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Chinese and Italian leadership styles: a cross-culture study

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Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and discipline ... Reliance on intelligence alone results in rebelliousness. Exercise of humaneness alone results in weakness. Fixation on trust results in folly. Dependence on the strength of courage results in violence. Excessive discipline and sternness in command result in cruelty. When one has all five virtues together, each appropriate to its function, then one can be a leader.

— Jia Lin, in commentary on Sun Tzu, Art of War.

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this dissertation thesis is to individuate, define, and demonstrate the similarities between the Chinese and Italian cultures. To reach this goal, the study focuses on the different styles of leadership existing in the two cultures, analyzing the specific situation of the small-medium enterprises in the secondary sector of the economy. These last factors have been examined because they represent a salient position in the labor market of both countries. A wide section is dedicated to the literature review. The research aims to identify and analyze the cardinal concepts and elements, such as culture, small and medium enterprises, and leadership, from an etymological to a historical point of view. In this initial part, a few theories are traced. To demonstrate these hypotheses, statistical surveys have been performed. The method used is defined and explained in the second part of the work. Multi-faced leadership questionnaires are administered as a means of objective assessment of the leadership style in China and Italy. The original questionnaire is written in English, but it has been translated into Italian and Chinese to help the interviewees to have a better understanding of it. The survey has been sent to various employees of SMEs working in the second sector in China and Italy. The questions are brief and straightforward, in order to collect information about the managing environment in the areas of interest and to have a clear understanding of the single point of view. The final part is dedicated to the analysis of the collected data and the conclusive interpretation.

前言

越来越多的意大利及欧洲公司对中国市场表现出兴趣，并将其核心业务转移到中国。这些公司有动力向抓住机会进入这个市场。为了使公司为急剧的变化做好准备，更好地了解中国文化并分析内部业务动态是至关重要的。因此，对于商业世界而言，在意大利和中国之间进行跨文化研究会很有用。

人类通常倾向于首先观察不同文化之间的差异，而很少关注连接世界不同国家的共同特征。以我的观点，寻找相似之处不仅可以帮助整合过程，而且可以使我们轻松地了解我们想要发现的文化。我清楚地记得我决定开始这项论文工作的原因，并且很乐意与他人分享：当我在中国居住时，我的第一印象是这个国家与我的出生和成长的意大利完全不同。几个月后，我意识到尽管外观可能有所不同，但各种核心的中国价值观却与意大利的原则相似。因此，我决定尝试证明这些相似之处不仅是个人印象，而且还有一个有效的基础。

为了证明这些类比，选取了特定一部分人，并描述了一个特定的主题。通过问卷调查法进行的调研。该问卷是针对在经济第二部门受雇于中小型企业（SME）的中国和意大利工人的。之所以考虑到这一特定人群，是因为在这两个国家，第二产业都提供了大量的就业机会。在中国，第二产业占GDP的40.5％，雇用劳动力的30％。另一方面，在意大利，第二产业占GDP的21.4％，雇用劳动力的26％。问卷以英语设计，并先后翻译成意大利文和中文，以使被访者更好地理解问题并激励他们以公正的方式回答。

论文工作的主要目标是：首先，分析两国的不同领导环境，并区分其主要特征；其次，发现，识别和证明两种文化之间存在相似之处，最后，描绘了一个领导力原型，该原型描绘了当前意大利和中国的商业环境。

这项工作包括两个主要部分：第一部分是文献综述，第二部分是研究过程和结果。更准确地说，论文分为四章。

在第一章中，定义了文化的概念以及历史上概述的各种定义。文化是社会科学的基础，从更广泛的角度来看，它被定义为"一个复杂的整体，包括知识、信念、艺术、道德、法律、习俗以及人类作为社会成员获得的任何其他能力和习惯。"（泰勒，1871年）。

继而，它描述了组织文化的含义，因为组织文化会影响人们的交流方式，知识的创建环境，不愿接受某些变更以及知识共享的方式，因此对于公司而言，这是至关重要的。此外，它概述了组织中成员的集体价值观、信念和价值观。最后，提供了跨文化研究的定义，即这项工作中进行的研究类型。

在第二章中，概述了中小企业的含义，并分别分析了意大利和中国的特殊情况。此外，它解释了欧盟和中国政府为中小企业分类提供的具体标准。

领导力是第三章研究的主要主题，它也是这项工作的重点之一。本章分为五个段落，具有重要意义，因为它主要提供了领导力的全面定义。为了对研究有清晰的了解，对领导力的含义没有任何疑问是至关重要的。继而，它非常重视描述其在过去几十年中领导理论的演变。为了更好地理解领导力发展，对领导理论在主要历史时代的特性也进行了分析。另一个重要的重点是领导风格，包括领导者提供指导的方式、计划实施并激励个人的方式。这对于更广泛地了解当前现有的领导者类型很有用。在本章的最后部分，目标更加明确的剖析和总结了中国和意大利的领导层格局的具体情况。中国领导层的特点是对下属采取家长式作风，这受到强大的儒家传统、共产主义意识形态和1978年经济改革的共同影响。

另一方面，意大利向世界提供了各种各样的领导人榜样，例如古罗马皇帝和坚忍的哲学家马库斯·奥雷留斯（Marcus Aurelius）将道德和责任感视为有抱负的领导人的基本方面。相反，文艺复兴时的尼科洛马基雅维里（Renaissant Niccolo Machiavelli）对马基雅维利的不道德的领导人进行了合理化，后者的唯一目的是要以一切方式统治一个国家。

第四章代表了这项工作的第二个主要部分的开始，并分为两个主要部分。第一部分致力于将调查定义为收集数据的工具，其历史以及在意大利和中国的使用。本章的第二部分涉及调查的具体特征，设计和管理调查的目的是为了收集对本论文的最终目标有用的数据。首先，收集并报告数据，其次，将数据组织在一个矩阵中，该矩阵是按行和列排列的数字表。通过使用IBM SPSS程序，将单位放在行上并将总变量放在列上，可以将数据系统化在矩阵中。继而，进行描述性分析，同时考虑了中心参数和标准偏差等主要参数。该分析旨在区分中国和意大利样本之间的类比。通过对描述变量之间联系性变化的可能关系，进行了相关分析。

为了将本研究的样本扩展到更广泛的领域，从特殊到一般，我进行了推论分析。进行了因子分析，并通过此统计分析获得了新变量，这些新变量表明变量之间的相似性。此外，为了评估这些行为如何在人群中分布，还采取了聚类分析。聚类分析可以通过突出意大利和中国中小型企业的典型领导模型来构建领导力的原型。这些集群的作用是证明意大利和中国第二产业中小型企业领导者的行为最终存在相似性或差异性。

后续的论文工作仍具有挑战性，但现阶段的研究成果是有效而令人满意的。

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of European and Italian companies are increasingly demonstrating their interest in China and moving their core businesses there. These companies are motivated to seize the opportunity to enter this market. In order for a company to be prepared for a drastic change, it is crucial to get to know Chinese culture better and to analyze the inner business dynamics. This is how it was reached the conclusion that it would have been useful for the business world to conduct a cross-culture study between Italy and China. The human being often tends to firstly observe the differences among cultures, and consequently pay less attention to the common characteristics that link different countries in the world. From my point of view, searching for similarities not only can help the integration process but also can lead to an effortless understanding of the culture we want to discover. I clearly remember the reason why I decided to commence this thesis work and it’s my pleasure to share it: when I was living in China, the first impression I had was that this country was completely different from where I was born and raised, Italy. After a few months, I realized that although the external appearance might look different, various core Chinese values were similar to the Italian principles. For this reason, I decided to attempt to demonstrate that those similarities were not just a personal impression, but there is a valid foundation. To prove these analogies, a limited sample of people was taken into account and a particular subject was delineate. the research was conducted via the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was administrated to Chinese and Italian workers who are employed in a small-medium size enterprise (SME) in the secondary sector of the economy. The reason why it has been taken into account this particular range of people is that in both countries the secondary sector provides a great number of employment opportunities. In China, the secondary sector accounts for 40.5% of GDP and employs 30% of the labor force. On the other hand, in Italy, it records 21.4% of GDP and provides employment for 26% of the active population. The questionnaire was designed in English and successively translated into Italian and Chinese, in order to offer a better understanding of the questions to the interviewees and incentivize them to answer in an unbiased way.

This dissertation work sets as main objectives: firstly, to analyze the diverse leadership environments in both countries, and to individuate the principal

characteristics, secondly, to discover, identify, and demonstrate the existence of similarities among the two cultures, and in conclusion, to delineate a leadership prototype, that characterizes the current Italian and Chinese business environment.
The work is composed of two major parts: the first part is dedicated to the literature review, and the second part includes the research process and the results. To be more precise, the dissertation thesis is subdivided into four chapters.
In the first chapter, it is defined the concept of culture and its various definitions that were outlined in history. Culture represents the foundation of social sciences and from a broader point of view, it is defined as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Tylor, 1871).
Successively, it is delineated the meaning of organizational culture that is fundamental in a company as it affects the way people communicate, the context in which the knowledge is created, the reluctance to accept certain changes, and the way this knowledge is shared. Furthermore, it outlines the collective values, beliefs, and values of members who are part of the organization. In the end, it is provided a definition of cross-culture study, that it is the type of research conducted in this work.
In the second chapter, it is outlined the meaning of Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and analyzed the particular situation respectively in Italy and China. Furthermore, it explains the specific criteria provided by the European Union and the government of China for classifying SMEs.
Leadership is the main subject studied in the third chapter, as well it represents one of the key points of this work. This chapter is subdivided into five paragraphs and has significant importance because primarily it offers a complete and comprehensive definition of leadership. In order to have a clear understanding of the study, it is fundamental not to have any doubts about the meaning of leadership. Successively, it is paid great attention to the leadership theories which describe its evolution in the past decades. The principal historical eras of leadership theories have been analyzed in order to have a wider comprehension of leadership development. Another important focus is dedicated to the leadership styles that consist of the way leaders provide direction, employ their plans, and motivates individuals. This is useful to have a broader knowledge about the currently existing types of leaders. In the last part of the chapter, the target is more definite and it concerns the specific case of the

leadership landscape in China and Italy. The Chinese leadership is characterized by a paternalistic approach towards its subordinates, which was influenced by a combination of the strong Confucian tradition, the communist ideology, and the 1978 economic reform.

On the other hand, Italy offered to the world diverse examples of leaders, such as the ancient Roman emperor and stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius who considered ethics and responsibility fundamental aspects for an aspiring leader. On the contrary, the Renaissant Niccolò Machiavelli theorized the Machiavellian-amoralist leader whose only aim was to rule a nation by all means.

The fourth chapter represents the beginning of the second major part of this work and is subdivided into two main parts. The first part is dedicated to defining the survey as a collecting data tool, its history, and its use in Italy and China. The second part of the chapter concerns the specific characteristics of the survey, which was designed and administrated in order to collect the data useful for the final aim of this dissertation thesis. Indeed, the data has been firstly reported, secondly, organized in a matrix which is a table of numbers arranged in rows and columns. The data has been systematized in the matrix by placing the units on the rows and the total variables on the columns, using the program IBM SPSS. Successively, it has been conducted a descriptive analysis, taking into consideration the main parameters such as the centrality indicators and the standard deviation. This analysis aimed at individuating the analogies between the Chinese and Italian samples. Consecutively, with the purpose of delineating a possible relation between the variables, correlation analysis has been performed.

In order to extend the sample of this study to a wider field, moving from the particular to the general, it was conducted an inferential analysis. A factor analysis was performed and through this statistical analysis has been obtained new factors that demonstrate similarities between the variables. Moreover, to evaluate how these behaviors were distributed among groups of people, it has been performed a cluster analysis. The cluster analysis allows building prototypes of leadership by highlighting the leadership model typical of the Italian and Chinese small-medium enterprises. The clusters have the function of demonstrating eventual similarities or discrepancies in leaders' behavior in Italian and Chinese SMEs in the secondary sector.

The successive thesis work has been challenging, however, it provided valid and satisfactory results.

1. CULTURE

1. 1. The concept of culture

Culture represents the keystone of the social sciences. Culture embraces various disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, communications, management. (Platten s., and Henfrey T., 2009, p. 491-500).

Because of its multidimensional characteristic, the definition of culture has been discussed over the centuries, bringing about numerous interpretations (Asad L., Kay T., 2015, p. 79–87).

The following chapter is divided into three main parts: the first one analyzes the historical definitions of the term culture; the second one describes the importance of culture in the organization; the third one outlines the key characteristics of the cross-cultural studies. These topics are described in order to be propaedeutic to the main subject of this dissertation work.

1. 2. Historical definition of culture

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word culture has its origins in the Latin verb colere, which's connected to agriculture and means "to cultivate" (Stevenson A., 2010).

The orator Cicero, in his Tusculanae Disputationes, was the first one to adopt this word with the sense of the development of the soul, cultura animi: "cultura animi philosophia est" (Tusculanes II, 13).

However, for centuries the word hasn't been used with the current meaning. It acquired modern use only in the 18th century, in France, meaning training of the mind.

Initially, the term culture was associated with civilization because both meant improvement, and reaching perfection (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1963, p.22).

Finally, in the second half of the 19th century, the term culture was established in the English language by the anthropologist Edward Tylor who defined it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor E. B., 1958, p. 40).

In the past centuries, culture has played an important role in various disciplines. Scholars became cognizant of its centrality, and as a result, numerous definitions were formulated. In order to outline the concept of culture, it is crucial to cite several of them (Horkoff T., 2015, chapter 9).

The writer Matthew Arnold delineated it as “the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit” (Arnold M., 1873, p.1).

The anthropologist Ruth Benedict, in her Patterns of Culture, wrote "A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action” (Ratner S., 1939, pp. 88-97).

One of the most remarkable definitions was formulated by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. In their book “Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions”, they collected 164 definitions of culture and proposed their own, offering an innovative and scientific meaning of culture. Here, it quoted in full as follows: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.“ (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181).

Another fundamental definition was determined by Geert Hofstede, in his book “Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values.” He drew “culture” as “The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.”(Hofstede G., 1991, p. 5)

1. 3. Organizational culture

The concept of culture is strongly related to the organizational culture, that is a specific field that has been growing and developing in the past years (Schein E. H. 1990, p. 109–119).

The organizational culture affects the way people communicate, the context in which the knowledge is created, the reluctance to accept certain changes, and the way this knowledge is shared. Organizational culture delineates the collective values, beliefs, and principles of members who are part of the organization. It also includes the

organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, location, beliefs, and habits (Hatch M. J. and Cunliffe A. L., 2013, p. 161).
The most representative in this area of expertise is Professor Edgar Schein, who is considered the leading researcher in the organizational culture field, who delineated it as “a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Martin J. and Siehl C., 1983, pp. 52-64).
However, the first to bring the concept of culture into the organizational context was Elliot Jaques in his 1951 book “The Changing Culture of a Factory” in which he carried out a study on the development of corporate group behaviors. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) consider organizational culture “as a set of shared assumptions that guide behaviors”. They believed that organizational culture influences the way people and groups communicate with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders. (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). Moreover, organizational culture could influence the level of the employees’ identification with an organization. Schein (1992), Deal and Kennedy (2000), and Kotter (1992) brought up a new idea, they proposed that companies often have subcultures inside their own structure. Although an organization may have its "own unique culture," in bigger firms the subculture is related more to a different management team than the company’s culture itself. Flamholtz and Randle (2011) proposed a different point of view, i.e. organizational culture has to be seen as "corporate personality." They describe it as consisting of the beliefs, values, and norms which affect the people's behavior as organizational members.

1. 4. Cross-cultural research

Cross-cultural studies, also defined as holocultural studies or comparative studies, is a specialization in anthropology that makes use of field data from different societies to analyze the scope of human behavior and examine theories about human behavior and culture (Annamoradnejad I., Fazli M., Habibi J. and Tavakoli S., 2019, p. 627–636).
The word cross-cultural is often employed as a general category. it refers to the process of comparing national, management systems, and local business uses in different countries (Brislin R. W., 1976, p.215–220). The main purpose is to highlight

what is specific and what is universal that is a fundamental prerogative for the preparation and implementation of management decisions in different national contexts. It differs from the intercultural approach, which focuses on studying the interaction between business people, organizations, buyers and sellers, employees, and managers, who experience a different national and cultural context. As Adler et al. explained: "Interaction, not simply confrontation, is the essence of most managerial actions" (Boyacigiller et al., 1996, p. 169). Cross-cultural studies are carried out in the social sciences, particularly in cultural anthropology and psychology (Ben-Zaken A., 2010, p. 163–167).

“Cross-cultural research refers to empirical studies carried out among members of various cultural groups who have had different experiences that lead to predictable and significant differences in behavior. In the vast majority of such studies, the groups under investigation speak different languages and are governed by different political units” (Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike, 1973, p. 5).

It should not be confused with comparative studies, which take into examination similar elements of a selected number of societies, and tries to identify similarities and differences in organizations and management across cultures; instead, cross-cultural studies execute an adequately substantial sample, in this way statistical analysis can be used to demonstrate relationships or lack of relationships between the peculiarities under consideration (Brislin R. W., 1976, p.221–229).

In order to carry out a cross-cultural study, it is fundamental to collect data from various countries. In the majority of cases, the best way to gather information is via questionnaires, which can be made online or offline, and aggregate the single results, which requires access of researchers to different people from the chosen countries. For example, Schwartz and Bardi, in their study concerning the value hierarchies of individuals in different cultures, gathered information from 63 nations employing a questionnaire that was translated into 39 languages (Schwartz and Bardi, 2003). In another investigation, Terracciano et al. studied the relationship between national character and average personality characteristics levels by gathering information from 49 cultures/subcultures (Terracciano, Ahmed M. A. K., Adam N. M. and Adamovová L., 2005, p. 96-100). Another case is the research in which Hofstede interviewed employees of IBM, as a multinational company, to aggregate initial data for his pre-eminent study on cultural dimensions. It collected more information on major cross-cultural studies, than original data from multiple countries. It's important to mention a crucial issue with the traditional methods of data collection in cross-cultural, i.e. the limited number of participants. For instance, past studies interviewed less than 300 people per nation in their study. As a result, the restricted number of participants raises doubts on the validity of final results (Hoppe, Michael H.; Hoppe, Michael H., 2004, p. 75–79). De facto, in some cases, participants choose not to answer every question in the survey, causing the removal of those modules because it doesn't adhere to the minimum requirement of the questionnaire. As an example of these issues, in the research about the national culture and values of organizational employees, 10,993 business organizational employees were asked to answer the questionnaire, however, only 9,920 modules had complied with the necessary requirements. Moreover, because of the limited number of respondents, the outcomes of 12 countries were eliminated from the investigation. In various cross-cultural studies, researchers translated surveys in order to interview a wider range of people. Various studies demonstrated the negative impacts of translation into the final result because the act of translating questionnaires into different languages consumes extra time and energy from researchers (Weinreb A. A. and Sana M., 2009, p. 429-454).

For instance, in research about sex differences in big five personality characteristics, a nation was eliminated from the study because of mistakes in translation. Another example about the time consumption of this process, Schwartz and Bardi translated their survey into 39 different languages, Terracciano et al. translated it into 27 languages, and in the research of patterns of the geographic distribution of big five personality characteristics, Schmitt et al. translated their survey into 29 various languages with specific explanations of some phrases or terms that could have been disorienting or ambiguous for readers (Terracciano, Ahmed M A. K., Adam N. M., Adamovová L., 2005).

In addition to these major problems, there are some undeclared issues to the traditional approaches of data collection. In fact, the tendency of people to self-enhancement lead participants to evaluate themselves more positively than others, this causes the risk to obtain biased results in self-reported data. In another case, the respondent can make mistakes in filling forms, can just fill them without reading carefully or in a random order, influencing the outcomes of the investigation without being noticed by researchers. Moreover, language tone, words, and sentences that are employed in surveys or during the interview can possibly affect the final outcomes (Althubaiti A., 2016).

2. SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

2. 1. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Italy

Small and medium-sized enterprises or SMEs are companies whose size falls within certain pre-established employment and financial limits. For this reason, and also for the objective difficulties of attracting capital, States and Regions usually implement policies to support SMEs (Gazzetta ufficiale 12 ottobre 2005, n. 238).

