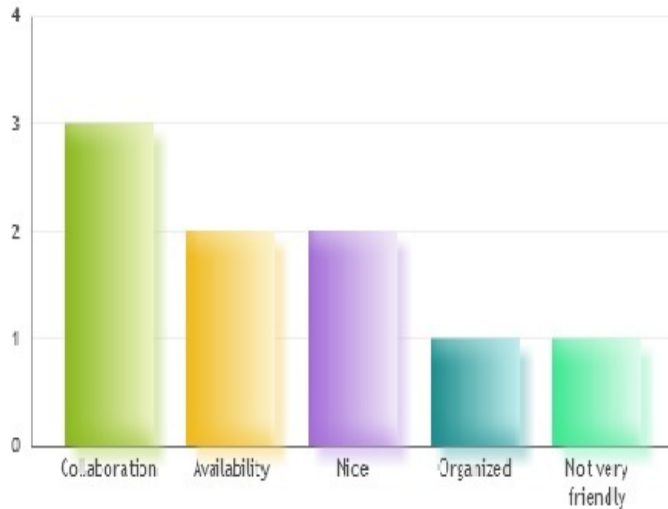


Chart 2. Answers received from the Italians

The answers given by the Italian counterparts at the first question were mostly positive. They mentioned that the first words that come to their mind when they think at their Romanian counterparts are collaboration (3 respondents), availability (2 respondents) and nice (2 respondents). The last two answers were organized and not very friendly.

The answers obtained can be due to the fact that one of the job requirements for Romanians is to always help and solve all the problems that the Italian counterparts could encounter. So, the Romanians have to be very patient when listening to the problems their counterparts encounter and try to solve them as fast as possible.

The fact that Romanians were perceived as not very friendly, can be related to a more reserved behavior Romanians have when meeting a new person, especially a foreigner.

To conclude, both sides answered in a positive manner, although the presence of stereotypes was revealed.

At the second question, both Romanians and Italians were given a list of ten attributes. The attributes were the following: fashionable, honest, competitive, corrupt, punctual, English speakers, sexist, friendly, stubborn. All of them represent some of the stereotypes about Romanians and Italians.

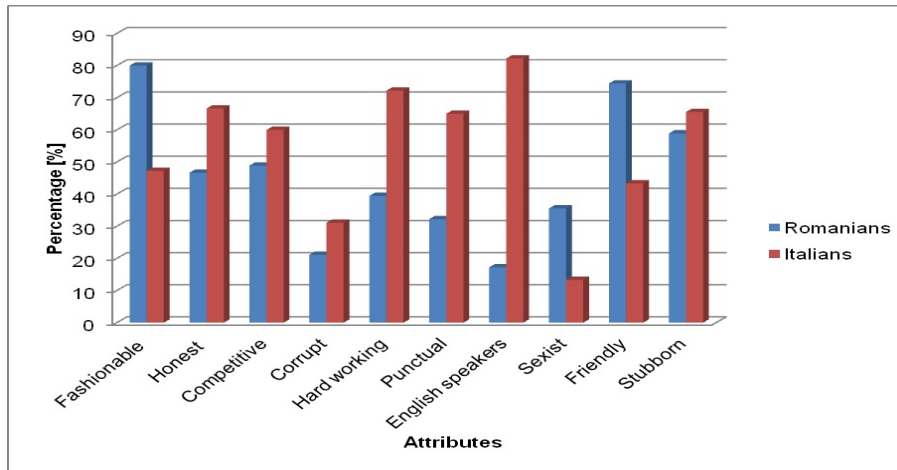


Chart 3. Attributes

For the first attribute, the Romanians answered that 80% of their Italian counterparts are fashionable. As already mentioned, this can be both positive and negative. If a Romanian expects his counterpart to be fashionable when attending a meeting or a business negotiation and he is, the Romanian's expectations will be met, but if this will not happen, then it is likely to create a feeling of discomfort for the Italian counterpart.

