

Transformational leadership in Romania's local public administration

Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means.

(Albert Einstein)

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Abstract

Leadership seems to be one of the topics that social scientist can never drop from their agenda. Although approaches in studying the phenomenon has changed, the raw number of researches on this topic is truly outstanding. Yet this large number has not translated into a common accepted understanding, Stogdill's belief that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept (Stogdill, 1974, p.259) still holds true today. Leadership in the public sector is a topic that has come into attention more recently, after the New Public Management movement, with researchers trying to find links between leadership and performance. *Bass's Transformational Leadership (1985)* theory is between those that got most attention from researchers in the last decades, especially because of its claims of performance beyond expectations from groups led by this type of leaders. Information to back up such claims especially in the public sector is still limited, especially in ECE countries.

Our study was focused on analyzing leadership in local public administration authorities in Romania in two types of institutions: decentralized and deconcentrated (representatives of the central government). We used Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (1995) to study

leadership behavior in City Halls, County Councils and Prefectures at national level. Our data shows that transformational leadership behavior is quite present in public institutions and that it is the one that leads to best results.

Preliminary data analysis shows that transformational leadership is more present in the public sector than we initially thought, that the type of institution does not make a difference in leadership behavior and that some specific transformational behaviors are correlated with better results perception from subordinates.

Introduction

Leadership has been a fascinating subject both for people in general as for scientist or philosopher. Probably one of the reasons that we are drawn to the concept is the belief that leadership and leaders can, in certain situations, accomplish great things. This attraction is even more astonishing if we take into consideration that there is still no consensus regarding what leadership actually is – in other words, social scientist are fascinated by a phenomenon whose meaning is still a subject of debate. Stogdill's belief that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept (Stogdill, 1974, p.259) still holds true today and is cited frequently in scientific articles on the topic of leadership. And is rightly so if we look at the numbers as Rost argues (Rost, 1991, p. 4): Stogdill (1974) and Bass (1981) analyzed more than 4.700 studies and afterwards Stogdill concluded that in spite of the endless accumulation of empirical data and information, there is no integrated understanding of leadership while Bass declared pessimistically that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth"(Bass, 1978, p. 2). These laments are echoed by authors like Bennis (1959, p. 259) who thinks that more has been written and less known about any other topic in the behavioral sciences, more than 20 years later reiterating that "thousands of empirical investigations of leadership have been conducted in the last seventy-five years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from nonleaders" (Bennis, Nanus, 1985, p. 4).

While Rost (1991) attributes this lack of fruitfulness on the focal point of leadership research, most of it focusing on peripheral elements of leadership – characteristics, behavior, context, group motivation, goal attainment and even organizational management – while ignoring the essence of the leadership process – the leader-follower relation: "If scholars and practitioners have not focused on the nature of leadership, it should not surprise any of us who are interested in the subject that we do not know what leadership is." (p. 3), others feel that the difficulties from the adoption of the word from the common vocabulary in the scientific language, use of other ambiguous concepts like power, authority, influence, control in relation to leadership (Yukl, 2010) and from the intrinsic nature of leadership, which works like an "invisible" force inside organizations. In spite of all this, leadership studies are more important than ever, taking into consideration the calling for it in the last years because of the economic and social turmoil's that started with the financial crises of 2008.

The present paper is not going to be part of this debate, and with a more pragmatic approach, it is going to offer some arguments for the importance of leadership in increasing organizational performance in public sector organizations. The first part of the paper presents the conceptual framework we have adopted for our research – namely that of Bass's (1985) transformational leadership – and presents the main ideas of this approach. The second part of the paper presents the results of a small to medium survey done using the MLQ5X questionnaire in local public organizations in Romania. The findings are somewhat surprising as transformational leaders seem to be more present than both common sense and some academic theories on leadership in public sector would indicate. The results also confirm the positive influence of a transformational leadership style and performance perceptions.