It is important to consider that small and medium-sized enterprises sometimes adopt a decisional approach different from larger ones, both for the diverse type of organization, in fact sometimes SMEs are still managed directly by the owner of the company, and for the limited availability of capital and consequently distinct management policies (Cubico S., Favretto G., Formicuzzi M. and Bellotto M., 2006, p. 9-18).

The abbreviation SME is widespread mainly in the European Union and international organizations, such as the World Bank, the United Nations, and the WTO. In other countries, the abbreviation SMB, "Small or Medium-sized Business" is used. (Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry (European Commission), 2014, p.8).

Each EU member state has traditionally used its own definition of SMEs. For example, in Italy, the limit was 250 employees which rose to 500 in Germany and dropped to 100 in Belgium. Today, however, the European Union has standardized the concept of SMEs. With the Recommendation 96/280/EC of 3 April 1996, the European Commission wanted to underline the need to define SMEs in a precise and unitary way. The discrepancy in the criteria used to define SMEs and, consequently, the various definitions used at the national level could have become a source of inconsistency. The program aimed to increase coordination between Union initiatives in favor of SMEs at a national level. In a single market without internal borders, businesses must be subject to policies based on common rules, considering the strong interaction between national and Union support measures in favor of these categories of businesses, it is essential to prevent the Union from developing projects aimed at supporting a certain category of SMEs.

The use of the same definition by the Commission, Member States, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Investment Fund (EIF) has made it possible to increase the consistency and effectiveness of policies targeting SMEs and has limited the consequent risk of distortion of competition. Thus the Commission recommended the adoption of four criteria for the identification of this category of enterprises: number of employees, turnover, balance sheet total, and independence, as well as the thresholds of 50 and 250 employees, respectively for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Afterward, with the Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003, the Commission updated the rules based on which an enterprise can be defined as an SME, coming into effect starting by 1st January 2005. As in the previous one (96/280/EC), which was no longer adequate for the correct determination of the size class of the companies receiving public aid, one of the most significant criteria that were taken into consideration, was the number of occupants; however, to better understand the company, from a viewpoint of results and positioning with respect to competitors, the financial criterion plays an equally important role. This criterion provides for the analysis of both the turnover and the balance sheet total, which reflects the general wealth of the company; the need to consider both values arises from the differences in turnover that exist between the various sectors.

In addition to modifying the financial parameters for identifying an SME, the new recommendation also wanted to better define micro-enterprises, which play a fundamental role in entrepreneurial development and job creation, adding to the limits on the number of employees, also those on the turnover or the total assets of the balance sheet. It can be seen that the variations that have been made are far from negligible; in fact, they allow a large number of companies to become part of this category, which is the object of concessions and attention coming, as already pointed out, by both European Union and nations.

The main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are staff headcount, and either turnover or balance sheet total. Here as it follows it explains how annex 1/2 of the recommendation provides for SMEs to be divided: it is defined as a medium enterprise when the number of employees is less than 250 when the annual turnover does not exceed 50 million euros or the total assets of the balance sheet do not exceed 43 million euros. Instead, it is considered a small business, when the number of employees is less than 50 when the annual turnover or the total assets of the annual balance sheet do not exceed 10 million euros.

It is called a micro-enterprise when the number of employees is less than 10 when the annual turnover or the total assets of the annual balance sheet do not exceed 2 million euros.

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m	≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m	≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m	≤ € 2 m

Table 1: European SMEs' standards.

These criteria apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm that is part of a larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group too.
Another important change made to the document by the Commission concerns the notion of independence. While in the previous one (96/280/EC) independent companies were considered "those whose capital or voting rights are not held for 25% or more by a single company, or jointly, by several companies that do not comply with the definitions of SME or small enterprise, as appropriate"; the new definition provides that "the associated enterprises" are not considered "autonomous" for the purpose of determining the size parameters. As regards the latter, it is understood that the one whose 25% of the capital or voting rights is held by one or more associated companies; a threshold that can be reached or exceeded if the categories of investors specified in annex 1/3 of recommendation 1442 are present, which in particular concern the public and institutional sector. However, the exception applies only if the same investors are not individually or jointly connected to the company, and if they do not intervene directly or indirectly in the management of the company (Official Journal of the European Union, 2003, p. 4-24).
According to the European Commission, Small and medium-sized enterprises represent 99% of all businesses in the EU. In Italy, SMEs account for 80% of employment and, at least between 2002 and 2010 (agi.it., 2017), in the EU they played the most important role in employment growth in Europe. The definition of an

SME is important for access to finance and EU support programs targeted specifically at these enterprises. It is important to mention that the relationship between SMEs and large companies or multinationals varies from country to country and characterizes the economic-productive system of each country: in fact, Italy is known for being a country with a strong spread of SMEs compared to large companies with implications for its economic structure. This factor is often considered an intrinsic weakness because it lowers economic stability, compared to other countries with a greater presence of large companies and industries that regulate competitiveness at the international level. Small and medium-sized companies often suffer from competition from large companies and multinationals, also needing to use credit from banks to promote their investments for research and development or other financial projects. however, it is often considered riskier by credit institutions and therefore granted by them less favorably and frequently (ec.europa.eu, 2015).

2. 2. Small and medium-sized enterprises in China

Small and medium-sized enterprises in China account for about 99.5% of the total number of enterprises, 58% of China's GDP, 74.4% of industrial added value, 58.9% of social sales, 46.2% of tax revenue, and provide about 75% of urban employment opportunities. About 60% of China's total exports come from small and medium-sized enterprises (Liu X., 2008, pp.37-68). However, this phenomenon is recent. In fact, the rapid development of the small and medium-sized enterprises is the result of the opening of China, and the market-oriented reforms launched by the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979 (Li D., 2005, p. 33-35). Only after this event, private SMEs were accredited as fundamental to the country's economic development, positioning themselves as a crucial force in the economic development of the entire China. It's vital to mention a few of the main characteristics of SMEs (Liang G., 2007). In accordance with the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" and the "Several Opinions of the State Council on Further Promoting the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" (Guo F., 2009, No. 36), small and medium-sized enterprises are divided into three types: medium-sized, small-sized, and micro-sized. The specific standards are formulated according to the indicators of enterprise employees, operating income, total assets, combined with industry characteristics. The industries to which this regulation applies include agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery, industry, construction, wholesale, retail, transportation Industry (excluding railway transportation), storage industry, postal industry, accommodation industry, catering industry, information transmission industry, software, and information technology service industry, real estate development and operation, property management, leasing, and business services (Zhang H., 2009, Chapter One.)

2. 2. 1. Classification standard for SMEs in China

The government of China set the guidelines for classifying SMEs' standards of various industries. In agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery, the small, medium, and micro enterprises have an operating income below 200 million yuan. Those with operating income equal or higher than 5 million yuan are medium-sized enterprises, those with operating income of 500,000 yuan or above are classified as small enterprises, and those with operating income inferior to 500,000 yuan are considered micro-enterprises (National Regulations Database, 2019).

In the Industrial field, the businesses counting more than 1,000 employees or less than 4 million yuan in operating income are part of the small, medium, and micro-enterprises. When there are 300 employees or more, and the operating income is equal to or higher than 20 million yuan they are considered medium-sized enterprises; when there are 20 employees or more, and the operating income is 3 million yuan or more, they are recognized as small enterprises; when the company has 20 employees or less, and the operating income is below 3 million yuan, they are micro-enterprises. (China Banking Regulatory Commission, 2006)

In the Construction industry, the businesses are classified as small, medium, and micro enterprises when their operating income is below 80 million yuan or their total assets are inferior to 80 million yuan. The businesses whose income is equal to or higher than 60 million yuan, and total assets is equal or higher than 50 million yuan are medium-sized enterprises; businesses with an income of 3 million yuan or higher, and total assets of 3 million yuan and above are small enterprises; operating income of 3 million yuan or less Or micro-enterprises with total assets of less than 3 million yuan (Chen J., 2006, Vol.13).

In the Wholesale industry, businesses with less than 200 employees or less than 4 million yuan in operating income are classified as small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those with 20 or more employees and operating income of 50 million yuan or more are medium-sized enterprises; those with 5 or more employees and operating income of 10 million yuan or more are small enterprises, and those with 5 or more employees or operating income below 10 million yuan are micro-enterprises (Fu Z., 2001).

In the Retail industry, businesses with less than 300 employees or less than 200 million yuan in operating income are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those with 50 employees or more, and operating income of 5 million yuan or more are classified as medium-sized enterprises; those with 10 employees or more, and operating income of 1 million yuan or more are recognized as small enterprises; the ones with less than 10 employees or operating income under 1 million yuan are considered micro-enterprises.

In the Transportation industry, businesses with less than 1,000 employees or less than 300 million yuan in operating income are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those having 300 employees or more, and operating income of 30 million yuan or more are classified as medium-sized enterprises; those ones with 20 employees or more, and operating revenue of 2 million yuan or more are small enterprises; those with less than 20 employees or operating income under 2 million yuan are considered micro-enterprises.

In the Warehousing industry, businesses with less than 200 employees or less than 300 million yuan in operating income are classified as small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those with 100 or more employees and operating income of 10 million yuan or more are considered medium-sized enterprises; those with 20 or more employees and operating income of 1 million yuan or more are recognized as small enterprises, and those with less than 20 employees or operating income below 1 million yuan are defined as micro-enterprises.

In the postal industry, businesses with less than 1,000 employees or less than 300 million yuan in operating income are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, businesses having 300 employees or more, and operating income equal to or above 20 million yuan are classified as medium-sized enterprises; those with 20 employees or more, and operating income of 1 million yuan or more are defined as small enterprises, and those with less than 20 employees or operating income under 1 million yuan are recognized as micro-enterprises.

In the accommodation industry, and in the Catering industry, businesses with less than 300 employees or less than 100 million yuan in operating income are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, 100 employees or more, and operating income of 20 million yuan or more are medium-sized enterprises; 10 employees or more, and operating income of 1 million yuan or more are small enterprises; employees with less than 10 employees or operating income under 1 million yuan are micro-enterprises.

In the Information transmission industry, small, medium, and micro enterprises are considered enterprises with less than 2,000 employees or less than 1 billion yuan in operating income. Among them, those with 100 or more employees and operating income equal to or higher than 10 million yuan are classified as medium-sized enterprises; those with 10 or more employees and operating income of 1 million yuan or more are defined as small enterprises, and those with less than 10 employees or operating income under 1 million yuan are micro-enterprises.

In the Software and information technology service industry, businesses with less than 300 employees or less than 100 million yuan in operating income are classified as small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those with 100 or more employees and operating income equal to or higher than 10 million yuan are considered medium-sized enterprises; those with 10 or more employees and operating income equal to or higher than 500,000 yuan are defined as small enterprises; and those with less than 10 employees or operating income under 500,000 yuan are micro-enterprises.

In Real estate development and operation, the business with operating income below 20 million yuan or total assets below 100 million yuan are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, businesses with an income of 10 million yuan or above, and total assets of 50 million yuan or above are defined as medium-sized enterprises; the business with an income of 1 million yuan or more, and total assets of 20 million yuan or above are classified as small enterprises; those with an operating income of 1 million yuan or less, and total assets lower than 20 million yuan are considered micro-enterprises.

In the Property management field, enterprises with less than 1,000 employees or less than 50 million yuan in operating income are defined as small, medium, and micro-enterprises. If there are 300 employees or more in the company, and the operating income is equal to or higher than 10 million yuan those businesses are considered medium-sized enterprises; if there are 100 employees or more, and the operating income is 5 million yuan or more, they are defined as small enterprises; companies with less than 100 employees or operating income below 5 million yuan are called micro-enterprises.

In the Leasing and business service industry, businesses with less than 300 employees or total assets lower than 1.2 billion yuan are considered small, medium, and micro-enterprises. Among them, those with 100 employees or more and total assets of 80 million yuan or more are classified as medium-sized enterprises; those with 10 or more employees and total assets of 1 million yuan or more are called small enterprises, and those with less than 10 employees or total assets inferior to 1 million yuan are defined as micro-enterprises.

In other unspecified industries, small, medium, and micro-enterprises are those with less than 300 employees. Among them, those with 100 or more employees are defined as medium-sized enterprises; those with 10 or more employees are classified as small enterprises, and those with less than 10 employees are considered micro-enterprises (www.gov.cn, 2009).

Size Category	Industries	Employment-based	Total assets	Business revenue
Small	Industry	< 300	<¥ 40million	< ¥ 30million
	Construction	< 600	<¥ 40million	<¥ 30million
	Wholesale	<100		<¥ 30million
	Retail	<100		<¥ 10million
	Transport	<500		<¥ 30million
	Post	<400		<¥ 30million
	Hotel & restaurant	<400		<¥ 30million
Medium	Industry	300- 2000	¥ 40million-400million	¥ 30million-300million
	Construction	600-3000	¥ 40million-400million	¥ 30million-300million
	Wholesale	100-200		¥ 30million-300million
	Retail	100-500		¥ 10million-150million
	Transport	500-3000		¥ 30million-300million
	Post	400-1000		¥ 30million-300million
	Hotel & restaurant	400-800		¥ 30million-150million

Note: SME meet one or more of the conditions. ME should meet three conditions, the others are SE.

Source: SME promotion law of China,2003.

Figure 1: classification of SMEs in China, source: www.gov.cn.

The classification of enterprise types is based on the statistical data of the statistical department, and these regulations apply to enterprises of various ownership and various organizational forms established in accordance with the law within the territory of the People's Republic of China. Single industrial and commercial households and other industries shall be classified with reference to these regulations (Woetzel J., Seong J., Leung N., Ngai J., Manyika James, Madgavkar A., Lund S. and Mironenko A., 2019). The upper limit of the standard for medium-sized enterprises in this regulation is the lower limit of the standard for large-scale enterprises, and the national statistics department shall formulate the statistical classification of, respectively, large, medium, small, and micro-enterprises. The relevant departments of the State Council shall analyze relevant data based on this, and shall not formulate enterprise classification standards that are inconsistent with these regulations.

They do not receive external fundraising, i.e. they don't publicly issue stocks and bonds; HRM is closely related to the steady development of business internationalization. One important challenge Chinese SMEs face is the development of international HRM congruent with international business strategies required to compete in a global environment. However, there are some problems in HRM of Chinese SME's, which have become barriers to Chinese SMEs' internationalization (Cardoza G. and Fornes G., 2018, p. 1-20).

3. LEADERSHIP

3. 1. Definitions of leadership

Leadership includes both a research sector, and a pragmatic competence enclosing the faculty of an individual, group, or organization to "lead", affect or guide other individuals, teams, or whole organizations (Western S., 2019). Leadership is one of the most composite and variegated phenomena to which organizational and psychological research has been devoted (Chin R., 2015, p. 199–216). The term "leader" was recorded in the 1300s and conceptualized even before biblical eras. Instead, the term leadership has been noted only since the late 1700s and it often has been discussed by literature specialists because of the diverse viewpoints, especially those concerning the different approaches to leadership in Eastern and Western, and also more specifically the differences between North American versus European approaches (Stogdill R. M., 1948, p. 35–71). The scientific research started only in the twentieth century (Bass B. M., Avolio B. J. and Atwater L. E., 1996, p. 5–34).

Afterwards, various definitions of leadership were established within the literature. Some authors endeavor to provide a concise and clear definition and understanding of leadership. Burns (1978) observed that, "Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns J. M., 1978, p. 1-2). Stogdill (1974) asserted that, "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as those who have attempted to define the concept" (Stogdill R. M., 1974, p.7). DuBrin (2000) determined 35,000 definitions of leadership in the scholarly literature (DuBrin A. J., 2000). The most universally recognized definition of leadership describes it as "a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers M., 2014) This definition provides three crucial points, i.e. leadership is an activity performed by a group of people, it is based on social influence, and it rotates around a common task (Goethals G. R. and Sorenson G., 2004, p.247).

Barnard pinpointed that the term 'lead' is both a noun and a verb, and consequently has a double meaning (Barnard, 1991, p.81). The noun could signify to be a guide to the others, to be the head of an organization, while the verb could signify to excel and to be in advance. The word leader is employed to refer to a person, or a group of people, who exert an influence on others (Northouse, 2004)(Yukl, G.A., 2002).

Northern American scholars define leadership as "a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task." (Chemers M., 1997). The traditional managerial view of leadership believes that it is something possessed or owned by one individual due to their role or authority, instead, other scholars advocate the complex nature of leadership which is found at all levels of the institution, both within formal and informal roles (Goleman D., Boyatzis R.E. and McKee A., 2003).

According to Davis' point of view (2003), "the word leadership implies movement, taking the organization or some part of it in a new direction, solving problems, being creative, initiating new programs, building organizational structures, and improving quality" (Davis, J., 2003). Other scholars, however, struggle with the entanglement of leadership. Bass and Stogdill (1990) account for over 3000 empirical investigations of leadership, which provide diverse conceptions of what leadership means. In light of the shortage of precision regarding leadership definitions, Birnbaum (1992) provided: "Any comprehensive consideration of academic leadership must be able to accommodate both the strong leader and the weak leader views because evidence suggests that while both may be incomplete, both are in some measure correct" (Birnbaum R., 1992). New visions of leadership were introduced by professor Joseph Rost (1991) who advocated that traditional leadership scholars and also the theories they advanced were involved with the peripheries of leadership, like traits, personality characteristics, and whether leaders are born or made. Rost proceeded by clarifying that leadership scholars have an interest in the elements of leadership and what leaders must know to be influential in a company. (Rost J. C., 1991,). Analyzing it from a psychosocial point of view, leadership is generated in our minds, at an individual and collective level, transformed into social functions and orientations, and interiorized into identities. Leadership is a continuous change of psychosocial dynamics, performed on the stage of life: "leadership begins with an idea in our minds, and even when it becomes a social role, a reality so to speak, it remains essentially an idea that we are constantly and dynamically reworking, embodying, acting out, and performing. Leadership is an idea that we are constantly at work with, and play with." (Western S., 2019, p.26). Leadership is often considered as an idolized form of human effort, in a way that reminds of heroic beauty. The common idea of leaders is often related to words such as strategic, future, change, passion, charisma, courage, integrity, authenticity, and vision. Alvesson and Svenginsson describe their opinion about leadership literature: "Contemporary writings usually frame leadership in terms of the visionary and heroic aspects, it is the leader's abilities to address, by talking and persuading, the many through the use of charisma, symbols, and other strong emotional devices, the ambition being to arouse and encourage people to embark upon organizational projects." (Western S., 2019, p.27).

Hirschhorn says: "a leader's major role is to give us a dream (Hirschhorn, 1999, p. 146). Without the dream there is no basis for us to mobilize the extra effort, attention, and skill we need to achieve a goal fraught with risks, many of us, perhaps most of us, would rather sit on the sidelines, do our daily work, and hope that we can participate in the gains that others have sweated for. The dream, by contrast, excites us all." (Yiannis G., 1999, p. 146).

3. 2. Leadership theories

In the past century, various researchers attempted to categorize theories about leadership. Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) carried out a complete analysis of the theories and models of leadership within higher education. These researchers classified the theories into six categories: trait theories, power and influence theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories. Another attempt to categorize leadership theories was made by Albert S. King who formulated an evolutionary tree of leadership theory in which he classified nine evolutionary eras of leadership: the Personality Era, the Influence Era, the Behavior Era, the Situation Era, the Contingency Era, the Transactional Era, the Anti-leadership Era, the Culture Era, and the Transformational Era (Bensimon, Neumann and Birnbaum, 1989 , p.37).

3. 2. 1. Personality Era

In the Personality Era, definitions and interpretations are integrated around the nineteenth-century notion of the 'great men' and their impact on society, the first formal leadership theories are illustrated, and it represents an initial understanding of the leadership practice (Heifetz, 1994). This period is subdivided into the Great Man Period and the Trait Period.

In the Great Man Period, scholars concentrate on the role of the great men in the history of the world and invite people to imitate those personalities and behaviors in order to become powerful leaders (Borgatta E. F., Bales R. F. and Couch A. S., 1954, p. 755–759)(Galton F., 1869). The decisive study in this period was carried on by Bowden (1926), who associated leadership with personality. Various powerful leaders, such as Napoleon, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, had broadly diverse personalities. Moreover, personalities are extraordinarily arduous to resemble, consequently bringing limited value to performing managers (Bowden A. O., 1926, p. 149–160).