On the other hand, the Italians answered that only 45% of their Romanian counterparts are fashionable.

For the second attribute, the Romanians answered that 45% of their Italian counterparts are honest, while the Italians answered that almost 70% of their Romanian counterparts are honest. The difference between the two answers is quite notable. This can be due to the stereotype that Italians are not honest; they never tell the truth. So, it is probably that because of this stereotype, the Romanians perceive the information their counterparts give as questionable.

For the third attribute both parties perceived each other as competitive, the Romanians stated that almost 50% of their counterparts are competitive, while the Italians stated that 60% of their Romanian counterparts are competitive. This can be seen as a similar feature between the two companies.

For the fifth attribute, the Italians said that 70% of their Romanian counterparts are hard working, while the Romanians stated that almost 40% of their Italian counterparts are hard working. This can be related to the stereotype that Italians like to take long breaks and enjoy life.

For the sixth attribute, the Italians stated that 65% of their Romanian counterparts are punctual, while the Romanian stated that only 30% of their Italian counterparts are punctual. This can be a negative aspect when it comes to the business communication between them as the Romanians expect their

counterparts to be always late. However, this does not mean that at every meeting the Italians will be late.

At the seventh attribute, the Italians answered that 80% of their Romanian counterparts are English speakers, while for the same attribute the Romanians stated that only 15% of their counterparts are English speakers. This embeds another stereotype about the Italians more precisely that Italians are not good English speakers. Probably most of them know English, but as no one expects to hear them speaking in English they prefer not to do it. It is advisable not to assume something without knowing the person, especially when it comes to business communication. The person can feel offended and that can ruin the business relationship.

At the ninth attribute, the Romanians answered that almost 75% of their Italian counterparts are friendly, while the Italian stated that only 40% percent of their Romanian counterparts are friendly. This is due to the fact that, usually, when Romanians meet a new person they tend to be more reserved.

At the last attribute, both parties described each other as stubborn (59% and 66%).

At the third question the Italians were given two statements. For each statement they were asked to say if it was true or false. The statements were: “Romanians have a strong sense of privacy. They do not like to talk about sensitive matters” and “Romanians are reluctant to change. They feel that change is related to instability.”

The Romanians were asked the same question, with the only difference that the statements were changed. The statements were the following: “Status is very important for Italians”, and “Italians do not like to admit when they are wrong”.

The Italians answered that 78% of their Romanian counterparts have a strong sense of privacy and they do not like to talk about sensitive matters, especially with their business counterparts. This can be seen as a cultural feature, as most Romanians tend to have a strong sense of privacy especially when meeting a new person. After establishing a closer relationship, the Romanians tend to be more open to private discussions.

Romanians have a strong sense of privacy. They do not like to talk about sensitive matters.

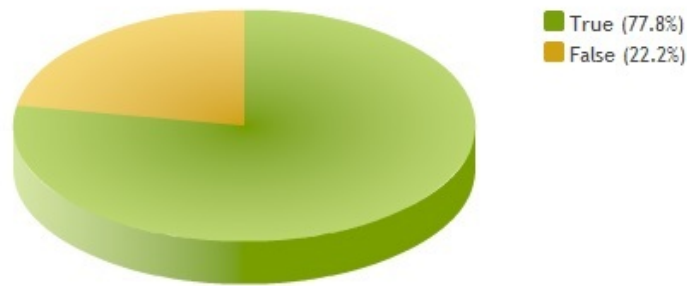


Chart 4. Privacy

Romanians are reluctant to change. They feel that change is related to instability.