Transformational leadership – brief analysis of the concept¹

Transformational leadership has been around for quite a while if we take into consideration the first scientific writings on the issue. At the same time the interest in this type of leadership is clearly on the rise – Lowe and Gardner (2001) concluding that approximately a third of the articles published in *Leadership Quarterly* are on either transformational or charismatic leadership; according to Northouse (2007), one argument for this is the emphasis it places on intrinsic motivation and follower development. On the same note, Antonakis (2012) sees transformational leadership as a major breakthrough in leadership studies because it incorporates “both elements of the “new leadership” (i.e., charisma, vision, and the like) and elements of the “old leadership” (i.e., transactional leadership behavior focused on role and task requirements) (p.264) although he does point to leaving out of an “essential” traditional element – initiating structure (or instrumental leadership) (Antonakis, House, 2002).

A brief historical overview of the concept, should probably start with Weber's (1947) definition of charisma and implicitly charismatic leadership, which has a lot in common with Bass's conceptualization of transformational leadership. As Antonakis (2012, p. 260-261) very well summarized Weber's ideas on the subject, these types of leaders are prone to arise especially in times of psychic, physical, economic, religious or political distress (Weber, 1968), they possess specific gifts of the body and spirit not accessible to everybody (ibid., p. 19), or in other words have “supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber, 1947, p. 358), are able to undertake great feats while followers willingly place their destiny in their leader's hands and support the leader's mission that may have arisen out of “enthusiasm, or of despair and hope” (Weber, 1968, p. 49). Downton (1973) continued Weber's work, by differentiating between charismatic, inspirational and transactional leaders, and although it is more than 10 years ahead of Bass's theory it is not mentioned by the later one (Antonakis, 2012). Downton is the first to introduce the idea of transactions between leaders and followers, distinguishing between

¹ Several important theories are not discussed here: House's (1977) charismatic leadership (including the modern form proposed by House and Shamir(1993)), Conger and Kanungo's (1987) attribution theory of charismatic leadership, Sashkin's (1988) visionary leadership or Podsakoff's transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1990, 1996); they will be integrated in a more comprehensive study on transformational leadership approach. The main theoretical arguments for excluding the two theories relate to the empirical research which was fully based on Bass's full range leadership model and thus the other theories offer little in explaining or enhancing the results of the empirical study.

positive transactions (those in which both parties receive what they expect) and negative ones which are basically situations of noncompliance which result in punishment (Antonakis, 2012). Later these two characteristics would be included in Bass's full range leadership model as contingent reward and management by exception. James MacGregor Burns (1978) had the most influence on Bass's leadership model, distinguishing transactional and transforming leaders (referring to political leaders). Transactional leaders built their relations with their followers through exchanges of mutual valued items (be it political, social, economic or emotional) while transformational leaders build their relation with followers on transcendent and far-reaching goals and ideals, through which "motivation, morality, and ethical aspirations of both the leader and followers are raised" (Antonakis, 2012, p. 263). It is interesting to see the moral side of the relation, as Burns points out to figures like Gandhi, as a perfect example of such a leader. Transforming leaders raise the consciousness of followers for what is important, especially with regard to moral and ethical implications, and make them transcend their self-interest for that of the greater good (ibid., p. 263). Because Bass constructed his model based on Burns's conceptualization, he distinguished authentic transformational leaders (moral values) from *pseudotransformational* leaders, referring to those who presented all the characteristics of transformational leadership without the moral aspect – describing them as being self-consumed, exploitive, power oriented but with warped moral values which put their own interest in front of the interest of the group or greater good (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, Bass, Riggio, 2006). While, Burns saw the two types of leadership as opposing sides of a spectrum (Antonakis, 2012), Bass reinterpreted the two models – transactional and transformational – as different sides of the same (positive) coin, the two completing each other.