Since ancient Greek times, the search for the attributes or traits of leaders has developed for centuries. Philosophical works from Plato's Republic to Plutarch's Lives have analyzed the characteristics that identify a leader (Jowett B., 1892). These studies represent an early recognition of the importance of leadership and the idea that leadership is embedded in the qualities that some individuals own (Evans J., 2012). This belief that leadership is found in individual characteristics is known as the "trait theory of leadership". Trait theory describes leadership by the inner characteristics with which a person was born (Stogdill, 1948). Various attempts were made to demonstrate that developing certain general traits, and adopting them, would enhance leadership potential and performance. However, inconsistencies emerged again when empirical studies revealed no single trait of a group of characteristics associated with good leadership (Jenkins W. O., 1947, p. 54–79). Finally, the results showed that most traits cannot be learned. As a result, theories of the personality age proved to be too simplistic and practically died out. Traits, nonetheless, were added to posterior theories as explanatory variables (e.g. Fiedler, 1964, 1967; House, 1971) but the focal point of these successive theories was not on leader characteristics (Fiedler and Fred E., 1967)(House R. J., 1971, p. 321–339). A few studies in the 19th century accurately examined trait theory: it's important to mention especially the works of Thomas Carlyle and of Francis Galton, whose writings have motivated decades of research. In On Heroes and Hero Worship (1841), Carlyle identified the talents, skills, and physical qualities of men who rose to power (Carlyle T., 1841). Galton's Hereditary Genius (1869) analyzed leadership characteristics in the families of powerful individuals. After demonstrating that the numbers of eminent relatives diminished when his focus moved from first-degree to second-degree relatives, Galton deduced that leadership was inherited. In other words, leaders were born, not developed (Galton F., 1869). Both of these remarkable works provided great initial support for the belief that leadership is embedded in the traits of a leader. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, numerous qualitative analyzes of prior studies (e.g., Bird, 1940; Stogdill, 1948; Mann, 1959) led researchers to take a totally different view of the driving forces behind leadership (Bird, C., 1940)(Mann, R. D., 1959, p. 241–270). In analyzing the existing literature, Stogdill and Mann discovered that while some characteristics were frequent across a number of studies, the general evidence showed that individuals who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in another context. Consequently, leadership was no longer characterized as an abiding individual quality, as situational approaches supposed that people can be effective in certain situations, but not others. In this way, the core of the question then changed from traits of leaders to research of the leader behaviors that were effective. This idea prevailed among the leadership theories and researches for the next few decades. New approaches and measurements were theorized after this period that would conclusively reestablish trait theory as a feasible method to leadership research (Day D. V., 2012, p. 696-729). Moreover, during the 1980s statistical advances allowed researchers to carry on meta-analyzes, in which they could quantitatively examine and outline the data from an ample series of studies. Trait theorists managed to develop a comprehensive framework of previous leadership research rather than count on the qualitative analysis of the past. By the means of new approaches, leadership researchers found out that individuals can and do arise as leaders in various situations and tasks (Kenny D. A. and Zaccaro S. J., 1983, p. 678–685). They also asserted that crucial relationships exist between leadership development and some individual traits such as intelligence, adjustment, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, general self-efficacy. The trait theory of leadership has definitely reacquired popularity, its reemergence has not been followed by a corresponding growth in refined conceptual schemes. In particular, Zaccaro (2007) individuated that trait theories still had some flaws. He claimed that those theories gave relevance to a limited number of individual characteristics such as "The Big Five" personality traits, ignoring cognitive abilities, purposes, values, competence, social and problem-solving skills. In addition, they didn't take into consideration patterns or combinations of various characteristics

(Zaccaro, S. J., 2007, p. 6–16). Moreover, he asserted that the trait theorists failed to differentiate between the leader's qualities that are mainly not pliable over time and those that are adapted and delineated to the situation. They also didn't take into account how fixed leader qualities explain the behavioral variety decisive for powerful leadership.

3. 2. 2. Influence Era

In the Influence Era, theorists claimed that leadership is a relationship between individuals and not a unique quality of the leader. It included characteristics of power and influence and is subdivided into the Power Relations Period and the Persuasion Period (Dannhauser Z., 2007, p. 59-99). Initially, during the Power Relations Period, researchers attempted to describe a leader's effectiveness in terms of the quantity of power they ordered and how it was employed. Power influence is definitely frequent in recent leaders (Pfeffer, 1981); on the contrary, dictatorial, authoritarian, and controlling leadership is not contemplated anymore as an effective method (French J. R. P., 1956, p. 63, 181-94). Undoubtedly, the unidirectional application of top-down authority is considered inappropriate to the wishes and needs of the subordinates. In the Persuasion Period, intimidation was excluded from the leader-member dyad, however, the leader was still recognized as the dominant element (Schenk C., 1928, p. 33, 111-122). The dominant leader approach is still widely employed in contemporary management, although an increasing realization of its drawbacks, like the limited influence of lower participants (Mechanic A., 1962, p. 349-364).
The Behavior Era changed completely the focus by emphasizing the actions taken by leaders instead of concentrating on their traits or source of power. Behavior theorists described Leadership as a subgroup of human actions (Hunt J. G. and Larson, 1977). It represented a great improvement in leadership research not only because it provided valid empirical support (Fleishman E. A. and Harris E. F., 1962, p. 15, 43-56), but also because it could efficiently be applied by practicing managers to develop their leadership performance. (Yukl G. A., 1971, p. 414-440).

3. 2. 3. Behavior Era

The Behavior Period is subdivided into the Early Behavior Period and the Late Behavior Period. In the Early Behavior Period, many concepts of the Trait Period were still considered valid, such as the personality traits, however, the focus was starting to be switched on developing behavior traits. Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lipitt, and Ralph White in 1939 started crucial research on the influence of leadership styles and performance. The researchers analyzed the performance of groups of eleven-year-old boys under various kinds of work environments. In every single type, the leader exerted his power concerning the kind of group decision-making, praise and criticism, and the management of the group assignment (Lewin K., Lippitt R. and White R., 1939, p. 271–301). Behavioral leadership theories pay attention to the actions of powerful leadership, instead of how they appear to others. The Ohio State leadership researchers (Stogdill R. M., and Coons A. E., 1957) and the Michigan Studies (Likert R., 1961) used this approach in investigating leadership. In 1945, Ohio State University carried out a study that researched observable actions employed by powerful leaders. They analyzed if these specific practices were a sign of leadership effectiveness. They concentrated on recognizing leader conducts using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The questionnaire data brought to a two-dimensional framework that was based on a leader's concern for subordinates and the leader's standard on performance objectives. Their studies were remarkable because they recognized two crucial leaders' behavior traits (Ohio State University, 2017). The first category was analyzed as "Initiating Structure", which explained how a leader stresses the accomplishment of tasks, how openly and precisely communicates with the subordinates, sets up goals, and defines how tasks are performed. These are considered "task-oriented" behaviors. The second category is "Consideration", which indicates the leader's interest in individual and group cohesion, his capability to establish a mutual relationship with his followers, his ability to create a form of reciprocal trust. These are considered "social oriented" behaviors (Aamodt M. G., 2015)(Griffin R. W., Skivington K. D. and Moorhead G., 1987). Similarly, In the 1950s, Michigan State Studies conducted further research and compared behaviors and leadership effectiveness. The Michigan researchers analyzed two aspects of influence; production-centered leaders accentuated employee tasks and ways of achieving them, while employee-centered leaders concentrated on employee exigency and mutual relationships. Their aim was to recognize the behaviors of leaders in order to learn these behaviors and teach them to others. Although they had similar results as the Ohio State researchers, they also individuated in leaders a supplementary behavior, i.e. the participative behavior, which consists of allowing the subordinates to participate in group decision making and motivating subordinates' contribution. This category rejects controlling types of leadership and permits more interpersonal communications between leaders and their subordinates (Stoker G., 2015). Behaviorists focused on dycothomic concepts like authoritarian versus democratic and task/structure versus relationship actions. According to behaviorist standards, a powerful leader should keep a balance between aspects employing certain behaviors over others as the situation demands. In The Late Behavior Period, the new concepts formulated during the Early Behavior Period were adapted to the managerial application. The most acknowledged approach is the Managerial Grid Model. This model was formulated by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton in 1964 and proposes five diverse leadership styles, focused on the leaders' regard for individuals and their interest in reaching objectives. (Blake R. and Mouton J., 1964). It employs a 9 x 9 grid with consideration behavior set along one axis and initiating structure behavior marked along with the other. This framework advocates that the most powerful leader will be rated 9 on both factors (Blake R. and Mouton J. S., 1982).

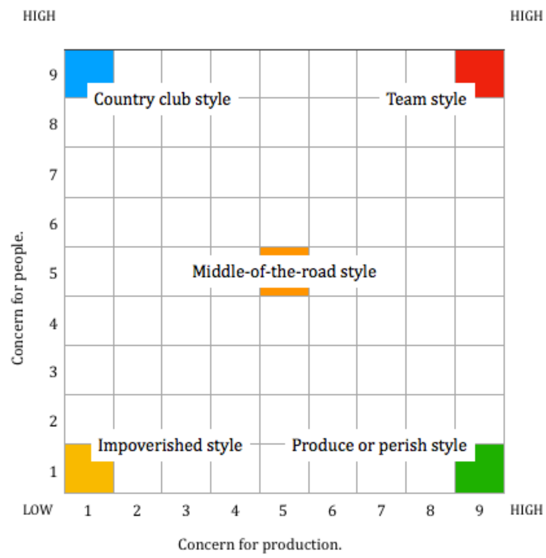

Figure 2: 9 x 9 grid of Blake R. and Mouton J., source: personal elaboration.

Theories X and Y are also noteworthy. Theory X asserts that individuals are passive, therefore they need to be guided and extrinsically motivated to perform organizational tasks, while Theory Y affirms that individuals are intrinsically motivated, so they only need appropriate working conditions (Lawter L., Kopelman R.

E. and Prottas D. J., 2015, pp. 84-101). In the final period of the Behavior Era, theorists reached the conclusion that leaders are not the direct cause of subordinate behavior, but they definitely create the conditions and stimulus to influence subordinates' behavior. The Operant Period is characterized by the role of the leader as the manager of reinforcements, the proper leader conduct represents the reinforcement of the aimed subordinate behaviors (Ashour A. S. and Johns G., 1977, p. 603-626,).

Diverse theories were analyzed and researched, however, there is not numerous empirical evidence in support of them. (Schriesheim C. and Kerr S., 1974, p. 756–765). B. F. Skinner is the pioneer of behavior modification and established the concept of positive reinforcement, i.e. a positive incentive that actuated in response to a behavior increases the tendency of that behavior in the future (Miltenberger R. G., 2004). For instance, considering praise as a positive reinforcer for a specific employee that does not arrive at work on time every day, thus his manager chooses to praise the employee for arriving on time every day the employee gets to work on time. Therefore, the employee shows up to work on-time more often because the employee enjoys being praised. In this example, praise represents the stimulus and it is a positive reinforcer for this employee because the employee shows up to work on time more frequently after being praised, instead, arriving at work on time represents the repeated behavior. This concept permits a behavior to be imitated and recurring in a positive manner (McLeod S., 2018). The employment of positive reinforcement is an effective technique enforced by leaders to encourage and promote determinate behaviors from subordinates. Empirical studies in the last 20 years found out that reinforcement theory has a 17 percent increase in performance. Moreover, numerous reinforcement methods like praising, are inexpensive and offer higher performance for lower expenses.

3. 2. 4. Situation Era

The Situation Era is subdivided into three periods: the Environment Period, the Social Status Period, and Sociotechnical Period. Initially, the situational theory appeared in response to the leadership trait theories. It brought notable progress in advancing leadership theory by recognizing the importance of elements such as the nature of tasks, the social status of the leader and his followers, the position power of the leader, and the type of the outside surroundings beyond the leader and the subordinate. These situational characteristics establish the types of leader aspects, qualities, power, and conduct that bring to effective leadership. Herbert Spencer (1884) asserted that the situation makes the person and not the opposite (Heifetz, R., 1994)(Spencer H., 1841). This concept means that diverse conditions ask for diverse responses; In the Environment Period, leaders were supposed to be in the right place at the right time under the right circumstance; their actions were insignificant. According to this theory, the single individual in the leadership position was unimportant, because they were considered interchangeable with anybody else who would easily replace them (Hook S., 1943). The Social Status Period was found on the concept that group members, as pursuing an objective, augment the expectation that every single person will continue to perform in a way consistent with their previous conduct. Hence, the leader's and the follower's role is characterized by interpersonal accepted expectations of the behavior, and communications are allowed to contribute to the group (Stogdill R. M., 1959). In summary, the Environment Period concentrated on the task whereas the Social Status Period emphasized the social aspect in a specific environment. Another category that is basically a combination of the environmental and social parameters, it is defined as the Sociotechnical Period (Trist E. L. and Bamforth K. W., 1951, p. 3-38). The progress made by the latter two periods is the recognition of group influence. A few researchers began to integrate the trait and situational theories. Starting with the studies of Lewin et al., scholars started to standardize the descriptive models of leadership environments, delineating three leadership styles and recognizing which style works is more suitable for each situation. As an example, the authoritarian leadership style is accepted in periods of difficulties, however, it doesn't work in everyday management; on the other hand, the democratic leadership style is more suitable for situations in which it’s important to create consensus; in the end, the laissez-faire leadership style is well-received for the level of freedom it offers, however, it could lead to organizational problems because the leaders have lower decision-making power (Van Wormer K. S., Besthorn F. H., and Keefe T., 2007).

3. 2. 5. Contingency Era

Hence, researchers described the style of leadership as dependent on the situation. This is categorized as contingency theory. The Contingency Era is considered a great step forward in the development of leadership theory. This theory opened the possibility that leadership could change depending on a single situation (Horner R., Day M and Day J. R., 1997, P. 601-614). It was acknowledged for the first time that leadership was not established in any of the unilateral methods formerly analyzed, instead, it was a combination of all of the factors together. In short, successful leadership was contingent or dependent on diverse factors, such as behavior, personality, influence, and situation. Contingency researchers asserted that leaders adapted their leadership style in response to the imminent events (Fiedler, 1967). Cognitive theories of leadership create a connection between leaders and institutional outcomes (Birnbaum, 1992). Theorists declared that the way leaders create meaning for themselves influences the way they will create a sense for the organization (Amey, 1992)(Fairhurst G. T. and Sarr R. A., 1996). In recent years, three noteworthy contingency leadership theories have been widely accepted: the Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967), the Path-Goal Theory (Evans J.L., 1970, p. 561-571)(House, 1971) (House R. J. and Mitchell T. R., 1974, p. 81-98), and the Normative Theory (Vroom V. H. and Yetton P. W., 1973)(Vroom V. H. and Jago A. G., 1988). Fred Fiedler founded his contingency model on the leader's efficacy that he named situational contingency. This was the outcome of the cooperation between leadership style and situational favorability. The model delineated two types of leaders: the relationship-oriented leaders, those who achieve the objective by creating good connections within the group, and the task-oriented leaders, those who are solely focused on accomplishing the assignment itself (Fiedler, 1967). From Fiedler's point of view, the optimal leader does not exist. Both task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders can be efficient if their leadership orientation suits the situation. When the leader-member relationship is positive, the situation is acknowledged as a "favorable situation". According to Fiedler's findings, task-oriented leaders operate at their best in extremely favorable or unfavorable situations, while relationship-oriented leaders achieve their goals in situations with intermediate favorability. Fiedler's Contingency Theory stressed the need to put leaders in conditions most adapted to them (Fiedler, 1967), or to train the leaders to modify the situation to adjust their own style (Fiedler F. E., Chemers M. M. and Mahar, L., 1976 p.82-85). Victor Vroom, Phillip Yetton and successively with the collaboration of Arthur Jago (1988), formulated a taxonomy to define leadership situations, which was employed in a normative decision theory in which leadership styles were linked to situational variables, delineating which method fits better which situation (Vroom V. H. and Yetton P. W., 1973)(Vroom V. H. and Jago A. G., 1988) (Vroom V. and Sternberg R. J., 2002, p. 301–323). This method was innovative because it promoted the concept that the same manager could count on diverse group decision-making methods depending on the aspects of each situation (Vroom and Yetton, 1973). This approach was posteriorly indicated as the situational contingency theory and it created a considerable interest considering its applicability to leaders (Lorsch, 1974). In fact, it assumed that no matter the single leader's characteristics and level of influence are, leaders are still able to modify their conduct to improve their efficacy depending on the situations. The path-goal theory of leadership was formulated by Robert House (1971) and was found on the expectancy theory of Victor Vroom. In House's point of view, the nature of the theory is "the meta proposition that leaders, to be effective, engage in behaviors that complement subordinates' environments and abilities in a manner that compensates for deficiencies and is instrumental to subordinate satisfaction and individual and work unit performance". (House R. J., 1996, p. 323–352). This approach individuates four leader behaviors, achievement-oriented, directive, participative, and supportive, that are probable in the environmental elements and subordinate qualities. Contrary to the Fiedler contingency approach, the path-goal theory affirms that the four leadership behaviors are flexible and that leaders can employ any of the four according to the situation needs. The path-goal approach can be considered both a contingency theory, because it is based on the circumstances, and a transactional leadership theory, since the model stresses the cooperation between the leader and the subordinates. Nevertheless, contingency methods have produced solid empirical foundations (Yukl G., 1989, p. 251-289) and are still strongly analyzed in contemporary leadership research, they have essential controversy. In fact, they differ one from another, so that it is difficult to categorize them in different periods within this era. They promised to offer a valid answer to the best leadership approach question, however they failed to provide them. Additionally, numerous are too burdensome for a methodical application in day-to-day managerial activities. Leaders are so occupied with making decisions and reacting to organizational issues, that they can't waste time resolving the situation using a complex model (Bass, 1981). Although many studies have been conducted in this period than any antecedent one, these approaches typically show limitations in practice, excluding a crucial acknowledgment of the interactive characteristic of the initial leadership periods, still exist a scant understanding of the essence of the interactions.

3. 2. 6. Transactional Era

The leadership research was renovated when it was advanced the propose that leadership lay not only in the individual or the situation, instead it focused on role diversification and social intercommunication. These researches were formulated in the period later called Transactional Era, which is subdivided into the Exchange period and the Role development period. In this era, leadership includes transactions between the leader and followers that influence their relationship. Moreover, the leader may have diverse types of transactions and various connections with any subordinates. The transactional leader acts on specific tasks and he has the power to reward or punish for the team's performance (Burns J. M., 1978). It gives the opportunity to the manager to lead the group and the group agrees to follow his lead to achieve a determined task in exchange for something else. The leader has the responsibility to judge, review, and instruct the subordinates when productivity does not reach the expected level, and offer rewards when the desired results are accomplished. In this framework, the concept of leadership exists because it has been recognized by the group members (Bass, 1981). Leaders try to arise as different from subordinates in their capability to start and sustain intercommunication. Their task is to raise the participation of less able members, approving different personalities, and being sympathetic towards variations (Bass, 1981). In the Role Development Period, there is still the presence of an exchange factor, however, this exchange concerns the respective roles of the leader and the follower. Social Exchange Theory (Hollander, 1979)(Jacobs T. O., 1970) and the Role Making Model (Graen G. and Cashman J., 1975, p. 143-165) are the most representative theories of this period. The group transmits appreciation and prestige to the leaders in an exchange for their ability to encourage the subordinates to reach the goal. This makes leadership a fair interchange relationship that doesn't include oppression exerted by the leader or subordinate (Bass, 1981).

3. 2. 7. Anti-leadership Era

Since leaders behave as role models and producers of positive requirements, their conduct can represent a reaction to followers' experience, communication ability, and expertise (Crowe B. J., Bochner S. and Clark A. W., 1972, p.215-237). In this innovative method, it is proposed that leadership could lie in the subordinate, instead of in the leader. This represented a disconcerting finding and brought researchers to recede to the origins of leadership theory and wonder again in which area of expertise leadership is collocated. According to this line of thought, various empirical researches had been conducted to analyze the numerous past theories, however the results were inconclusive, bringing to a new belief, i.e. it didn't exist a coherent concept of leadership. This period is defined as the Anti-Leadership Era, which consists of the Ambiguity Period and the Substitute period. In the Ambiguity Period, researchers sustained that leadership represents a "perceptual phenomenon in the mind of the observer" (Mitchell T. R., 1979, p.243-281). Pfeffer (1977), in his paper entitled "The Ambiguity of Leadership'', described the leader as a symbol, this meant that leader performance was not so influential. Miner (1975) proposed to completely abandon the concept of leadership. During the Substitute Period, researchers tried to individuate substitutes for leadership. Kerr and Jermier (1978) proposed that the assignment and the traits of the subordinate and the organization could limit leadership from influencing subordinate conduct. Similarly to the previous theory, Howell and Dorfman (1981, 1986) claimed that it was crucial to demonstrate when leadership is less probable to affect strongly organizational performance.