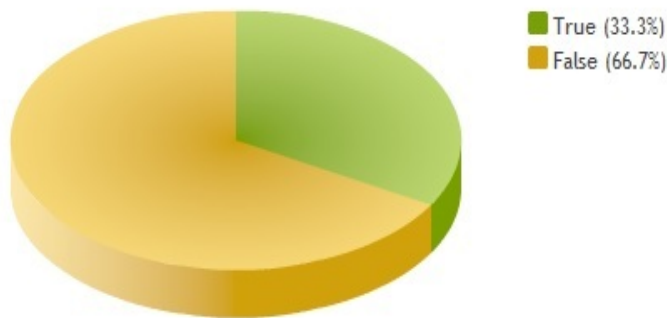


Chart 5. Romanians are reluctant to change

Although it is a frequently encountered stereotype about the Romanians, also due to the communist regime, the Italians answered that the statement is false. Only 33.3% said it is true.

The Romanians answered that status is very important for their Italian counterparts. This can be related to the fact that the Italians like to make a “bella figura”, which is more than the physical aspect, it includes also what they say, how they say it and how they behave. In addition, Italians address each other, in business communication, with their title, in order to highlight that the person has a Bachelors degree. Usually they use Dottore/Dottoressa, which are more general, or Ingegnere.

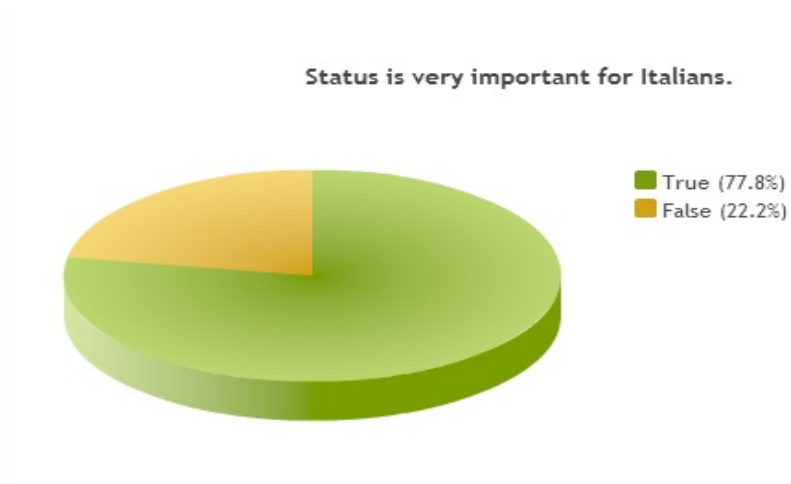


Chart 6. Status

For the statement “Italians do not like to admit when they are wrong” the answers are divided. Almost 56% of the Romanians answered that the statement is false, while 45% answered that the statement is true.

At the fourth question, both Romanians and Italians were asked to indicate a positive and a negative aspect related to their business communications. Their answers were the following:

Romanians	
Positive aspects	Negative aspects
- They start every discussion from a well set agenda	- They are not always open for new things
- They are friendly	- You may not understand everything they say as they speak with different accents
- Well educated	- Not very organized
- Always very friendly in their communication style	- They do not tell you exactly what they want from you
- Polite	- They never admit when they are wrong
- They are very nice and calm	- They are lazy, they prefer not to get involved too much
- Always available	- Before starting a serious discussion they talk about personal matters
- Nice	- They often change their mind
- Friendly	- They speak too much

Table 8. Romanians: positive and negative aspects

The Romanians perceive their Italian counterparts as very friendly and polite in their communication style. However, they think a negative aspect is the fact that the Italians speak too much. It is true that they have a tendency to debate everything and sometimes they also bring personal matters into discussion, but this is one of the defining features of their culture. There is no

word for privacy in the Italian language. Also, their language is very colorful and musical so they like to use as many words as possible.

The fact that they do not like to get involved so much, or that they often change their mind or they are not always open to new thinks and ideas is related to another cultural aspect which in Italian is called “brutta figura”, in English it would mean a bad impression, although the translation is not very precise. They do not like to “lose face” in front others.