Bernard M. Bass full range leadership model

In 1985 Bernard M. Bass devised his full ranged leadership model, that included 3 main types of leaders: *transformational*, *transactional* and *laissez-faire*. Paraphrasing Burns (1978), Bass (1985a, 1985b) described **transactional leaders** as being able to recognize what their followers want to get from their work, and try to see that they get it, if their performance so warrants; they exchange rewards and promises of reward for appropriate levels of effort; finally they respond to the needs and desires of associates as long as they are getting the job done (Bass, Avolio, 1999). In other words, the leader-follower relation can be seen as a continuous exchange process that is aimed at bringing mutual benefits for both parties involved. This is dependent on the knowledge of the leader regarding the needs or motivators of his followers and the actual capacity of the leader to provide the benefits. Transformational leaders on the other hand are able not only to recognize associates' needs, but to develop those needs from lower to higher levels of maturity (Bass, Avolio, 1999). Bass (1985a, 1985b) describes these leaders as individuals able to raise the level of awareness of the importance of achieving valued outcomes; they encourage followers to put their self-interest aside for the sake of the team/organization (the idea of greater good); finally, such leaders are able to develop the followers' needs to higher levels in areas as achievement, autonomy, affiliation, self-actualization (the theory implicitly accepts Maslow's conceptualization of human needs) (Bass, Avolio, 1999). Thus, according to Bass, this leads to *performance beyond expectation*, one reason being the examples of personal sacrifice, motivation and devotion for achieving the goals, demonstrated by the leader, secondly the

personal identification with both the mission and the values expressed by the leaders and finally the openness for “higher challenges” (making a difference). The *laissez-faire component*, or passive avoidant style, was added later (Yukl, 2010) and shows indifference both about tasks and subordinates, exemplifying more the absence of leadership rather than an actual style or behavior. Such individuals avoid any kind of involvement; they do not react when problems arise until they get critical.

*The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X)*² as an instrument intended to assess both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. MLQ was tested in numerous organizational environments involving military, educational, or commercial organizations (for more on this see Gellis, 2001). Since then MLQ has emerged as the primary means of quantitatively assessing transformational leadership (Bryant, 2003) Research (Bass, 1985b; Avolio, Bass and Jung, 1999) on the transformational leadership model suggest that transformational leadership can be conceptually organized along four major coordinates:

1. *Idealized influence* designates leaders seen as role-models by followers. They are admired, respected and trusted. They inspire power and pride in their followers, by going beyond their own individual interests and focusing on the interests of the group and of its members (Bass and Avolio, 1999). Seeing them as role-models, followers want to emulate them. “There are two aspects to idealized influence: the leader’s behaviors and the elements that are attributed to the leader by followers. In addition, leaders who have a great deal of idealized influence are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary. They can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct” (Bass and Riggio, 2006, p. 6).
2. *Inspirational Motivation* refers to the capacity of the leader to articulate in simple ways the goals and objectives of the group (organization). It also refers to the capacity to create a mutual understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Transformational leaders provide visions of what is possible and how to attain it. They enhance meaning and promote positive expectations about what needs to be done (Bass, 1988). Transformational leaders are able to create clear and appealing views of the future and give meaning to the work that is being done in present. Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech and US President John F. Kennedy’s vision of putting a man on the moon by 1970 stand out as exceptional examples of this characteristic (Yukl, 1989, p. 221). Through these sorts of means, transformational leaders encourage their followers to imagine and contribute to the development of attractive, alternative futures (Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson, 2003: 208).
3. *Intellectual Stimulation* is linked to creativity and innovation. Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders help followers view problems in new ways. They encourage followers to question their own beliefs, assumptions, and values, and, when appropriate, those of the leader, which may be outdated or inappropriate for solving current problems (Bass and Avolio, 1999). This is an important part of followers learning to tackle and solve problems on their own

² The information regarding the MLQ5X instrument, describing Bernard M. Bass’s full range leadership model, has been previously published exactly as in here or with minor changes in Mora C., Țiclău, T., “Transformational leadership in the public sector. A pilot study using MLQ to evaluate leadership style in Cluj County local authorities”, 2012, *Review of research and social intervention*, vol. 36, pp. 74-98.