3. 2. 8. Culture Era

The idea of leadership rejection, developed during the Anti-Leadership Era was finally put aside in the Culture Era when it was suggested that leadership does not regard exclusively the individual, the duo, or the small group, instead is pervading the culture of the organization. It's also in this period that for the first time, the leadership switched the focus from increasing the quantity of work achieved, i.e. concentrating on the productivity and the efficiency of the organization, to enhancing the quality by means of expectations and values. The 7-S Framework (Pascale R. T. and Athos A. G., 1981), the Search of Excellence attributes (Peters T. J. and Waterman R. H., 1982), and the Theory Z (Ouchi W. G., 1981)(Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978, p. 305-314) are developed in this global context of leadership. The culture generates the future leaders. The need for formal leadership appears only when the actual culture is subjected to change and a novel culture is necessary (Schein E. H., 1985). This period predicates a leadership form that is almost passive or absent, and it is useful only in the initiation part and the changes in the organization.

3. 2. 9. Transformational Era

In the Transformational Era, theorists made impressive advances over previous eras, they claimed that leadership is found in intrinsic motivation. According to this approach, leaders must be proactive in their thinking, more progressive than traditional, more original and ingenious, and more welcoming to new ideas (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is not only concentrated on the compliance of subordinates. It regards changes in the concepts, the demands, and the principles of subordinates (Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum, 1989). In this context, leadership performs the task to create an enthusiastic commitment among the subordinates, in contrast to the reluctant submissiveness or indifferent conformity (Yukl, 1989). In addition, Tichy and Ulrich (1984) assert that this approach is fundamental during organizational changes because it has the task to create visions of attainable opportunities and inspire employee engagement to change (Tichy and DeVanna, 1986). This era is subdivided into the Charisma Period and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Period. In the Charisma Period, leadership has to be visionary, the main aim of leadership is to transform the vision into an actual fact, providing a valid sense of direction and ambition. Leadership is a collective action and it's owned by all who share the same mission and vision. This is how leadership starts to be considered as a state of consciousness, not as a personality characteristic or set of traits (Adams, 1984). In contrast to the passive leadership proposed in the past two eras, transforming leadership provides an active contribution to the organization. A powerful executive leadership is necessary both to generate the vision and to entrust subordinates to perform it. The Charismatic Leadership Theory which is formulated in this period and it is a comprehensive theory in which leader qualities, actions, power, and situational elements combine to increase follower responsiveness to ideological proposals (Conger and Kanungo, 1987, p. 637-647)(House, 1977).

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (SFP) Period is found in the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy phenomenon theorized by Field (1989). This study claims that the transformation occurs mutually from the leader to the subordinate and vice-versa. Specifically, the SFP leader can be mobilized from lower or upper levels in the organization. Moreover, this process functions not only in dyadic contexts, but also in group and organizational situations . This concept is analyzed by Field and Van Seters (1988) who propose that the key element to reach success, employing this type of leadership is to create positive expectations. Therefore, the scope of leadership is creating, checking, and reinvigorating a culture of great expectations. Bass (1985), inspired by this theory, proposes that workgroups choose leaders who are expected to ensure task achievement, keep strategic focus, and promote group cohesion. In this way, followers are lifted from responsibilities for partnerships and safety to concerns of self-actualization, acknowledgment, and accomplishment.

3. 2. 10. Leader–member exchange Era

The previous eras of leadership theory have all suffered from eventual disillusionment and discouragement. .

Leader–member exchange (LMX) is a dyadic/reciprocal relationship-based method that analyzes the working relationships between the leader and the subordinate (Bauer and Green, 1996, p. 25-36). It derives from a previous theory named the vertical dyad linkage (VDL) model (Dansereau F., Graen G. and Haga W. J., 1975, p. 46–78). These approaches concentrate on the interaction between leaders and subordinates that is considered a fair exchange in which the leader offers determinate benefits like task direction, consultation, encouragement, and rewards and the subordinates correspond by providing the leader with admiration, collaboration, commitment to the assignment and good conduct. LMX theorists acknowledge that there exist various kinds of exchange between leaders and subordinates which can lead to the creation of two categories: in-groups and out-groups. In-group members are supposed to have high-quality exchanges with the leader, instead out-group members have low-quality exchanges with the leader. In-group subordinates are considered by the leader more capable, qualified, and willing to take responsibility than other colleagues. The leader starts to assign challenging tasks to these followers. If the follower responds positively, the leader rewards the follower with extra training, beneficial job assignments, and formative experiences. If the subordinate demonstrates great engagement and resolution, both parties create reciprocal trust, influence, and assistance of one another. theorists claim that the in-group members frequently obtain greater performance appraisals from the leader, higher achievement, and quicker promotions than out-group members. In-group members tend to create solid relations with their leaders as they share a common culture and interests (Howell Jon. P., 2012, p. 16–17).

Contrary to in-group members, leaders dedicate less time to out-group members, they don't have high expectations on their job performance, they just expect an adequate presence, acceptable respect, and compliance with the job description in return for a decent salary and standard benefits. When leaders communicate with out-group members, show their formal authority to obtain adherence to their demands. Researchers demonstrate that out-group members are less content with their job and organization, receive fewer performance appraisals from the leader, consider their leader as less impartial, and are more likely to file complaints or leave the company.

3. 3. Leadership styles

The leadership style consists of the way a leader gives direction, puts into action plans, and motivates individuals. Rhetoric researchers formulated theories to analyze leadership (Hariman R., Political Style, U of Chicago Press, 1995)(Salazar P. J., 2009).

Diverse circumstances require a different leadership style. When an emergency occurs, and there is short time to find a solution designated authority a designated authority own more experience or skills than the rest of the group, an autocratic leadership style can be most successful; however, in a greatly motivated and coordinated group with a equal level of abilities, a more democratic or Laissez-faire style may be more productive. It’s important to choose a leadership style that effectively accomplishes the goals of the team whereas it takes into consideration the specific interests of every member. The autocratic or authoritarian leadership style is characterized by centralized decision-making power, as it happens with dictators. Autocratic leaders do not call for or contemplate any proposals or initiatives from followers. The autocratic management has been effective because it gives strong motivation to the manager. It allows fast decision-making, as the leader is the only one who takes a decision for the whole team and maintains each choices private until there is a real need to share them with the group (Lewin K., Lippitt R. and White R. K., 1939, p. 271–301).

Under the democratic or participative leadership style, the leader is open to share the decision-making process with the team, incentivizing their interests and teatinging them equally. This style is also defined as shared leadership.

Laissez-faire or free-rein leadership put the focus on the subordinates and it offers them decision-making responsibility. The phrase "laissez-faire" derives from French and literally means ”let them do” which signifies no intervention in the business of others. The subordinates have the power to make decisions, to resolve problems or complications, to set their own goals and the ways to accomplish them (Samosudova N., 2017).

In Task-oriented leadership, the leader is concentrated on the assignments that are necessary to be completed in order to reach a specific production objective. Task-oriented leaders are typically interested in creating a gradual solution for a specific problem or aim, rigorously guaranteeing the deadlines are respected. On the other side, relationship-oriented leaders give priority to the relationships among the group and pay typically more attention to the overall comfort and contentment of group members (Griffin R. J. and Ebert R. W., 2010, p. 135–136). They enhance group communication, demonstrate trust and confidence in group members, and appreciate the subordinates for their work.

Task-oriented leaders are generally less interested in providing help to group members, and more focused on finding a determined solution to reach a production target.Therefore, they usually guarantee to meet deadlines, nonetheless the group members' well-being may go through endures. Relationship-oriented leaders are concentrating on developing the group members and their relationships. The advantages of this kind of environment are that group members are more motivated and receive support. However, a drawback is that the productivity might suffer because of the relationship's focus.

Paternalism leadership styles frequently manifest a father-figure attitude. The structure of the group is organized hierarchically in which the leader is considered above the subordinates. The leader also gives both professional and personal guidance in the individuals’ lives. The members have limited possibilities of choice due to the strict orders given by the leader.

The term paternalism derives from the Latin word pater meaning "father". The leader tends to be a male. This leadership style is frequent in places such as Russia, Africa, and Pacific Asian Societies (Aycan, Z., 2006, p. 445–446).
The concept of servant leadership was originally introduced by Greenleaf (Greenleaf R. K., 1977). Its definition highlights the importance of service to followers as the first duty of leaders. Servant leaders are assumed to respect, support, praise and entrust subordinates, and firmly oppose social injustice and inequality. They provide a primary attention to employee growth (Van Dierendonck D., 2010). The idea of servant leadership has recently become more known, especially through modern technology management styles. This style is characterized by the leader who has the function to serve as a protector of the methodology and a "servant" of the group he manages. The cohesion and common orientation of the team is imposed by a shared culture, common goals and a determined methodology. Another crucial point is that servant leaders emphasize their subordinates first, enhancing personal integrity, and giving priority to create strong long term relationships with their employees (Liden et al., 2013)(Stone et al, 2004, p. 349-361).

3. 4. Leadership in China

According to Hofstede's findings, in high power distance cultures individuals tend to adopt a paternalistic leadership style (Hoftede G., Hofstede G.J. and Minkov M., 2010) (Hwang S.J., Quast L.N., Center B.A., Chung C.T.N., Hahn H.J. and Wohkittel J., 2015, p. 259-277). This phenomenon is more common in Asian countries, more specifically in China, where leaders generally choose a command-and-control, hierarchical leadership style (Huang X., Xu E., Chiu W., Lam C. and Farh J.L., 2015, p. 180-200). As Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) demonstrated, authoritarian, top-down leadership are prevalent styles in China and other Eastern cultures (E.K. Pellegrini and T.A. Scandura, 2008, pp. 566-593).
These types of behaviors could be worldwide spread, however predominate in China. Paternalistic leadership is deeply rooted in the Chinese traditional culture of Confucianism, and has been described as “a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence” (Farh and Cheng, 2000, p. 91) . In the traditional Chinese culture, the grandfather or father had an administration role. Their authority legitimated them to control the family economy and to make financial decisions. This

masculine supremacy has evolved over time, but the principal characteristics remained. The employer, particularly the executive leader of an organization, is still seen as the “father” of the organization family, especially in State-Owned enterprises and Private-Owned enterprises. Thus, the authoritative behavior of Chinese managers is justified, despite these conducts usually result in assignment fulfillment rather than a true commitment. Researchers individuated three different characteristics in the Chinese paternalistic leadership: authoritarianism, benevolence, and morality. Authoritarianism regards the control, authority, and request for submission and obedience by followers (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Benevolence outlines comprehensive and distinguished interest in employees' well-being at work and in personal life (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Morality grasps a greater integrity and moral character, the leader’s will of acting altruistically and to accomplish obligations (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Morality is closely connected to the concept of harmony. The pursuit of harmony was conspicuous in the literature and connected to maintaining good interpersonal relationships (Gao F. and Xu J., 2006, p. 49–55)(Li J.X., Xu M.Z. and Li R.Z., 2006, p. 59–64)(Fan G.R. and Wang Z., 2006, p.: 6–8). Researchers stressed on the validity of moral leadership and of maintaining harmony. Ethical and servant leadership practices of mainland principals were heavily affected by political ideology (Luo and Najjar, 2006). These characteristics offer a complete picture of paternalism. From a moral point of view, leaders are authentically benevolent with their followers, whereas they exert a complete authority over them. The Confucianism political tradition indicates that superiors exert a paternalistic power in the central and the vertical relation of autocrat leadership, and that subordinates surrender to their authority. The five cardinal relationships are part of the Confuncian principles, the fundamental cultural base underlying benevolent leadership in China, enhances mutuality and reciprocity in social relationships. Status judgment has crucial cultural consequences in china. The society is relation-oriented, Chinese take strongly into consideration the way others treat them. They evaluate their status based on their understanding of how well they are treated and respected. Indeed, Confucian ethics are basically status ethics guiding Chinese to respect and follow high-status individuals, to appreciate high status, and to judge themselves depending on how well authorities acknowledge them. Another important lesson from Confucianism is that leaders limit their actions through personal moral, principles, and conscience; they develop ethical rules and follow monarchical and paternal concepts and virtues (Farh and Cheng, 2000). These cultural origins demonstrate paternalistic leadership is embedded in the Chinese context, and it is not related to the Western-developed leadership concepts like the abusive control (Aryee, Chen, Sun and Debrah, 2007), supportive guidance (Deci E. L., and Ryan R. M., 1987, p. 1024–1037), and moral leadership (Brown M. E., Treviño L. K. and Harrison D. A., 2005, p. 117–134). Confucian values are characterized by four principal virtues: the class system, obedience, the doctrine of the mean, and "renqing" that means both kindness and reciprocity. These four values are interconnected and represent the base of Chinese ethics and morality. They affected the conduct of the Chinese in the past three millennia. The role of the class system is to maintain the tradition and adequate order of individual positions in society, according to five cardinal relations. The five relations are emperor-subordinate, father-son, husband-wife, older-younger brother, and friend-friend. Obedience is the key to maintaining social order. Those considered inferior had to obey their superiors. The head of family was empowered with absolute authority. The doctrine of the mean limits individuals from losing control when they are angry. "Renqing" indicates to be compassionate, kind, virtuous, and respect people's feelings. Chinese used to believe that "renqing" was an inner moral virtue stronger than laws. As results of these virtues, traditional Chinese business leaders show extremely high levels of authoritarianism, whereas they exhibit benevolence to followers and demonstrate a great degree of morality in their behaviors and decisions. China has been changing at a fast pace in the past decades, however it is still possible to notice the links between present and past. A recent research by Fu and Tsui demonstrated that Confucian values regulate the leadership conduct. On the other side, the Communist ideology affected deeply and directly the Chinese society. The Communist ideology includes concepts like the whole-hearted assistance to the people, devotion to the Party, hard work and self-sacrifice are dictated in the Party Constitution. Considering that most of the business leaders in China are members of the Communist Party, they are required to adhere to these ideologies.

Another aspect to take into account to evaluate the Chinese leadership style is the influence given by the economic reform. It commenced about 25 years ago and before this reform, all businesses were owned by the government. There were a limited number of large privately owned companies and foreign-invested companies didn't exist. The entire economy was organized by and controlled by the central government, with provincial and city governments adhering to the central model. Every industry had strong hierarchies, from small factories to the central government, with the people in a lower position obeying the higher levels. Leaders did not exist in the modern sense because what was required from companies was to ensure that objectives were met and that the people were comfortable. The government allocated production materials at the required stages. Products were not sold to the market, but were assigned following the government's plans and instructions. Employees appointed to a department or warehouse stayed until they retired. Managers and leaders had limited decision-making authority. The 1978 reform represented a revolutionary and evolutionary turning point to these practices. Managers in state-owned enterprises had to lead and be responsible for their own decisions. The growth of privately owned companies and foreign-owned firms did not give a choice to the state-owned enterprises leaders: they had to adhere to changes or retire. Private-owned enterprises are approximately younger, freer from the control of any greater authorities, and compared to the state owned leader they are more inclined to take risks and experiment new ideas. Another important result of the economic reform is the opening of the Chinese market to foreign enterprises. Numerous Western businesses entered the Chinese market, as a consequence they introduced in China their management philosophies and practices, challenging the traditional Chinese system and offering to Chinese business leaders an alternative model of leading and managing. The expatriate managers in the foreign-invested enterprises, as well as the growing number of Chinese who studied abroad, have brought into China western management philosophies and practices. Chinese started to work for foreign enterprises in China, to communicate with foreign expatriates or overseas-trained Chinese, and to travel abroad for business trips. This is how Chinese business leaders were influenced by different managerial philosophies and leadership styles. Chinese managers, in the past decades, have been experiencing a continuous restructuring of organizations, together with a growing global competition, the changes of values in the personnel, and fast technological advancements. They have to face different types of organizations, a growing and competitive market. Therefore, they need to constantly shape their behavior to the new environments.

3. 5. Leadership in Italy

The Italian industrial enterprise system is characterized by a small number of large companies worldwide, a small number of medium-sized enterprises and a great number of micro and small businesses, often characterized by a family ownership structure. It is well-known that in Italy small-medium enterprises represent 98% of the total number, and the majority of the employees work in this type of enterprises. It is common in management articles, books, business newspapers and magazines, to refer to the centrality of people as a source of competitive advantage, and as the driving force of the company, and to the concept that the company competitiveness mainly lies in the capabilities and characteristics of the human resources personnel.

Valkeavaara (1998) asserted that human resource development in Italy firstly depends on producing real quantifiable results. The Italian concept of human resource development is a traditional method, meaning that human resource development in Italy does not pursue any ambitious level of integration with a general business strategy, nor Italians attempt to implement comprehensive training and career development projects (Valkeavaara, 1998). In Italy, human resource development is not considered a whole part of the organizational strategy and the human resource function is seen as an administrative function (Lee and Stead, 1998, p. 297-308). Furthermore, in Italy human resource development is greatly analyzed from an instructional design point of view (Nijhof W. J. and de Rijk R. N., 1997, p. 247-256). However, there are countless examples of valid leaders and leadership scholars in Italian history, who helped the future studies, providing the means to understand leadership phenomena. In The Roman Empire era, the Roman emperor and the stoic philosopher Marc Aurelius considered ethics and responsibility a crucial characteristic for an aspiring leader. During the Renaissance period, Niccolò Machiavelli analyzed the power and cultural dynamics between leaders and followers. Machiavelli (1469–1527) was a diplomat and civil servant of the Florentine Republic. He wrote about leadership and power and he described how to develop it and maintain it. Furthermore, he theorized a new leadership model, i.e. the Machiavellian-amoralist leader, considering amoralism a fundamental ingredient for a leader whose only objective was to rule a nation. This concept was later reinterpreted by Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) who was a political philosopher imprisoned by Benito Mussolini’s Fascist regime. He claimed that leaders preserve their power not solely by force and exerting control, but principally through cultural hegemony (Fontana, 1993, p. 261-270). In his study of political hegemony and international relations, Gramsci claimed that cultural hegemony is represented by the cultural "leadership" or supremacy of one social class over another and the preservation of the socio-political status quo (Holsti, 1985). Cultural hegemony is therefore about the maintenance of power of the "hegemon", i.e. the leader who adopts a combination of ''persuasion'' mixed with ''coercion and consent", with the aim of managing followers of lower social classes (Fontana, 1993, p.30). Machiavelli and Gramsci early discovered that leaders do not always exercise their authority in a totalitarian way, instead they exert it in more sophisticated and ingenious ways. Bates (1975) perceived the social and cultural hint of Gramsci's theory of hegemonic authorities: ''A social order, no matter how exploitative, cannot be understood simply as a conspiracy of wicked rulers. Rulers who can make a society work, who can make millions of people do their bidding and make them do it without the lash, are competent rulers'' (Bates E., Camaioni L. and Volterra V., 1975, p. 365). Gramsci's research of Italian society under a Fascist regime and its leader, Mussolini describes how the Catholic Church contributed to affect the submissiveness of Italians (Gentile, 1996). He considered the Papacy and the hierarchy of the Church as the main players in preserving the status quo and the domineering feudal system (Fontana, 1993, p.69). The powerful presence of the Roman Catholic Church has strongly affected Italian cultural principles and its acceptance of uneven allocation of power, generally known as power distance. The Roman Catholic Church offered political support to the Fascist regime under Mussolini with only a few cases of dissent and resistance. For instance, Don Lorenzo Milani (1923–1967) fought against the Fascist hegemonic powers and the condescending Catholic doctrine and practice. However, the Roman Catholic Church has had an impact on the Italian culture so strongly that Italians accept the status quo, refuse the change and don't question hierarchical distribution of power (Gentile, 1996). Organizations such as the Catholic Church and the Mafia have offered paradoxical instances of leadership development.