Italians	
Positive aspects	Negative aspects
- Good collaboration	- Very sensitive to critics
- Nice	- Sometimes too serious
- Patient	- Not very talkative
- Always available	-
- Always respectful of the rules and procedures	- Particular sensitivity to criticism
- An excellent collaboration	-
- Friendly	- Sometimes pessimistic
- Come up with new ideas	-
- Implement ideas very quickly	- Not very talkative

Table 9. Italians: Positive and negative aspects

The positive aspects reveal a good collaboration between the two parties as the Italians described their Romanian counterparts as friendly, always available, always respectful of rules and procedures. However, the fact that the Romanians are particularly sensitive to criticism is due to the fact that they have a tendency to identify themselves with their ideas, so there is not a clear delimitation between them and the ideas that they come up with.

At the fifth question, both Romanians and Italians were asked to express agreement, partial agreement or disagreement with the two statements given. For Romanians the statements were the following: “Italians do not take a decision immediately. Usually one has to wait several days before getting an answer”, and “Italians tend to speak very loud, no matter the context.”

The Italian counterparts received the following statements: “Romanians do not take decision immediately. Usually, one has to wait several days before getting an answer” and “Romanians are corrupt”.

Italians do not take a decision immediately.

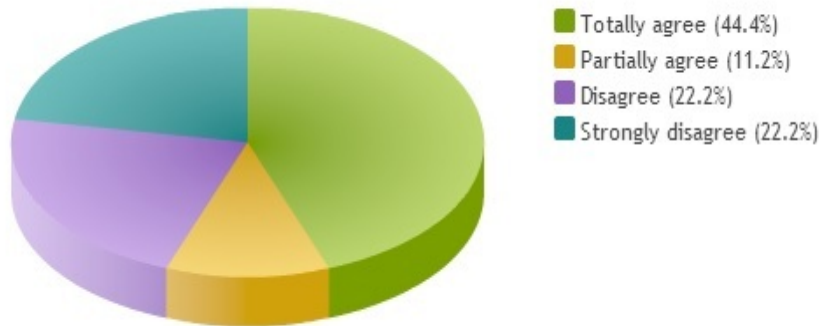


Chart 10. Italians – Decisions

For the first statement the Romanians answered that they totally agree – 45%, partially agree – 11.2%, disagree – 22,2%, and strongly disagree – 22.2%. Italy and Romania are hierarchical societies and usually the person with the highest position takes the decision, especially the most important ones. Sometimes it is possible to wait a few days before getting an answer. The answers from the Italian counterparts were the following: 11,2% - totally agree, 45% - partially agree, 44.4% disagree. Usually, the Romanians take a decision faster as all the people involved are in the same headquarter.

Romanians do not take decision immediately. Usually, one has to wait several days before getting an answer.

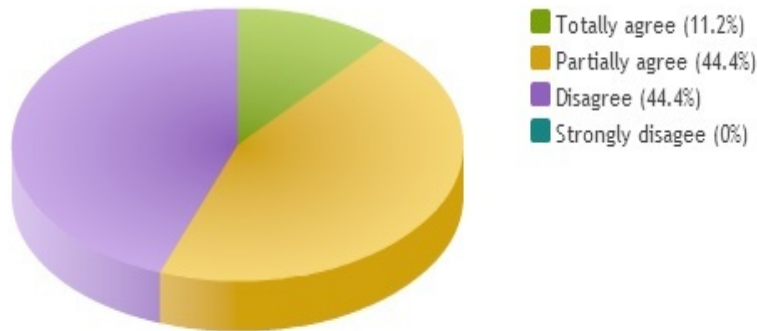


Chart 11. Romanians - Decisions

For the second statement – “Italians tend to speak very loud, no matter the context”, the Romanians answered that they totally agree – 45%, partially agree – 45%, and disagree – 11.2%. This is a very common stereotype, but not always true. Usually, the Italians coming from the south tend to speak very loud, while those coming from the north adapt their tone of voice to the situation.

Usually, when doing business with Italians, one should not be surprised or offended if they talk louder than the rest of the people.