The Church, by providing specific examples of leadership practices, has supported the expansion and institutionalization of the central leadership idea of charisma since St Paul. This 'Catholic' cultural outcome is proved by the GLOBE research. ''Although present day Catholicism is more benign than in previous centuries it still supports the status quo in many societies, and it continues to recognize women as unsuitable to hold the higher positions within the Church establishment. Consequently, societies that have been primarily Roman Catholic tend to be high in power distance, whereas Protestant societies prefer lower power distance'' (Carl D., Gupta V. and Javidan M., 2004, p.520). The most authoritative and comprehensive empirical research on leadership are represented by Geert Hofstede (1980, 2001, 2011) and GLOBE studies (Carl D., Gupta V. and Javidan M., 2004, p. 513–558). In these studies, Italian leadership shows a preference for a more charismatic, value-based, team-oriented, participative and self-protective style of leadership, whereas gives a minor importance to the independent leadership and the human aspect of leadership (Northhouse, 2009, p.342). In order to focus on what represents a good leadership example in Italy, it is useful to consider the outcomes of the GLOBE leadership study (House et al., 2004). According to the GLOBE research, Italy is classified in the Latin Europe cultural cluster, as well as Israel, Switzerland-Francophone, Spain, Portugal and France. These countries are mainly characterized by the analogously lower value based on humane orientation and on the societal collective. The valuable and aspiring leader model for the Latin Europe cluster is typified by being charismatic, value-based, team-oriented, participative and self-protected. Autonomous leadership, that consists of being efficient and confident, as well as the humane oriented side of leadership, that means being attentive and benevolent, are not taken in great consideration in this cluster (Northouse, 2009). Analyzing leadership in Italy from Geert Hofstede's point of view, it demonstrates that Italy is identified with other countries that accept more power distance. From a general perspective, power distance represents a cultural dimension that indicates the range to which a community accepts and supports authority, power disparities and status advantages (Carl et al., 2004). Italians not only welcome, but also expect that a few groups in society are more dominant than others. Hofstede formulated the Power Distance Index (PDI), that it helps to determine the societal acceptance and expectations of unequal power relations between leaders and subordinates, bosses and followers, parents and children, and teachers and students (Hofstede, 2001, p. 80–83). In countries with a low power-distance index, followers have limited reliance and acceptance for autocratic or paternalistic leaders, and they favor a more equal and interdependent kind of relationships. On the hand, in countries with a high power-distance index, followers rely considerably on their autocratic or paternalistic leaders (Carl et al., 2004, p. 61). Italy scored 50 in its power-distance index evaluation and it was ranked 51 out of 76 countries. Italy's position is relatively high in comparison to the other Western countries, however it is located in the middle of the general index. This is demonstrated by how Italians expect disparities and formality in titles and status, whereas they tend to express cynicism about persons in powerful positions. Leaders might choose diverse styles in their conduct in organizations and institutions, however, the acceptance of their democratic or autocratic style is based on the culture of the organizations, institutions and countries. Analyzing Italy using Hofstede's "Uncertainty Avoidance" key, it emerges that admitting mistakes and showing uncertainty is not typical in Italian leadership styles. Generally speaking, uncertainty avoidance is the way different cultures are dissimilar on the amount of tolerance they have of unpredictability (McCornack S. and Ortiz J., 2017) Despite the fact that the way of handling uncertainty depends on the single leader or human institution in a different country, however Italy recorded 75 in Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), in fact Italians ''avoid risk and uncertainty in everyday life, preferring friends over strangers and familiar over new or strange situations'' (Gannon and Pillai, 2010, p. 372). For high-level UAI cultures this means that what is different is dangerous and ambiguity creates intolerable anxiety. Another interesting evaluation of Italian culture is to categorize it basing on its masculine or femminine role. From a broad view, a society is defined masculine when emotional gender roles are certainly definite: men are supposed to be confident, resilient, and concentrated on tangible success, while women are supposed to be more humble, kind, and apprehensive with the quality of life. On the other hand, a society is defined feminine when emotional gender roles coexist: both men and women are supposed to be humble, kind, and apprehensive with the quality of life (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 140). Italy is reasonably considered a masculine society, considering that scored 70 in the MAS index, i.e. the indicator of Masculinity or Femininity of a country, and that ranked seventh out of 76 countries, being the country with the highest ratio among the other Latin European countries and the United States, which is classified 19 with a MAS score of 62. Although the presence of women in the workforce in Italy is noticeable, still the high-level leadership and managerial positions are rarely occupied by women. According to the research of Campa, Casarico and Profeta (2009), the gender gap in leadership and employment in Italy is related to cultural family principles. Around 27 percent of women resign at work after having their first child, and below the 10 percent of toddlers are admitted to preschool nurseries. Grandparents often represent the principal providers of childcare. In spite of the fact that a superior number of Italian women compared to men obtained university degrees, however only 46 percent of them are hired, considering the average in the European Union is 59 percent (Guerrina, 2005, p.114). In their cross-cultural research on leadership, Traquandi and Castellucci (2002) analyze the effect of definite aspects of Italian managerial culture and context on leadership predilections. They identify that Italian companies expect that their high-potential management will be a man. ''At the same time, and for the same reason, Italian women generally do not find it interesting to be HPM candidates. With some exceptions, this division of roles is considered a natural situation by both sexes. Undoubtedly, this attitude stems from the Catholic culture, which, although it is slowly fading in Italy, still influences unconscious behavior and personal decision making'' (Traquandi L. and Castellucci P., 2002, p.111-112). As it happens in other masculine contexts and in societies with a distinct gender role, Italian women strive for finding equal employment and career opportunities. As stated in the "2010 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report'', Italy is classified 74th out of 134 countries in equality between men and women, positioning itself at the lowest place of the European Union ranking, as well as Hungary, Malta and Cyprus. Moreover, in a country in which it still happens that leadership opportunities originate mainly from family connections and relationships with parties instead of meritocracy, ''Italian women face an uphill battle'' (Povoledo and Donadio, 2011). However, the situation is changing in the Italian leadership panorama, but this change is passive.

4. SURVEY

4. 1. Definition of survey

The survey is a statistical method aimed at evaluating the proportions of different characteristics of a population starting from the study of a part of this, defined as a sample. The opinion poll has the purpose of discovering the opinion of a group of people on a given topic by collecting and analyzing relevant research data through systematic questions to the public to describe or explain social phenomena and their relationships (Jyotiprasad M., 1992, p. 370).

4. 1. 1. Brief history of the opinion polls

Before the polls, there were no direct means of listening to public opinion. The so-called “scientific” poll was proposed by the US statistician George Gallup in 1928. In 1936 Gallup was able to correctly predict the outcome of the presidential elections in the United States of America by interviewing only 50,000 people out of nearly 46 million voters, Literary Digest magazine, who had punctually predicted the results of the previous four presidential elections, conducted an election poll by recruiting a sample of ten million citizens from the automobile register and telephone directory. Only 2.3 million people participated in the survey and according to the Literary Digest, the election would certainly have been won by Landon (Aczel A. D., 1995, p. 192). The election was won by Roosevelt and the Literary Digest closed two years later. Gallup's lesson was fundamental in the following years, as it demonstrated the small importance of the size of the statistical sample, or the number of people interviewed, with respect to its composition, which must necessarily be random and probabilistic. Therefore, using telephone directories and the automobile register, the Digest ended up interviewing too many Republicans, at the time on average richer and more easily in possession of a telephone number or a car and consequently underestimated the Democratic electorate (Converse J. M., 2017, p. 113).

A larger sample does not always lead to greater reliability of the results (Brusati E., 2003, p. 26). It’s evident that a survey conducted on a greater number of people reduces the sampling error but if the statistical units are selected in a distorted manner a larger sample does not reduce the error due to the selection bias, i.e. when the probability of inclusion in the sample of individuals belonging to the population it depends on the characteristics of the population under study. Therefore, a distorted sample provides a false estimate of the characteristics of the population. It has been demonstrated that it is not necessary to question every single person to acknowledge what an entire population thinks, but the ingredients of the survey must be correct: the probabilistic sample must in fact be as representative as possible (Barisione M., and Mannheimer R., 1999).

Opinion polls have been an essential element of participatory democracy since their introduction. By responding to surveys, respondents can express their ideas and what their problems are, the European Commission itself, for example, has been using the "Eurobarometer" surveys since 1974 to monitor public opinion, with the aim of "helping the preparation of texts, the taking of the decisions and the evaluation of his work ". The inquiries and studies concern topics of primary importance for European citizenship, such as the enlargement of the EU, the social situation, health, culture, information technology, the environment, the Euro, and defense (European Parliament website, https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm, January 2021).

4. 1. 1. 2. Brief history of the leadership's polls

One of the most important aspects of a research project is the development of an appropriate questionnaire (Ogbonna E. and Harris L. C., 2000 p. 767). Research on leadership theories suggests that there are a large number of leadership style questionnaires created by theorists.

For example, in the Fiedler (1967) questionnaire, bosses were asked to think about their employees and rate their characteristics on a scale of 1 to 8. Another leadership questionnaire 'the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ)' was proposed by Hemphill and Coons (1957), where a sample of people was asked to describe their leader's behavior. The questionnaire contained elements that described a specific behavior of the leader and the participants were asked to rate the repetitiveness of more or less virtuous behaviors on a 5-point scale.

House and Dessler (1974) proposed a 20-item leadership questionnaire. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate to what extent each statement represented their behavior and rated it on a scale of 1 to 7.

One of the best known questionnaires is the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) created by Bass and Avolio (1997), later modified into Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Avolio B. J. and Gardner W. L., 2005, p. 315-338).

The MLQ was designed to evaluate three leadership styles: Transformational, Transactional, and Passive-Avoidant. In this questionnaire, participants are asked to rate themselves regarding specific leadership behaviors by answering 45 questions, using a 5-point hike scale. For the current research, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was selected as the only valid and accessible leadership style assessment tool. In this questionnaire, participants are asked to think about their team leader and to judge how often each statement fits their leadership style by answering a 16-question questionnaire (Avolio B. J. and Walumbwa F. O., 2014. p. 331-356). The scale of each element is between 0 that stands for never, and 4 which means often.

4. 1. 2. Opinion polls in China

The history of public opinion polling in China has existed for 25 years and the period was only briefly interrupted after the June 4 democracy movement in 1989. In recent years, tens of thousands of public opinion polling institutes have sprung up in China, they were run by the official, and officially controlled media, and others were financed from abroad (Dong Li, 1994, p. 49).

The weekly magazine "Liaowang" quoted Wu Shihui, deputy director of the National Bureau of Statistics Social Opinion Survey Center, as saying that public opinion information has gradually entered the government's decision-making consultation process, and the government is listening to people's voices (Liaowang magazine, 2010).

Some observers believe the Chinese government spokesman, Xinhua News Agency, is so imaginative that the purpose of the public opinion polls is because the current social conflicts in China are escalating more and more. The government can only stabilize by listening to the real voices of the people and understanding the true desires of the people. Society, consolidate dominance. Professor Ding Xueliang, a scholar of Chinese social issues, also agrees with this view. In an interview with the BBC's Chinese website, he claimed that the Beijing government has spent huge sums of money to maintain social stability and pursue a harmonious society for years, but it

has not received the intended effect, which is to understand feelings. and the opinions of the people (BBC news Chinese website, 2010, https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/indepth/2010/08/100816_ china_poll).
The Horizon Research Consultancy Group, founded in 1992, is one of the largest survey organizations in China. The president of the group, Yuan Yue, described the organization of polls as an important channel to scientifically and systematically transmit public opinion to the government.

4. 1. 3. Opinion polls in Italy

The first Italian pollster was Pierpaolo Luzzatto Fegiz who studied the methodologies of opinion polls during his stays in the United States, and he was considered a pioneer of the sector in Italy and in Europe (Luzzatto Fegiz Pierpaolo, biographic Dictionary Treccani, 2020). In 1942, he founded Doxa, one of the largest polling institutes in Italy. The institute name comes from the ancient Greek term δὀξα (dóxa) which means "opinion". It was the first institute to conduct a survey on voting intentions. In 1946, on the occasion of the institutional referendum, it was administered on a sample of 6000 people that were interviewed on the 2nd June referendum. This survey demonstrated the electorate's tendency to vote in favor of the Republic (Pier Luigi Ballini and Maurizio Ridolfi, 2003, pp. 224-225)(Gobo G., 2002, p. 135).
Another important occasion that increased the notoriety of the institute was during the first Italian political elections on April 18th, 1948. A poll, conducted by Doxa, predicted the ballot results quite accurately, anticipating the victory of the party "Christian Democracy" over the left-wing parties (Novelli E., 2008, p. 67).
In the same year, Budget Minister Luigi Einaudi asked the institute Doxa to conduct the first survey on the national income. A new survey was conducted in 1950 on behalf of the Bank of Italy (Favero G., 1877, p. 735)(Baffigi A., Cannari L. and D'Alessio G., 2016, p. 17). Despite all the good work, the institute devoted several years to demonstrate its reliability and be appreciated at a national level. However, the public opinion continued to show indifference to this type of investigation, so that Doxa had to initially offer its work free of charge because it was unable to obtain political or sociological researches commissioned. Statistical research mainly dealt with scenario studies, customer satisfaction, loyalty analysis, brand, product, and communication studies (Rinauro S., 2002, p. 46).

Starting from the 1970s, on the occasion of the 1976 elections, RAI entrusted Doxa with the first electoral projections: the success of the forecast marked the beginning of a long collaboration with public television (Anania F., Ballini P. L. and Ridolfi M., 2002, p. 256).
The introduction of the abrogative referendum about the legalization of divorce, and its subsequent application, which happened in 1974, represented a turning point in the use of the preventive analysis tool (Rinauro S., 2002 p.706).
In those years other polling institutes were born, the most important among these, was undoubtedly Demoskopea, which was founded in 1965 by the initiative of Giampaolo Fabris and Carlo Erminero (Fumagalli M. and Fabris G., Corriere della Sera, del 21 maggio 2010) .
From the 1980s, polling institutes finally managed to gain greater visibility and credibility thanks to the spread of telephone interviews via the use of the PATI method, which stands for paper and telephone interview. This situation continued until 1986, which is the year in which the system began to become computerized through the brand-new software, called CATI, i.e. computer-assisted telephone interview. This software allowed the interviewers to record the answers directly on their personal computers (Fortini F., 2013)(Sala E. and Lillini R., 2017, p. 133-156).

4. 2. SURVEY'S DESIGN

Before starting to write a survey, it's fundamental to set the priorities and the main objectives of the research, in order to design a survey correctly. The survey design has to focus on who is the target of people to question and define the subject and the purpose. Therefore, it is essential to understand who are the people selected in the representative sample. In the case of this study, the population sample taken into consideration comprises the workers in small and medium-sized enterprises of Italian and Chinese companies. As it was already indicated in the previous chapter, they represent an extremely significant model of the main source of employment and business in both countries. In this research, the survey was conduct with the following objective, i.e. demonstrate the existence of similarities in the Chinese and Italian leadership approaches analyzing the specific working context of the secondary sector in small and medium-sized enterprises.

The leadership literature indicates that in the modern context, corporate organizational structures need leaders to possess not only a few specific knowledge of managerial professionalism but also some fundamental skills such as a strong ability to plan, build and manage complex organizational structures, master the techniques of modern management organizations, technologies, markets and social systems. These skills have to be combined with an exceptional ability to communicate and develop consent, in order to interact both with the internal and external environment. They also have to be able to manage connections and transactions and to have the ability to give and receive orders by sharing, and understanding collaborators according to their values, their convictions, and their respective cultures of origin (La Bella A. and Battistoni E., 2008, P. 581).

It is also the leader's task to motivate workers to define ambitious goals but also to facilitate the employee's sense of satisfaction by addressing an appropriate reward in response to the achievement of the goals so that such behavior could create motivation and satisfaction in the worker. An indifferent reaction to the positive results of the subordinates can undermine their commitment to their job and the organization. For this reason, it is crucial to pay great attention to the employees' gratification in order to obtain a positive attitude and good results at work (Borgato R., 2014, p.51).

A further aspect of crucial importance is the concept of work ethics: it is necessary for a leader to remain faithful to moral principles, as well to be aware of the complexity of some ethical issues, to be sensitive to the different points of view of their employees and to manage conflicts that may arise. Unfortunately, ethics and leadership don't always go hand in hand. According to a study conducted by the Institute of Leadership & Management, the 63% of the executives were asked to do something contrary to their code of ethics; the 43% were told to behave against their organization's values, and 9% were asked to break the law. Indeed, in order to have a clear comparison of the two countries leadership approaches, it is useful to verify if the way of reasoning and the ethical principles are similar in both countries. Therefore, the questions has been formulated basing on the fundamental principles of leadership theories, and the questionnaire was designed taking into consideration these valid aspects. (Ciulla J. B., 1998).

4. 2. 1. Data organization

The collected data was organized in a data-sheet and entered on the software IBM SPSS (appendices 1a-1b). The data matrix was organized by placing the 63 sample units on the rows and the 31 total variables on the columns. The columns include the 28 questions (table 2) and the 3 census questions concerning the industrial sector, the nation, and the time of employment in the current company.

	Variable N
Sample N	Data

Table 2: organization of the data matrix.

4. 2. 2. Hypothesis

The main objective of this study is to seek a relation between the leadership culture in Italy and China.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- Hypothesis 1: the leader has the ability to plan and manage the work, in order to be executed properly.
- Hypothesis 2: the leader is able to communicate clearly and comprehensively with the internal and external environment.
- Hypothesis 3: the leader remains faithful and respects the moral principles in the work environment.
- Hypothesis 4: the leader motivates the workers to reach ambitious goals by associating appropriate ways of recognition to the followers' goal achievement. The results of these analysis conducted on a sample of workers of Italian and Chinese SMEs will provide the results to be able to evaluate which similarities and which differences will be evident in the leaders of the companies of the two countries.
- Hypothesis 5: the last hypothesis is related to data analysis and can be summarized in the title of the research itself: Chinese and Italian leadership style, a cross-cultural study.

4. 2. 3. Accuracy and precision

To get reliable results, a survey must be accurate and precise. Accuracy must be pursued during all investigation phases. Careful control of sample selection and well-formulated questions is essential to obtain reliable results. In order to have clear feedback on the selection of the sample, two preliminary questions are inserted at the top of the survey with the aim of investigating not only the reliability of the sample but also trying to know which kind of company the interviewees are part of and the time of employment in their current company. In probabilistic sampling, the units are chosen randomly but they still need to belong to the field to which the research is addressed (Giovanni Di Franco, 2001, p.19). Therefore, these preliminary questions had a further purpose, that is to verify the survey was asked to people who met the fundamental characteristics of this study.

Another fundamental point to which it was dedicated great attention is the comprehensibility of the survey. In order to obtain reliable results, it is crucial that the interviewee has a perfect understanding of the questions asked and that there are no misunderstandings in the questions. This is the reason why the survey, although was designed in English, has been translated into two languages: Chinese and Italian. Moreover, in order to analyze the data in a more accurate and precise way, the questionnaire is closed answers. Open-ended questions would not have provided a specific answer and could have been highly flexible and adaptable in the interpretation and evaluation of the results.

4. 2. 4. Reliability

Statistical reliability means that individual items or groups of items should be consistent with the overall questionnaire (Field A., 2005, Chapter 15).

The most common method for testing the questionnaire reliability file is the split-half reliability method, which suggests separating the sample into two equal parts and finding the correlation between them (Field A., 2005).

If the correlation is high, the test can be considered reliable. However, the division in half can be done in various ways. Cronbach (1951) proposed a statistical indicator called Cronbach's Alpha used in psychometric tests, as well in psychological measures, to calculate the reliability, or to verify the reproducibility overtime of the results provided (Pedagogical orientations, 1985, Volume 32, p. 868)(Rappagliosi C. M., 2003, p. 87).

It is common that high-reliability values are considered those ranging from 0.70 upwards (George D. and Mallery, P., 2003).

Cronbach's alpha is normally used for Likert-scale surveys. The Likert scale is a psychometric attitude measurement technique invented by the psychologist Rensis Likert. This technique is mainly distinguished by the possibility of applying methods of analysis of the items based on the statistical properties of the measurement scales at intervals or ratios. For each item, a 5-modality scale of agreement/disagreement is presented. Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with what was expressed by the statement. This method is applicable for both one-dimensional and multidimensional attitudes. For the data taken into consideration, the scales demonstrate a good Cronbach's alpha result, therefore, it is fair to conclude that all research scales are perceived as reliable.

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Q1	0,889	Q8	0,887	Q15	0,885	Q21	0,892
Q2	0,892	Q9	0,885	Q16	0,887	Q22	0,904
Q3	0,887	Q10	0,893	Q17	0,892	Q23	0,894
Q4	0,889	Q11	0,888	Q18	0,896	Q24	0,890
Q5	0,887	Q12	0,886	Q19	0,898	Q25	0,900
Q6	0,890	Q13	0,886	Q20	0,889	Q26	0,885
Q7	0,885	Q14	0,885	Q21	0,892	Q27	0,905

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha survey results.

4. 3. Participants

The total number of the participants in the survey is 62 workers of Italian and Chinese Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs), that particularly belong to the secondary sector. The interviewees are divided into two groups that differ in the nationality of the country in which they work, precisely Italy or China. To obtain a sample as varied as possible, the participants were surveyed based on the length of their employment in the company and the industrial sector in which they work.

Participants were informed that their responses would have remained anonymous.
The census survey shows that in terms of permanence in the current company, most of the interviewees have less than three years of experience, as it is shown in the table 4.

Time of employ	Italian	Chinese	Total
Less than 1 year	7	11	18
From 1 to 3 year/s	13	8	21
From 3 to 5 years	5	5	10
More than 5 years	8	5	13

Table 4: employment time of workers in the current SME.

Another analytical data that has been taken into consideration, it is the industrial sector in which the interviewees work. As it is shown in the table 5, the distribution is rather homogeneous and representative of the main industrial sectors of the countries under analysis.

Industrial sector	Total of workers	Industrial sector	Total of workers
Food&Beverage	7	Manufacturing	8
Mineral	0	Automotive	0
Metallurgical	0	Pharmaceuticals	0
Ferrous metallurgical	0	Textile	1
Mechanical engineering	8	Chemical	3
Defense	1	Electronics	1
Petrochemical	0	ICT	1
Paper	0	Others	27
Construction	5		

Table 5: industrial sector of workers in SMEs.

Participants were asked to think about their leader, the culture that is currently established in the organization and to evaluate the organizational performance by responding to the survey.

The questionnaire was sent to participants via e-mail. 62 responses were received. The data were analyzed using the SPSS program for descriptive statistics, validity and reliability check, exploratory factor analysis, and correlation analysis.

4. 4. Questionnaire

1. Purpose of the survey: Your feedback will help us understand more clearly the business leadership skills of SMEs.
2. Confidentiality and anonymity: the questionnaire is confidential, you don't have to worry about others knowing your answers.
3. Compilation method:

- You can choose only one answer for each question;
- Please be honest and answer each of the following choices correctly.

Preliminary questions:

- Industrial sector (food and beverage industry, mineral industry, metallurgical industry, ferrous metallurgical industry, mechanical engineering industry, defense industry, petrochemical industry, paper industry, construction industry, manufacturing industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry, textile industry, chemical industry, electronics industry, ICT industry, others).
- Time of employ (less than 1 year, 1-3 year(s), 3-5 years, more than 5 years).

4. 4. 1. English version

1. He/she describes accurately the tasks to his/her subordinates.
2. He/she doesn’t hesitate to speak out the truth.
3. He/she admits his/her own mistakes.
4. When something goes wrong, he/she communicates to the employees that a procedure is not working correctly and he/she establishes a new one.
5. He/she demonstrates beliefs that are consistent with actions.
6. His/her decisions are market-driven.
7. He/she respects high standards of ethical conduct.
8. He/she is open to listening to different points of view.
9. He/she is open to reconsidering his/her ideas on important issues.
10. He/she closely monitors the employees to ensure they are performing correctly.

11. He/she allows the employees to set priorities with his/her guidance.
12. He/she asks for feedback to improve interactions with his/her subordinates.
13. He/she motivates everyone to pursue their objectives following their core values.
14. He/she encourages everyone to manifest their opinion.
15. He/she demonstrates appreciation to his/her subordinates.
16. He/she manages and respects the working time of the subordinates.
17. He/she delegates tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process.
18. He/she doesn’t want to lose face in front of his/her subordinates.
19. He/she doesn't like to be contradicted.
20. He/she maintains his/her promises.
21. He/she likes to offer gifts to his/her subordinates.
22. He/she likes to receive gifts from his/her subordinates.
23. He/she sets up a familiar environment in the company.
24. He/she prefers to set up a professional approach in the company.
25. He/she takes advantage of the leadership position he/she holds over the subordinates.
26. He/she makes use of his/her leadership power to help subordinates to grow.
27. He/she threatens with punishment the employees in order to get them to achieve the organizational objectives.
28. He/she believes that employees exercise self-direction if they are committed to their objectives.

4. 4. 2. Italian version

1. Spiega in modo preciso e accurato ai suoi dipendenti i compiti da svolgere.
2. Non ha problemi a parlare apertamente e in modo diretto.
3. Ammette i propri errori.
4. Quando qualcosa va storto, informa i dipendenti che una procedura non funziona correttamente e ne stabilisce una nuova.
5. I suoi principi sono coerenti con le sue azioni.
6. Le sue decisioni sono dettate dalle logiche di mercato.
7. Rispetta standard elevati di condotta etica.
8. È aperto/a all'ascolto di diversi punti di vista.
9. È disponibile a riconsiderare le sue idee su questioni importanti.

10. Controlla attentamente i dipendenti per assicurarsi che stiano operando correttamente.
11. Da la possibilità ai dipendenti di stabilire, attraverso la sua guida, quali siano le priorità.
12. Cerca dei feedback per migliorare il rapporto con i suoi dipendenti.
13. Motiva i suoi dipendenti a perseguire i propri obiettivi basandosi sui propri valori.
14. Incoraggia i suoi dipendenti a manifestare la propria opinione.
15. Dimostra apprezzamento per i suoi dipendenti.
16. Gestisce e rispetta l'orario di lavoro dei dipendenti.
17. Delega compiti per attuare una nuova procedura.
18. Non vuole fare brutta figura davanti ai suoi dipendenti.
19. Non vuole essere contradetto.
20. Mantiene le sue promesse.
21. Suole fare dei regali ai suoi dipendenti.
22. Gli/le piace ricevere regali dai suoi dipendenti.
23. Crea un ambiente familiare in azienda.
24. Preferisce creare un ambiente professionale in azienda.
25. Approfitta della posizione vantaggiosa che ricopre a discapito dei dipendenti.
26. Usa la sua capacità di leadership per aiutare i dipendenti a crescere.
27. Minaccia i dipendenti per indurli a raggiungere gli obiettivi aziendali.
28. Ritiene che i dipendenti possano auto-dirigersi se sono impegnati nei loro obiettivi.

4. 4. 3. Chinese version

1. 他/她（以下均代指您的领导或管理层）准确地向下属描述了任务.
2. 他/她会毫不犹豫地说出真相.
3. 当出现问题时，他/她会与员工沟通，指出某个工作程序无法正常运行，并且他/她建立了一个新的工作程序.
4. 他/她承认自己的错误.
5. 他/她表现出与行动相符的信念.
6. 他/她能根据市场情况做出决定.

7. 他/她尊重高标准的道德行为.
8. 他/她愿意听取不同的观点.
9. 他/她愿意重新考虑他/她在重要问题上的想法.
10. 他/她密切监视员工，以确保他们的表现正常.
11. 他/她允许员工在他/她的指导下设置优先级.
12. 他/她要求反馈以改善与下属的互动.
13. 他/她激励每个人遵循其核心价值观追求自己的目标.
14. 他/她鼓励大家发表自己的意见.
15. 他/她对下属表示感谢.
16. 他/她管理并尊重下属的工作时间.
17. 他/她委派任务以实施新的程序或过程.
18. 他/她不想在下属面前丢脸.
19. 他/她不喜欢自相矛盾.
20. 他/她信守诺言.
21. 他/她喜欢送礼物给下属.
22. 他/她喜欢从下属那里收到礼物.
23. 他/她在公司中拥有自己熟悉的社交圈.
24. 他/她倾向于在公司中建立专业的方法.
25. 他/她会将自己的领导职务放权给下属.
26. 他/她利用自己的领导能力帮助下属成长.
27. 他/她威胁要惩罚雇员，以使他们实现组织目标.
28. 他/她认为，如果员工致力于自己的目标，他们会进行自我指导.

4. 5. Descriptive analysis

The first processing of the research data was done with descriptive statistics, as suggested by Heritage et al. (2014) missing answers were excluded from the analysis in order not to have missing data. For these data, the descriptive statistics were measured by observing the centrality indicators such as the mean, the mode, the

deviance, the symmetry, and the kurtosis. The mean was used to have a synthetic description of the collected data with a single numerical value. The mode, instead, shows which is the value that is present most frequently in each variable. The symmetry of the data is measured with the asymmetry and kurtosis, the wide distribution of the samples can cause the data to vary and it is, therefore, important to analyze if there are symmetry deficiencies or peaks (Field A., 2013).
The skewness of a distribution is a value that provides a measure of the lack of symmetry in the observed data, by flipping the representation around the central vertical, or median axis, one part of the graph overlaps the other. If there is perfect identity, it means that the distribution is symmetrical and the value of the symmetry index is equal to 0. Otherwise, it is in conditions of asymmetrical distributions. When the values are greater than zero, the asymmetry is defined as positive and the observation results exceed the right side of the representation graph, instead, with negative values, the asymmetry is called negative and the graph of the observed data exceeds on the left side. In this case, thanks to this indicator, it is possible to analyze the trend of the responses more precisely than the means and mode values. Kurtosis, on the other hand, indicates whether a distribution exhibits a flatter or pointed curve. As it happens with asymmetry, it might exist a positive and a negative kurtosis of the collected data. If the kurtosis is equal to zero the distribution of the data is normal, if it is superior to zero, the observation curve is defined as hyper-normal, or leptokurtic and the data curve is more pointed, therefore it occurs greater variations in numerical terms between one response and another. On the contrary, if the kurtosis is inferior to zero, the curve shows less difference in the responses and the curve is flat, hypo-normal, or platykurtic. The standard deviation of a variable is a summary index of the differences in the values of each observation in relation to the mean of the variable. Therefore, each observation has a deviation from the mean.

4. 5. 1. Descriptive analysis results

In this first phase of descriptive statistical data analysis, the preliminary information has been analyzed in order to study the phenomenon relative to extrapolated data from the sample taken in analysis. Indeed, the analysis was conduct based on the characterizations of the pre-established questions, which were formulated during the drafting phase of the survey. Successively, the census data have been collected which concerns the nationality, the time of employment in the current company, and the industrial sector in which the respondent works. The first fact that emerged is that the respondents are equally distributed between Italians and Chinese.

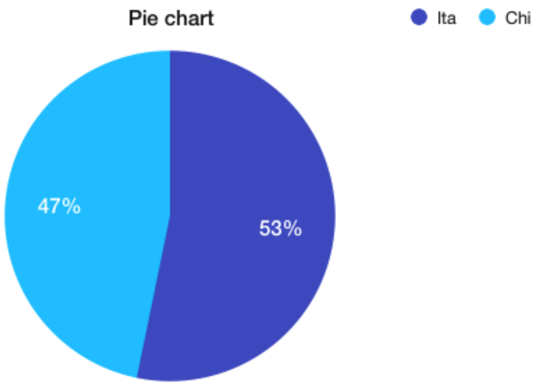

Figure 3: industrial sector of workers in SMEs, source: personal elaboration.

In particular, as it is shown in the figure 3, 53% of the respondents are Italian, whereas 47% of the interviewees are Chinese. The characteristics that emerged from the analysis of the questions, demonstrated that the Italian respondents considered the leader of Italian SMEs, possess a high degree of communicativeness, especially for what it concerns work procedures. Moreover, leaders adopt direct communication when there is a problem in the work completed by the subordinates and there is a need to explain how to resolve the issue. In this situation, they are also open to listening to any questions in order to communicate clearly in the organization. On the contrary, Italian managers show their employees a scarce aptitude to collect feedback and discuss with their subordinates how the procedures should be implemented or corrected in case of unsatisfactory results. These characteristics are evident, in particular, by analyzing the answers to questions number 2 and 4 whose mean and mode values tend to the answer "agree". It is also evidenced by the symmetry and kurtosis values and by the answers to question 12 where, on the contrary, the centrality indicators of the responses tend towards the 'disagree' response. Chinese workers' answers confirm the vision of Italian workers on their manager, as it shows the mean and mode values of the answers to the same questions, having as the only exception the question number 12. Indeed, the mean and the mode of the opinions of Chinese employees to this question are based on the 'agreement' response, that is in contrast with what emerged from the Italian data. Therefore, this reveals a strong analogy in the communication attitudes in the leading figures of SMEs in Italy and China, with the only exception of seeking feedback to improve the relationship with their employees.

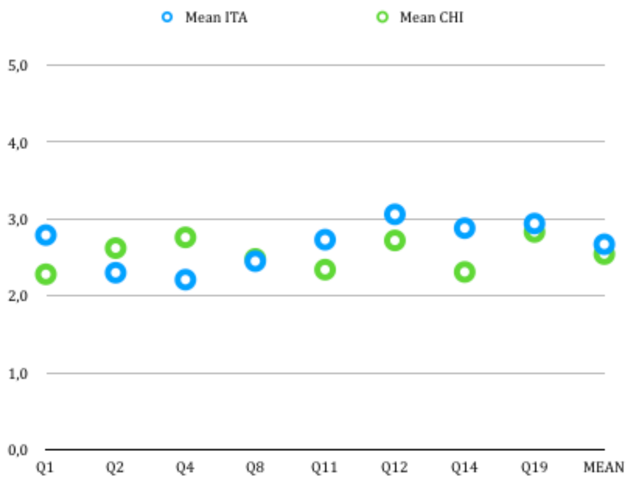

Figure 4: mean of the answers concerning communication questions, source: personal elaboration.

For what it concerns management, analyzing the data emerged from the centrality indicators responses, it is evident that the Italian and Chinese managers delegate the tasks and assigned them to a person they trust. If the trust is high, when it is possible, they allow them to self-directing some procedures. However, there exists a discrepancy between the two countries' results, that is Italian managers show greater concern and attention when a procedure does not work properly and are very careful in seeking to establish a new one. Another aspect that can be deduced from the descriptive statistical data is that neither the Italian subordinates nor the Chinese subordinates expect that their manager would threaten them in order to induce them to achieve the objectives of the company. This data is also connected to the time of employment of workers who answered the survey which demonstrates that in most cases people do not exceed five working years. Therefore, it is evident that, if a worker is in an uncomfortable position and feels threatened, he is more inclined to leave the company earlier, while if a worker remains in a company for many years, there is a high probability that his manager will respond to the failure to achieve objectives with threats.

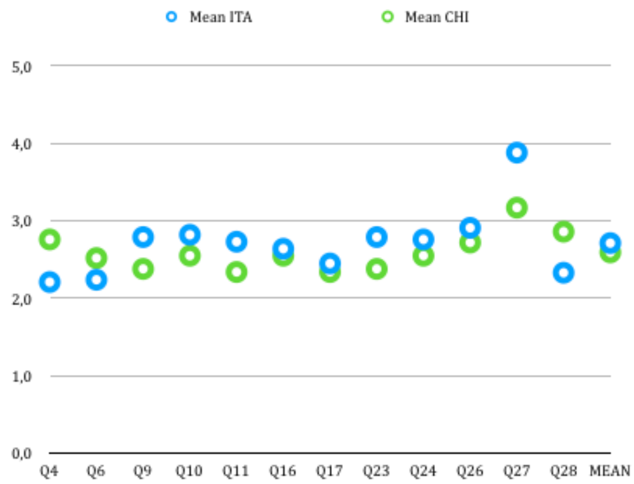

Figure 5: mean of the answers of the questions concerning management, source: personal elaboration.

The questions that highlight the leaders' motivational skills show that Italian managers demonstrate appreciation to their subordinates but they do not pay great attention to motivational aspects. Indeed, they are not interested in giving or receiving gifts and do not want to create a familiar environment in the company. Most of the managers transmit the idea that in the workplace it is important for employees to be focused on their tasks. Therefore, Italian business leaders seem to be focused on controlling their employees and their productivity. On the other hand, from the Chinese data emerge how gratification is a focal point for their bosses in the workplace. Indeed, their managers enjoy being appreciated by even receiving gifts. It results as well that managers are pleased to show appreciation for their subordinates and consider the motivational aspects essential for the achievement of important company objectives. These data are particularly evident in question 15 that says: "He/she demonstrates appreciation to his/her subordinates". As it has evidenced by the values of mean, mode, skewness, kurtosis, and the standard deviation. While differences can be noted in the indicators of the centrality of the answers to question 22: "He/she likes to receive gifts from his/her subordinates". The answer to this question highlights how precise is the difference between the employees of the two countries in this behavior.

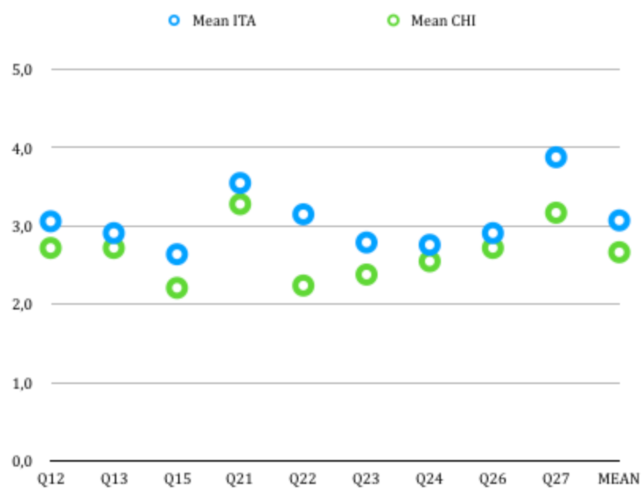

Figure 6: mean of the answers of the questions concerning motivation, source: personal elaboration.

The analysis of opinions regarding ethics underlines the similar characteristics between Italy and China. The leaders of Chinese companies tend to have high average values for the aspects concerning the respect for employees and ethics in the workplace. This results from the indicators described by the answers to question 7 and to question 14, which are respectively: "He/she respects high standards of ethical conduct" and "He/she encourages everyone to manifest their opinion". The responses to these two questions stand at around the range of "agree". However, it is crucial for the managers of Chinese SMEs to preserve the integrity of their images in front of their employees. This aspect is evident in the answers to question 18, which says: "He/she doesn't want to lose face in front of his/her subordinates". In this answer, the respondents strongly agree with the statement of the question. Moreover, it is evident from the reactions to the question number 25 that there is a tendency from Chinese managers to take advantage of their favorable position they hold. On the other hand, this statement is disproved in the answers of the Italian employees who instead 'disagree' with the above-mentioned sentence. Furthermore, it appears that in Italian SMEs the attitude of leaders is strongly oriented towards market logic as is shown in the answers of question number 6. However, this tendency seems to be accompanied by high standards of ethical principles in the workplace. The distinction between the two profiles can be found in this case in the responses to question number 3, that is:

"He/she admits his/her own mistakes". Therefore, Italian employees think that their managers have difficulties admitting their mistakes.

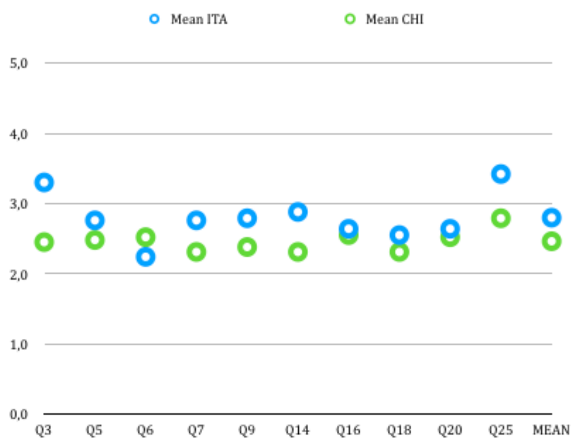

Figure 7: mean of the answers of the questions concerning ethics, source: personal elaboration.