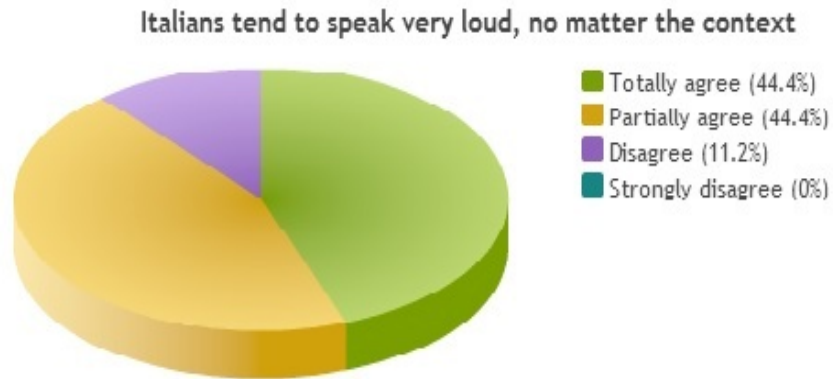


Chart 12. Italians – Tone of voice

For the second statement “Romanians are corrupt”, the Italian counterparts partially agreed – 11.2%, disagreed – 45%, and strongly disagreed – 45%. Although the fact that Romanians are corrupt is one of the most encountered stereotypes about Romanians, it seems that the Italian counterparts do not have it.

This can also be due to the fact that most Italians and Romanians have been working with each other for a long period of time, so they got to know each other better and establish a relationship.

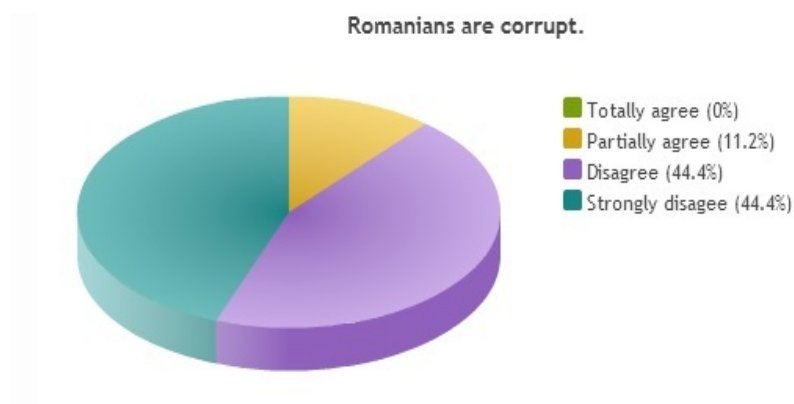


Chart 13. Romanians – corruption

The last question consisted in defining, using three adjectives, the calls/conferences/meetings with the Italian/Romanian counterparts.

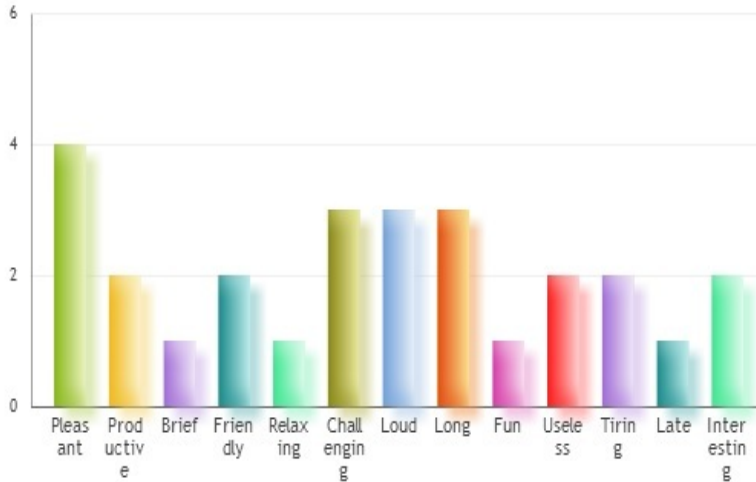


Chart 14. Romanians description of conferences/call/meetings

Most of the adjectives used by the Romanians to describe the calls, conferences or meetings with their Italian counterparts were positive. They used adjectives such as pleasant, productive, friendly, challenging, interesting. However, there were also negative adjectives, such as loud, long, useless and late.