4. 6. Correlation analysis

To correlate the data of the variable, it has been used the Pearson correlation index, which is an index that expresses a possible linearity relationship between two statistical variables (Glossario Istat, www3.istat.it, December 2020).

According to the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality's value ranges between -1 and +1. The correlation coefficient +1 corresponds to the perfect positive linear correlation, 0 corresponds to an absence of linear correlation and -1 corresponds to the perfect negative linear correlation.

The correlation analysis is aimed at confirming or denying the hypotheses. To avoid that the results are subjective it is also important to analyze the level of significance of the hypotheses formulated (Ho, 2006).

As asserted by Ho in 2006, in the social sciences the probability level must be set ≤05.

From the values shown in the table (Appendices 2a-2b), a few evaluations were defined on the correlation of the categorizations that were formulated in advance and it has been verified that the correlation index is elevate and confirms the correlation between the questions of the same categories.

4. 7. Inferential statistics

Statistical inference is the procedure by which the characteristics of a population are deduced from the observation of a part of it, is usually selected randomly (aleatory). It is composed of a set of methods that are used to draw a conclusion about the population based on information obtained from a smaller sample (Azzalini A., 2004, p. 1).

4. 7. 1. Factor Analysis

To reduce the number of variables to take into consideration, it can be helpful to use a statistical method that permits detecting to what extent the variables are related to each other. Taking a step forward in statistical analysis, with the aim of explaining the relationships between variables, it has been conducted an EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) factor analysis with the use of the software IBM SPSS. Factor analysis is a technique that highlights the existence of similar characteristics, not directly measurable, within a set of variables that relate to them, working on the correlation matrix between the observed variables (IDRE Stats, 2018).

Starting from the correlation matrix, the factors are extracted through the method of analysis by principal components, i.e. a technique for simplifying the data (Bolasco S., 1999).

The aim of this method is to reduce the numerous variables to a smaller number of variables, limiting the loss of information as much as possible. Unlike other linear transformations of variables employed in statistics, in this technique, the same data determines the transformation vectors (Tufféry S., 2011).

This method extracts a number of factors equal to the number 'N' of measured variables but only a part of them are needed. The number of factors that have to be considered in the factorial solution can be chosen according to different criteria. In particular, in the case of this study, the Kaiser criterion was used, based on which all the factors whose eigenvalue is greater than or equal to 1 (Yong A. G. and Pearce S., 2013).

Therefore, the result was subjected to an orthogonal Varimax rotation in order to preserve the independence of the factors as much as possible (Kaiser H. F., 1958).

For the purpose of interpreting the result, the parameter that has to be evaluated is the amount of variability or, more precisely, the explained variance (Furr, R. M. and Bacharach V. R., 2013).

In the case that it has been analyzed in the exploratory phase, it has been inserted discrete qualitative variables going to extract the items through the principal component method.

4. 7. 1. 1. Factor analysis results

As it is shown in the rotate component matrix, the items generated by the factor analysis are 8. As it can be evaluated in the figure 8, the total variance explained by the eight resulting items is quite high, therefore it has a value of 72.73%. Appendices 2a-2b reports the values of the correlation coefficients between the variables. This statistical index measures the degree of relationship existing between two variables: if the variables change dependently, there will be a high correlation, if they change independently of each other there will be no correlation. At the intersection of a row and a column is the correlation index of the two variables indicated respectively at the beginning of the row and at the top of the column (figure 9).

From the variables belonging to the generated items, it was possible to notice the common characteristics of the variables of each factor. Therefore, the factors were named according to the aspects that represented the characteristics of each one.

	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5,850	20,172	20,172
2	2,916	10,056	30,228
3	2,584	8,912	39,139
4	2,559	8,824	47,964
5	2,112	7,284	55,247
6	2,098	7,234	62,481
7	1,516	5,229	67,711
8	1,456	5,020	72,730

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Figure 8: total variance explained, source: IBM SPSS.

Rotated Component Matrix [a]

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Q14	,872	,212	,111	-,003	,014	-,064	,032	,102
Q13	,770	,149	,219	,099	-,105	,155	,124	,134
Q12	,743	,264	,313	,072	-,042	-,094	-,077	-,158
Q8	,739	,063	,337	,101	,126	-,017	-,114	-,073
Q9	,730	,408	-,046	,263	,010	-,006	,029	,053
Q7	,689	,274	-,018	,302	,315	,137	,004	,013
Q15	,625	,120	,251	,340	,167	-,002	,056	,216
Q26	,567	,171	,213	,492	,151	-,131	,019	,247
Q5	,543	,370	,012	,256	,374	-,082	,143	,008
Q17	,505	,029	,209	-,015	-,494	,378	,251	,048
Q1	,269	,685	,148	,147	,132	-,307	,107	,087
Q3	,402	,662	,039	,180	,128	-,065	,051	-,012
Q11	,470	,642	,069	-,072	-,038	,017	-,257	,215
Q10	,136	,586	-,130	,167	-,213	,011	,219	,039
Q24	,224	,560	,205	,166	,162	,350	-,165	-,052
Q28	,258	-,104	,794	,206	-,177	-,055	-,065	,074
Q4	,405	,141	,742	,043	,170	,073	,046	-,072
Q2	,081	,368	,204	,023	,192	,192	,475	-,049
Q6	,105	,236	,494	,338	,382	,139	-,215	,319
Q27	-,270	,109	-,480	,134	-,380	,283	-,350	,217
Q21	,156	,189	-,036	,762	-,282	-,107	-,114	-,007
Q16	,375	,156	,191	,638	,289	,093	,069	-,077
Q20	,281	,119	,264	,591	,386	,226	,181	-,081
Q22	-,144	-,026	-,089	,009	-,839	-,059	-,219	-,059
Q19	,012	-,078	,052	,180	,045	,821	,151	-,085
Q25	-,025	,071	,009	-,215	-,071	,676	-,108	,379
Q23	,036	,228	,190	,492	-,133	-,551	,145	,289
ToE	-,007	,037	-,028	,023	,118	,001	,826	-,009
Q18	,131	,059	-,025	,017	,036	,020	-,015	,902

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Figure 9: rotate component matrix, source: IBM SPSS.

The first factor is constituted by variables inherent in the trust nurtured by the leader towards his employees. In particular, correlated trends are found in the variables of questions 14, 13, 12, 8, 9, 7, 15, 26, 5, and 17. This factor confirms the group categorized previously and highlights how motivation and ethics are strongly intertwined and connected to the sense of mutual trust between leader and employee. If there is a relationship found on trust, there is a tendency to create a motivating relationship based on justice. From the respondents who have correspondence in the affirmative answers to the above-mentioned questions, it resulted that they were equally distributed in the two nationalities that are taken into consideration. Moreover, it has emerged that the data regarding the time of employment in the company. It is evident that the leader's trust in employees is perceived when employees have worked for a period inferior to three or exceeding five years of employment in the company. This data underlines how Italian and Chinese leaders place great trust in employees at the beginning of their work experience, and in those who have been in the company, for longer, whereas the workers who have worked from 3 to 5 years, the data show that employees perceive a strong lack of trust from their leader (figure 10).

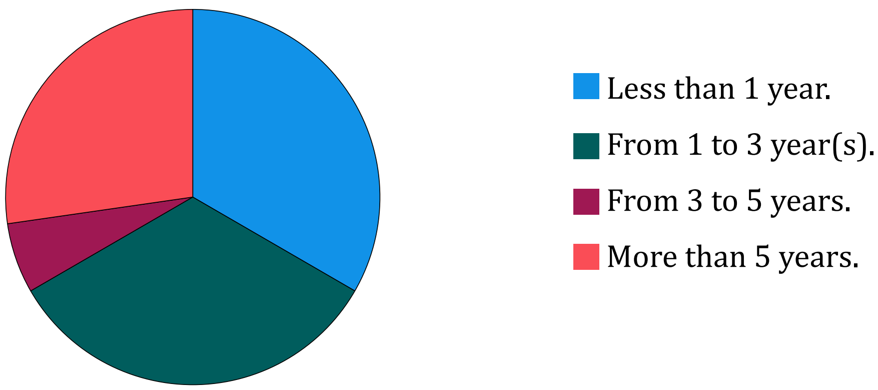

Figure 10: time of employment of the workers with affirmative answers, source: personal elaboration.

The second factor emerging from the factorial analysis concerns the accuracy of the working procedures, and it is shown by the factor that correlates the trend of the variables corresponding to questions 1, 3, 11, 10, 24. This factor reflects what previously emerged from the descriptive analysis for what concerns the management of employees. Indeed, it results in the existence of a relationship between the questions concerning personnel management. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the previous analysis are confirmed by this summary variable. Furthermore, the correlation indexes are high, thus it emphasizes the categorization of the questions of this item. The range oscillates between the values of 0.560 and 0.685 with the Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The data show that Italian and Chinese leaders tend to focus on the accuracy of work procedures and pay great attention to the monitoring of work activities for employees with less than 3 years of experience. This highlights that leaders are willing to teach their methods to their subordinates when they are new in the company and they are not familiar with the procedures. The above-mention characteristics are typical in the leaders working in the food, manufacturing, and chemical sector.

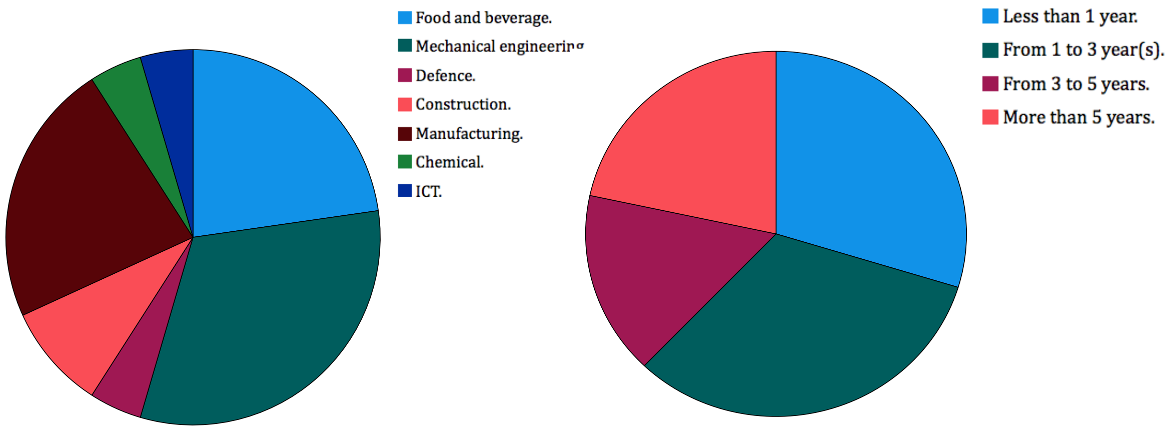

Figure 11: Industrial sector and time of employment of the worker in item 2, source: personal elaboration.

The third item concerns the questions about the management logic employed by the leader to manage the subordinates, and it links the trend of the variables of questions 28, 4, 6, 23. The variable number 23 shows a trend that cannot be correlated with the previous questions. Indeed, it emerges that some leaders: firstly, consider their employees able to self-manage if they are committed to their goals; secondly, possess good communication when procedures do not work correctly; in conclusion, they are attentive to the logic of the market. Moreover, there is a strong lack of correlation with the need for threatening their employees in order to achieve goals (as evidenced by the index -0.480). Analyzing the sampling units of workers who consider that their leaders correspond to this type of behavior, it results that 65% of the workers are Italian, thus it is possible to create a different characterization based on nationality (figure 12). In the opposite case, those leaders who are refractory to the idea that their employees can self-manage, who have poor communication when procedures do not go correctly, who are not very attentive to the logic of the market, and who show the need to threaten their employees to achieve their goals are prevalently found in the answers from the Chinese workers, specifically the 67% (figure 12).

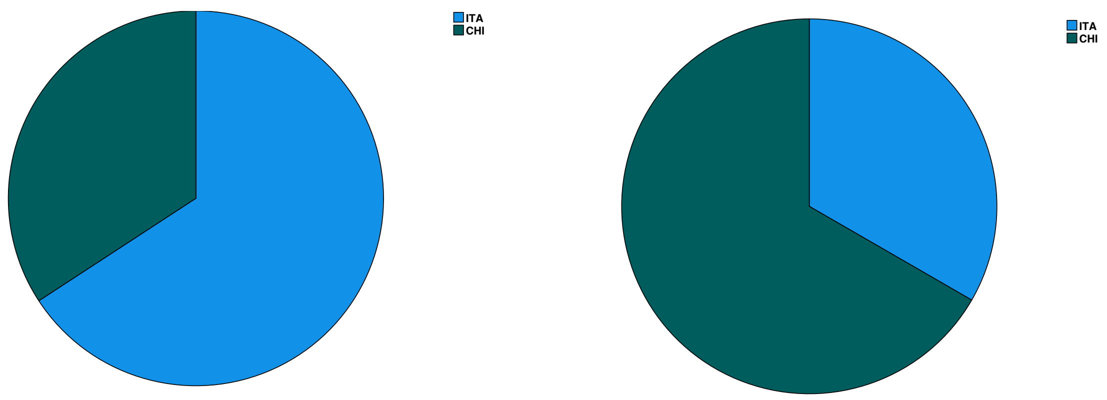

Figure 12: nationality distribution of workers in item 3, source: personal elaboration.

Another item that emerged from the common trend of the variables is represented by questions 21, 16, and 20. These questions are inherent to the ethical behavior of the leader and it is evident that there is a causal relationship between the questions regarding the manager: “he maintains the promises, manages and respects the working hours of employees and is used to giving gifts to his employees.”

Therefore, it results in a leader profile described by employees characterized by strong ethical principles, that is attentive to timetables, maintains his promises, and appreciates his employees even with gifts.

A further aspect that emerged from the common trends of the variables is that corporate leaders show two types of behaviors regarding a family, or a professional environment in the company. There is a correlation between statements 19 and 25, the leaders who do not want to be contradicted are also those who take advantage of their prestigious position they hold at the expense of employees. These questions have a strong opposite trend (0.821 and 0.676) with the statement “creates a family environment in the company” (-0.551), which indicates how those who create an unfamiliar environment have little correlation with those who show a scarce predisposition to communication and attitude ethically correct.

4. 7. 2. Cluster analysis

The following step has been to conduct a group analysis, or also called cluster analysis, a term introduced by Robert Tryon in 1939 (Everitt B. S., Landau S. and Leese M., 2011).

It is a set of multivariate data analysis techniques that aims at selecting and grouping homogeneous elements in a data set. Clustering techniques are based on measures relating to the similarity between the elements. In many approaches, this similarity is conceived in terms of distance in a multidimensional space (Estivill-Castro V., 2002, p. 65–75).

The validity of the analysis that is obtained by the clustering algorithms depends on the choice of the metric, and therefore on how the distance between variables is calculated. Clustering algorithms group elements on the basis of their mutual distance, and therefore whether or not they belong to a set depends on how far the element under consideration is from the set itself (Nielsen F., 2016, Chapter 8).

A cluster is described by the maximum distance required to connect parts of the cluster. (Davis J. A., 1967, p. 181–7).

4. 7. 2. 1. Dendrogram

Hierarchical clustering techniques produce a hierarchical tree representation. These algorithms do not provide a single partitioning of the dataset, but instead, provide a broad hierarchy of clusters that merge with each other at certain distances. A graphical representation of the clustering process is provided by the dendrogram (Lior R. and Maimon O., 2005, p. 321-352).

The dendrogram is a diagram representing a tree used to visualize the similarity in the grouping process (Everitt B., 1998, p. 96).

In clustering techniques, the dendrogram is used to provide a graphical representation of the grouping process of the instances or statistical units which expresses: in the abscissa axis, the logical distance of the clusters according to the defined metric, the choice of an appropriate metric influences the form clusters, as some elements can be "closer" using one distance and more "distant" using another.

In this specific case, it has been chosen to operate with the Euclidean distance which analyzes the distance between two points. Using this distance, Euclidean space becomes a metric space (Wilkinson L. and Friendly M., 2009, p. 179–184).

4. 7. 2. 2. K-means Clustering

The algorithm used for the analysis was the K-means. It is a partition group analysis algorithm that allows dividing a set of objects into k groups on the basis of their attributes. It is assumed that the attributes of objects can be represented as vectors, and thus form a vector space.

K-means clustering is a vector quantization method, which aims to partition n observations into k clusters where each observation belongs to the cluster with the closest mean (cluster centers or cluster centroid), which serves as a prototype of the cluster. K-means clustering minimizes variances within the cluster (MacQueen J.B., 1967, p. 281–297).

The goal that the algorithm sets itself is to minimize the total intra-group variance; each group is identified by means of a centroid or midpoint (Arthur D., Vassilvitskii S., 2006).

The algorithm follows an iterative procedure: it initially creates k partitions and assigns entry points to each partition, then calculates the centroid of each group; it then builds a new partition by associating each entry point to the group whose centroid is closest to it; finally, the centroids for the new groups are recalculated, and so on, until the algorithm converges (MacQueen J. B., 1967, p.281-297).

4. 7. 2. 3. Cluster analysis results

The clustering that was conducted with SPSS shows that the best division, that has the least information loss and it is measurable by evaluating the dendrogram, brought to the formation of three clusters (Appendix 3). The goal is to group the units, but without distorting the acquired information. Since the cluster is a synthesis operation, it is important not to exclude crucial information. Therefore, it is crucial to have the greatest homogeneity in the groups and the greatest inhomogeneity of the groups to take into consideration the congruous number of iterations. In the analyzed case it has been identified three groups of individuals with similar characteristics. The members belonging to the cluster membership show the characteristics that differentiate the cluster from each other.

The first cluster is composed of heterogeneous members since the results show that precisely 50% of people are Italian and the other 50% are Chinese. Furthermore, for what concerns the characterizations of the time of employment in the company and the industrial sector, it is not possible to highlight data that are more significant than others. Therefore, this first cluster is the most numerous, with 52% of the total people participating in the survey. The characteristics that emerge from the correspondences to the factors which are examined by the cluster analysis show that this group takes into consideration the factors relating to manager confidence, management logic, ethics, and professionalism of the working environment. In particular, the prototype of a leader that derives from this cluster shows great trust in its employees, is attentive to the working procedures, carefully monitors every process, pays minor attention to ethics in the workplace and prefers a professional environment.

The second cluster consists of 26% of the people who took part in the survey. The most evident characterization is that 75% of the members of this cluster are Italian, whereas 25% are Chinese. In this cluster, the time of employment in the company is a heterogeneous element, and most of the workers belong to the food industry (43.8%) and metalworking (50%). These data demonstrate that the prototype of the company leader is characterized by paying attention to the working procedures and carefully controlling every process, being attentive to the logic of the market, having a strong inclination to adopt ethically correct behaviors in the workplace, and predicting a familiar environment.

The third cluster includes 22% of the sample units. 65% of the members of this cluster are Chinese, whereas 35% are Italian. The time of employment in the company is biased by workers who have less than one year's experience (50%). Another element is that most of the employees work in the construction (35.7%), and manufacturing (57.1%) industrial sectors. Their prototype of leader summarized by this cluster shows limited trust in their employees (65%) and does not manifest the will to create a professional environment in the company (71%).

CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this study was to demonstrate that there exist similarities between Italian and Chinese leadership, in the context of the small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in the secondary sector of the economy. In order to achieve this major goal, it has been conducted a statistical analysis of the survey results. The exploration of the data was organized through descriptive statistics, using the program IBM SPSS. The data reduction was conducted using factor analysis and the hypotheses testing was performed through correlation and cluster analysis. The results of the survey are considered high-reliability values as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall model, as well as for each separate variable, falls into the range of 0.70 upwards. From the data results, it is possible to outline the Italian and Chinese leaders and to provide a model of leadership. The great correspondence of the given answers demonstrates that both Italian and Chinese leaders firstly consider the working procedure crucial for the organization, secondly, they show trust in their employees, thirdly, they do not pay great attention to ethics, and in conclusion, they predilect a professional behavior in the workplace. These characteristics have emerged from the analogies found in the responses of the Italian and Chinese workers, describe in a precise way the similar aspects of the leaders of both countries, and delineate the Italian-Chinese leadership model. Therefore, it is accurate to assert that the aim of the study was achieved, as the research demonstrated the existence of significant similarities between both countries and it outlined the principal traits of the Italian-Chinese leader.

Although it is of secondary importance, it is fair to mention that from the results of the cluster analysis, it has emerged a minor numerical representation that demonstrates a few differences between Chinese and Italian leaders, which are: there exists a limited number of managers predilect to create a familiar environment in the office; Italian leaders are more attentive to and follow the market logic, whereas Chinese ones pay greater attention to the company's productivity. Conclusively, a definite group of Chinese leaders demonstrates to have scant trust in their employees, contrary to the Italian data results from which it emerges the opposite.

This work is remarkable because it provides a valid contribution to future researches. It is unique because of the involved countries, Italy and China, and it has a significant relevance because it enhances the specific situation of the small-medium enterprises' landscape.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of the current study is the correlation between the number of variables and the sample size. The number of respondents is inferior to 100 and contains 30 variables included in the analysis. Therefore, a wider number of the sample would have provided more accurate and precise results. This limitation is partly resolved by computing variables into several groups. The first group is based on leaders' trust in their employees. The second group is represented by the accuracy and attention to the working procedure. The third group emphasizes the management logic. The fourth group pays attention to ethics. Lastly in the fifth group, the focus is concentrated on the working environment. A suggestion for future research is to collect a greater number of responses from participants and to increase the number of variables, in order to increase the validity of the study.

It is fair to mention that a possible limitation of eventual researches could be represented by the distribution of the questionnaire. In order to collect the data of this work, it has been necessary to use two different survey administration software. "Google Forms" was employed to administrated the questionnaire in Italy. However, it was not possible to apply the same tool in China, as the use of Google, was banned in mainland China on March 30, 2010. This is the reason why, for those who are willing to bring further researches about this topic, it is crucial to have a solid knowledge of the Chinese language and culture. In this study, to collect the Chinese data has been employed the use of the software called "eqxiu", in Chinese 易企秀, which is completely designed in Chinese and it is possible to sign in only with the use of "Wechat", in Chinese 微信, that is a Chinese social media and mobile payment app.

Even though the research has its limitations and complications, it succeeded to provide accurate and satisfying results. The above-mentioned limitations should represent a suggestion for future research studies.

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APPENDICES

Counter	Nationalit	Industrial.	Time.of.e	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
1	0	10	2	4	2	5	2	4	3	2	4	3	2	3	3
2	0	1	2	5	1	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	2	4	5
3	0	9	2	3	4	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	2	3
4	0	9	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	2
5	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
6	0	5	4	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1
7	0	1	1	2	1	5	3	2	4	5	4	4	2	4	4
8	0	17	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4
9	0	5	4	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	2	2	4	2	2
10	0	16	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	1
11	0	5	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	4	2	3	4	2	4
12	0	9	1	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	3
13	0	17	4	4	1	5	4	2	2	1	3	4	4	4	4
14	0	17	2	2	2	4	2	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	2
15	0	17	1	2	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	4
16	0	17	2	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1
17	0	17	3	4	4	5	1	4	1	4	2	4	4	4	2
18	0	17	2	3	2	3	3	4	1	3	3	3	4	3	4
19	0	17	1	4	1	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3
20	0	17	4	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	3	2
21	0	17	1	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	2	3	4	3	4
22	0	1	4	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2
23	0	17	2	3	2	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
24	0	5	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	4
25	0	5	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	4
26	0	9	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	4	4	3	5	5
27	0	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3
28	0	15	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	2	1	4	2	2	4
29	0	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	4	2	2
30	0	17	2	3	2	4	2	3	2	3	3	2	4	2	3
31	0	14	3	5	3	5	2	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	3
32	0	5	4	2	3	2	4	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	4
33	0	14	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	3
34	1	17	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	4	2	2
35	1	10	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	2
36	1	17	3	2	3	4	4	5	2	4	3	2	2	2	4
37	1	17	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
38	1	17	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
39	1	17	2	3	4	2	4	4	2	2	3	3	2	2	4
40	1	14	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
41	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	2
42	1	17	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
43	1	17	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
44	1	17	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	4	4	3	2	4
45	1	17	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
46	1	17	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
47	1	17	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
48	1	17	1	1	2	1	5	4	5	4	3	3	2	3	3
49	1	17	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	1	1	3	4	2
50	1	17	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
51	1	17	4	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	2	2
52	1	9	4	4	5	3	5	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	3
53	1	13	1	2	2	3	4	3	3	2	4	4	4	2	4
54	1	6	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3
55	1	10	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
56	1	10	3	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
57	1	10	4	2	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	2	2	2
58	1	10	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2
59	1	10	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
60	1	10	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	4
61	1	1	2	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	5	5	3	5	5
62	1	1	1	2	4	3	5	1	5	1	5	2	3	2	4

Appendix 1a: data matrix, source: personal elaboration.

Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28
3	4	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	3	5	2	4	4	4	2
4	5	5	5	2	5	1	4	5	3	5	1	2	5	2	4
3	2	2	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	2
4	3	2	1	3	4	5	2	3	4	2	3	5	2	5	1
3	3	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	2	2	4	2	4	2
3	2	2	2	4	2	5	2	3	4	2	2	5	2	5	2
4	4	2	4	3	2	3	1	4	2	2	2	4	4	4	2
4	4	4	5	2	2	2	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	2	4
2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	2
3	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	4	2	4	2
4	4	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	1	4	2	5	3
4	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	5	5	2	3	2	2	3	2
3	3	2	2	3	2	4	2	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3
2	4	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	4	2	4	4	2	2	2
1	1	3	1	1	3	3	2	4	3	3	2	3	2	4	1
5	3	4	4	1	4	3	3	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	1
4	3	2	1	3	4	3	2	3	5	5	2	5	3	4	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	4	4	1	3	2
2	2	2	1	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	4	5	1	5	2
3	2	4	4	2	1	1	3	5	5	4	4	3	2	5	3
1	1	1	2	2	1	4	2	3	4	1	2	4	1	5	1
3	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	4	3
4	4	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	2	4	2	2	5	3	3
4	4	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	2	4	2	2	5	3	3
4	5	3	2	5	2	3	3	5	5	2	4	4	3	5	5
3	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
2	3	4	5	3	2	3	4	5	3	5	3	2	3	4	3
2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	4	2	2	5	2	5	2
3	4	3	2	3	1	2	3	5	3	4	3	3	5	5	3
1	3	2	5	1	3	3	5	5	1	5	5	2	5	5	1
2	3	2	2	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	4	2	4	3
2	1	2	4	2	1	4	2	5	5	3	2	4	3	4	2
2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	4	5	2	2	2	3	4	3
2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	4	5	2	2	3	2	5	2
4	4	2	5	2	1	4	4	3	1	1	4	3	5	1	2
2	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	4	3
3	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	4	5	3	3	2	3	4	3
2	2	3	1	2	1	5	5	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
2	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	3
2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	4	2	1	1	2	4	2
2	2	2	3	3	2	4	2	4	4	2	2	2	2	4	2
3	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	4
4	4	3	4	2	2	4	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	2	3
2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	3	2	2	2	4	3
4	3	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	3	2	5	5	5	5	5
2	2	2	2	2	4	2	1	3	3	4	2	5	2	3	4
2	1	1	2	2	4	3	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	4	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
4	3	2	4	3	1	4	3	5	2	3	3	4	3	1	5
3	3	3	4	3	2	3	2	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	2
2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	1	3	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	4	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	3	1	4	5	5	2	4
4	3	3	4	3	1	3	4	4	2	2	2	4	3	2	3
2	2	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2
2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	2
4	2	2	3	4	2	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3
5	5	5	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	3	5	1	5	3	4
3	2	3	3	1	2	5	5	2	3	4	3	4	4	2	5

Appendix 1b: data matrix, source: personal elaboration.

Correlations

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
Q1	PCC	--															
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)																
	N	62															
Q2	PCC	,327**	--														
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,009															
	N	62	62														
Q3	PCC	,666**	,282*	--													
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,026														
	N	62	62	62													
Q4	PCC	,302*	,464**	,333**	--												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,017	0,000	0,008													
	N	62	62	62	62												
Q5	PCC	,503**	,349**	,456**	,404**	--											
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,005	0,000	0,001												
	N	62	62	62	62	62											
Q6	PCC	,257*	,299*	,300*	,513**	,275*	--										
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,044	0,018	0,018	0,000	0,031											
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62										
Q7	PCC	,401**	,261*	,521**	,361**	,654**	,425**	--									
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,001	0,040	0,000	0,004	0,000	0,001										
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62									
Q8	PCC	,314*	0,206	,427**	,569**	,448**	,419**	,526**	--								
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,013	0,108	0,001	0,000	0,000	0,001	0,000									
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62								
Q9	PCC	,494**	0,213	,531**	,335**	,560**	,314*	,617**	,599**	--							
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,096	0,000	0,008	0,000	0,013	0,000	0,000								
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62							
Q10	PCC	,287*	0,204	,334**	0,014	0,231	0,135	,285*	0,158	,369**	--						
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,023	0,111	0,008	0,916	0,071	0,294	0,025	0,219	0,003							
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62						
Q11	PCC	,521**	0,138	,515**	,318*	,432**	,303*	,480**	,378**	,622**	,284*	--					
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,286	0,000	0,012	0,000	0,017	0,000	0,002	0,000	0,025						
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62					
Q12	PCC	,449**	,252*	,462**	,563**	,504**	,268*	,517**	,670**	,675**	0,250	,456**	--				
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,049	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,035	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,050	0,000					
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62				
Q13	PCC	,354**	,313*	,470**	,461**	,421**	0,223	,593**	,606**	,631**	0,208	,421**	,548**	--			
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,005	0,013	0,000	0,000	0,001	0,082	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,104	0,001	0,000				
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62			
Q14	PCC	,381**	0,214	,522**	,451**	,553**	0,209	,613**	,643**	,681**	0,229	,570**	,722**	,683**	--		
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,002	0,095	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,104	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,073	0,000	0,000	0,000			
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62		
Q15	PCC	,402**	,353**	,368**	,477**	,523**	,412**	,594**	,538**	,604**	0,202	,342**	,586**	,561**	,651**	--	
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,001	0,005	0,003	0,000	0,000	0,001	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,115	0,006	0,000	0,000	0,000		
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	
Q16	PCC	,320*	,304*	,393**	,441**	,500**	,452**	,638**	,376**	,486**	0,200	,255*	,409**	,386**	,375**	,536**	--
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,011	0,016	0,002	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,003	0,000	0,120	0,045	0,001	0,002	0,003	0,000	
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q17	PCC	0,080	,254*	0,142	,300*	0,146	0,031	,317*	,295*	,351**	0,133	,261*	,393**	,500**	,411**	0,230	0,149
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,537	0,046	0,273	0,018	0,258	0,812	0,012	0,020	0,005	0,301	0,041	0,002	0,000	0,001	0,072	0,246
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q18	PCC	0,172	-0,003	0,036	-0,035	0,160	,295*	0,105	0,047	0,210	0,103	,294*	-0,006	0,228	0,157	0,235	-0,001
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,182	0,983	0,780	0,784	0,214	0,020	0,415	0,715	0,101	0,424	0,020	0,966	0,074	0,223	0,066	0,992
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q19	PCC	-0,176	0,230	-0,048	0,130	0,019	0,133	0,071	0,096	0,045	0,029	-0,094	-0,009	0,146	-0,048	0,041	0,151
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,172	0,072	0,712	0,313	0,882	0,302	0,585	0,458	0,727	0,824	0,469	0,943	0,256	0,712	0,749	0,240
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q20	PCC	,337**	,375**	,321*	,388**	,507**	,460**	,498**	,445**	,426**	0,147	0,132	,377**	,334**	,270*	,518**	,584**
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,007	0,003	0,011	0,002	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,001	0,255	0,308	0,003	0,008	0,034	0,000	0,000
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q21	PCC	,312*	-0,040	,393**	0,081	0,234	0,157	,262*	0,142	,351**	0,118	0,212	0,171	,263*	0,199	,263*	,447**
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,013	0,756	0,002	0,530	0,067	0,222	0,040	0,270	0,005	0,359	0,098	0,183	0,039	0,121	0,039	0,000
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q22	PCC	-0,201	-,333**	-0,243	-,276*	-,341**	-,314*	-,356**	-0,170	-0,129	0,166	-0,027	-0,073	-0,073	-0,191	-0,244	-,333**
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,117	0,008	0,057	0,030	0,007	0,013	0,004	0,187	0,318	0,196	0,837	0,574	0,570	0,137	0,056	0,008
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q23	PCC	,431**	0,095	,273*	0,144	,302*	0,246	0,091	0,150	,262*	,261*	0,129	0,245	0,100	0,217	,302*	,289*
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,000	0,464	0,032	0,264	0,017	0,054	0,484	0,245	0,040	0,040	0,319	0,055	0,439	0,090	0,017	0,023
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q24	PCC	,305*	,313*	,372**	,287*	,441**	,361**	,422**	0,239	,449**	0,240	,478**	,341**	,377**	,323*	,328**	,335**
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,016	0,013	0,003	0,024	0,000	0,004	0,001	0,062	0,000	0,060	0,000	0,007	0,002	0,011	0,009	0,008
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q25	PCC	-0,146	-0,008	0,073	0,052	-0,146	0,095	0,007	-0,061	-0,135	-0,023	0,112	-0,095	0,124	0,051	0,007	-0,053
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,259	0,951	0,573	0,686	0,256	0,464	0,956	0,639	0,294	0,857	0,385	0,462	0,335	0,692	0,958	0,681
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q26	PCC	,407**	,272*	,517**	,420**	,543**	,459**	,611**	,540**	,547**	,265*	,354**	,500**	,595**	,598**	,604**	,552**
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,001	0,032	0,000	0,001	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,037	0,005	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q27	PCC	-0,225	-,360**	-0,134	-,470**	-,296*	-0,156	-0,188	-,377**	-0,065	0,040	0,070	-,298*	-,289*	-,272*	-0,185	-0,247
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,079	0,004	0,298	0,000	0,020	0,225	0,143	0,003	0,616	0,759	0,587	0,018	0,023	0,032	0,150	0,052
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Q28	PCC	0,129	,256*	0,077	,564**	0,079	,339**	0,186	,387**	0,146	-0,100	0,201	,388**	,388**	,306*	,401**	,304*
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	0,319	0,044	0,551	0,000	0,542	0,007	0,147	0,002	0,256	0,440	0,117	0,002	0,002	0,016	0,001	0,016
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62

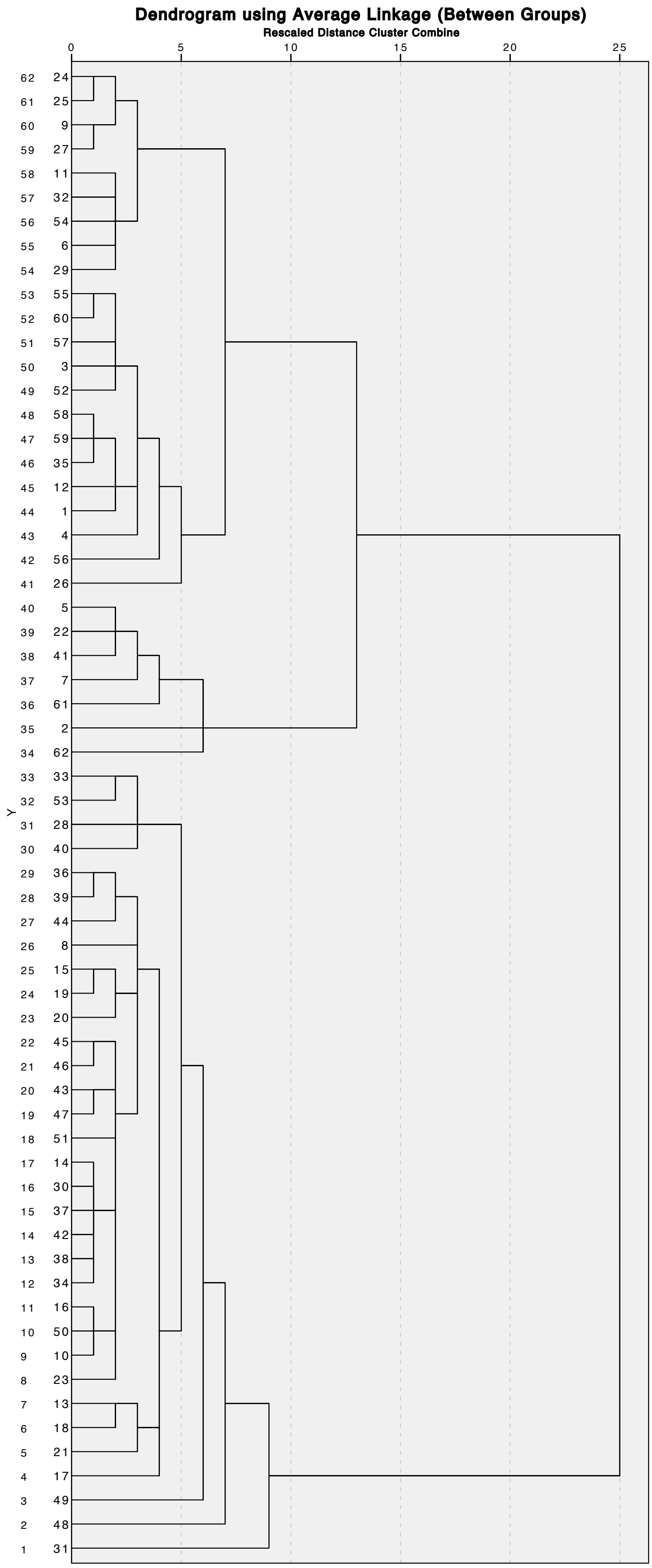
*. The correlation is significant at the level 0,05 (Two-tailed test).

**. The correlation is significant at the level 0,01 (Two-tailed test).

Appendix 2a: Pearson correlation index, source: IBM SPSS.

		Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28
Q1	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q2	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q3	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q4	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q5	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q6	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q7	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q8	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q9	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q10	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q11	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q12	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q13	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q14	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q15	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N												
Q16	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)												
	N	--											
Q17	PCC												
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62											
	N	0,090	--										
Q18	PCC	0,488											
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62										
	N	,261*	0,001	--									
Q19	PCC	0,040	0,996										
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62									
	N	0,112	0,047	,390**	--								
Q20	PCC	0,385	0,715	0,002									
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62								
	N	0,136	0,040	-0,029	,278*	--							
Q21	PCC	0,292	0,758	0,823	0,029								
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62							
	N	0,149	-0,034	-0,052	-,386**	0,186	--						
Q22	PCC	0,247	0,796	0,690	0,002	0,148							
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62						
	N	-0,047	0,183	-,296*	0,215	,388**	0,067	--					
Q23	PCC	0,718	0,154	0,020	0,093	0,002	0,607						
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62					
	N	0,179	0,080	0,185	,401**	0,189	-0,193	-0,021	--				
Q24	PCC	0,165	0,537	0,151	0,001	0,141	0,132	0,872					
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62				
	N	0,205	0,218	,408**	-0,087	-0,141	-0,008	-,250*	0,124	--			
Q25	PCC	0,110	0,089	0,001	0,504	0,275	0,954	0,050	0,339				
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62			
	N	0,231	,274*	-0,028	,487**	,444**	-,287*	,441**	,344**	-0,127	--		
Q26	PCC	0,071	0,031	0,830	0,000	0,000	0,024	0,000	0,006	0,324			
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62		
	N	0,040	0,089	0,039	-,281*	0,175	,337**	-0,083	-0,008	,298*	-0,210	--	
Q27	PCC	0,757	0,490	0,766	0,027	0,174	0,007	0,522	0,954	0,019	0,101		
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	
	N	,347**	0,063	-0,068	,320*	0,226	-0,015	0,235	,271*	-0,049	,394**	-,304*	--
Q28	PCC	0,006	0,624	0,599	0,011	0,078	0,909	0,066	0,033	0,706	0,002	0,016	
	Sign. (Two-tailed test)	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62

Appendix 2b: Pearson correlation index, source: IBM SPSS.



Appendix 3: dendrogram, source: IBM SPSS.

LIST OF FIGURES

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LIST OF APPENDICES