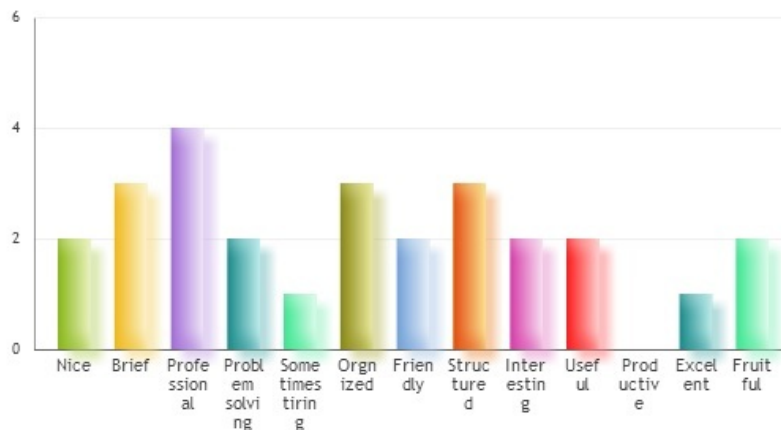


Chart 15. Italians description of conferences/calls/meetings

The answers of the Italian counterparts were also positive. They described the calls, meetings and conferences as nice, brief, problem solving, organized, friendly, structured, productive, excellent, and fruitful.

It is normal for the Romanians to perceive the calls, conferences and meetings as long, because the Italians have a tendency to explain in a more detailed manner. It is their way of making sure that everyone has understood the problem.

The Interview

The interview consisted of six questions, which were the same for the Italians and the Romanians. In the first question both parties were asked to mention the number of years they have been working with their counterparts. Most of them worked with their counterparts for more than five years, only one respondent stated that she has been working with her Romanian counterparts for two years.

The aim of the question was to find out if there were people who have recently started working with Romanians or Italians as stereotypes are usually formed at the beginning of the relationship, when people do not know much about each other. Once they have the opportunity to strengthen their relationship most of the stereotypes disappear.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked if at the beginning they were preoccupied by the cultural differences between the two countries. All the respondents answered that they were not preoccupied about the cultural differences because they had the opportunity to meet Romanians or Italians before. One of the Romanian respondents said that she had had an Italian teacher at school who had taught her many things about the Italian culture.

The third question consisted in mentioning some of the cultural differences both Italians and Romanians have noticed during these years they have been working together.

One of the Romanian respondents mentioned that she noticed many differences between Romanians and Italians. She said that Romanians are definitely more patient, more polite and more formal, while Italians are always in a hurry and less formal.

The second Romanian respondent said that she noticed that Italians love to talk, but they do not take the matter in their own hands, more exactly they do not want to assume responsibility. Instead, Romanians are exactly the opposite, they do not talk too much but take action when it is necessary.

Other cultural differences mentioned by the third respondent were the fact that the Italian counterparts are not punctual and the fact that they gesticulate a lot.

At the fourth question, both parties were asked to mention which of the stereotypes about each other are true.

The first Romanian respondent stated that the stereotypes she considers true about Italians are the fact that they do not speak foreign languages, their love for fashion and for being always fashionable, the fact that they gesticulate so much and speak very loud.

The other answers received were that Italians use their hands a lot when talking and the fact that they are nationalists.

On the other hand, all Italian respondents said that they could not answer

the question as they are not aware of stereotypes about Romanians.

For the final question, respondents were asked to mention which of the stereotypes about each other they considered as being false.

The Romanian answered that the Italians do not eat as much pizza and spaghetti as everyone tends to think, the Italians are not best lovers and they are not as fun and as friendly and outgoing as most people imagine.

The Italians answered that they do not think the Romanians are corrupt or thieves, as they have heard mentioning in different occasions.

Conclusions

As already mentioned the aim of the research was to reveal whether or not there are stereotypes between Romanian employees from Accenture and Italian employees from VIE company. Furthermore, I also wanted to uncover their nature, positive or negative, and how they influence the communication between the two parties.

The first question from the questionnaire revealed the presence of stereotypes. These were related to fashion and food, most of the employees from Accenture stating that when they think about Italians the first word that comes to their mind is fashion and pasta.

On the other hand, the words that the Italian mentioned were mostly positive. Only one respondent stated that the Romanians are not very friendly.

The second question revealed other stereotypes. The Romanians gave very low percentages for their Italian counterparts for the following attributes: honest, punctual, English speakers. The attributes that scored high percentages were fashionable, friendly and stubborn. The Romanians perceive their counterparts as not very honest, not very punctual and not good English speakers.

On the other hand, the Italians gave low percentages to their counterparts for two attributes – fashionable and friendly. The highest percentages were scored for the attributes honest, competitive, hard working, English speakers and stubborn.

Furthermore, the third question consisted in two different statements for Romanians and Italians. The Italians answered that the statement “Romanians have a strong sense of privacy. They do not like to discuss about sensitive matters” is true, while the second one “Romanians are reluctant to change” is false.

Although the stereotype that the Romanians are reluctant to change is much encountered, especially in the business environment, it appears that it is not the case of the Italian counterparts.

The Romanians answered that the statement “Status is very important for

Italians” is true, while the second statement was rather controversial as half of the Romanians believe that “Italians do not like to admit when they are wrong”, while the other half believes they do.

At the fourth question, both parties were asked to write a positive and a negative aspect of their business communication. The Romanians wrote that the Italians are friendly, nice and available. On the other hand, they are not very opened to new things, they change their minds and they speak too much.

The Italians wrote that their counterparts are nice, collaborative, and come up with new ideas. As negative aspects they stated that the Romanians are particularly sensitive to criticism, sometimes too serious and not very talkative.

At the fifth question, almost half of the Romanians totally agree with the statement “Italians do not take a decision immediately. Usually one has to wait for a few days in order to get an answer”, while for the second statement “Italians tend to speak very loud no matter the context, half of them totally agreed, while the other half partially agreed.

The Italians disagreed and strongly disagreed with the first statement “Romanians do not take a decision immediately” and half of them partially agreed, while the other half disagreed with the second statement “Romanians are corrupt”.

The final question consisted in using three adjectives in order to describe the calls, conferences and meetings between the parties. The Italians used only positive attributes such as nice, brief, problem solving, with one exception – sometimes tiring.

The adjectives used by the Romanians were both positive and negative – friendly, challenging, productive, interesting, loud, long, useless.

The interview was very helpful because it offered a more detailed insight of the problem. Its aim was to determine how long the parties have been working with each other, if the parties were aware of the cultural differences between them, and which were the stereotypes they perceived as true and which as false.

Comparing the answers of the two parties, from both the questionnaire and the interview, it can be concluded that the Romanians have more stereotypes about Italians that the Italians have about the Romanians. However, it is true that these stereotypes are not only negative, but also positive.

Independently of their nature, positive or negative, they have a great impact when it comes to the business communication between the parties. For example, most of the Romanians do not expect the Italians to be good English speakers, but that does not mean they are not. Also, they expect the Italians to speak loud, be fashionable, and give a high importance to status. However, this does not mean that they will never work with an Italian who is not fashionable,

does not speak very loud and is an excellent English speaker.

This is valid also for the Italians counterparts. They perceive the Romanians as good English speakers and hardworking, however not all of them are like this. Positive or negative, stereotypes create the false impression that all the elements of a category are the same, and often that is not the case.

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Idem.

[← 11]
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