by being creative and innovative. Following new ideas and new paths of solving problems is encouraged by transformational leaders through dismantling any sanctions or fear of ridicule for new and controversial ideas (Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2003). Followers are consequently empowered to follow new paths of thought. Transformational leaders can discern, comprehend, conceptualize, and articulate to their followers the opportunities and threats facing their organization, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and comparative advantages. It is through intellectual stimulation (of the followers) that the status quo is questioned and that new, creative methods of accomplishing the organization's mission are explored (Bass, 1985a).

4. *Individualized Consideration* means the leader is responding to each individual's specific needs in order to include everybody in the "transformation" process (Simic, 1998). Followers are developed to successively higher levels of potential. The transformational leader treats each member of the group as a unique individual with specific needs, abilities and knowledge. Task assignment and reward distribution is done on an individual basis. An important element is the capacity of the leader to build an organizational culture that supports individual development and growth. Individual consideration can be expressed through many forms, from specific rewards or praises to individuals, career counseling, mentoring and coaching or activities with the aim of individual professional development. Bass and Riggio (2006, p. 7) describe this as being "practiced when new learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate; individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized and the leader's behavior demonstrates acceptance of individual differences (e.g. some employees receive more encouragement, some more autonomy, others firmer standards, and still others more task structure)". Clearly then, besides having an overarching view of the organization and its trajectory, the transformational leader must also comprehend the things that motivate followers individually (Simic, 1998, p. 52).

According to Bass (1985a, 1985b, Bass, Avolio, 1999) *transactional behaviors* complement the transformational ones and can be classified in two major categories: constructive transactions and corrective transactions.

1. *Contingent reward* (or constructive transactions) refers to leaders defining the objectives and tasks that followers must meet, offering assistance for task accomplishment and showing recognition when expectations are met. The clarification of goals and objectives and providing of recognition once goals are achieved should result in individuals and groups achieving expected levels of performance (Bass, Avolio, 1999). Thus, *contingent reward* can be seen as an effective behavior for motivating followers, but to a lesser degree than transformational leadership behaviours (Antonakis, 2012). This is explained by the fact that in certain situations leaders lack the necessary reputation or resources to deliver the needed rewards which leads to distrust and lower respect from followers and less influence over them.
2. *Active Management by exception* (or corrective transactions) refers to leaders monitoring follower activity, defining what is seen as ineffective and taking corrective action when deviations or errors occur (Bass, Avolio, 1999). This behavior is similar to contingent reward as it is focused on outcomes of actions, but in this case the leader acts upon mistakes or deviations

instead of compliance or performance (Antonakis, 2012). This component is classified by Hater and Bass (1988) in two subcomponents – active and passive management by exception, the first one being part of the transactional leadership style and refers to quick corrective reactions from the leader to deviations and errors (this means monitoring and a certain level of personal involvement) while passive management by exception – which is part of the Laissez faire behavior – means late interventions only when problems get critical.

In the simplest of terms, transactional leadership is basically the *carrot and stick method*.

The last component of the model refers to *laissez-faire leadership or passive avoidant behaviors* and as mentioned before is comprised of:

1. *Passive management by exception* which means that leaders do not act on errors in a systematic matter (Bass, Avolio, 1999). This specific behavior is in line with the idea “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it”, and their involvement in resolving problems is reactive as they interfere only after problems have become critical.
2. Laissez-faire leadership is indicating to leaders avoiding to take responsibility, make decisions, or get involved in important issues. This translates into leaders not defining expectations, not defining objectives and task requirements, which most of the times leads to poor performance.

Bass added another dimension to reflect his hypothesis regarding leadership type and results, which measures 3 indicators for results (Bass, Avolio, 1999, p. 96):

1. *Extra effort* which means the leader is able to get followers to do more than expected, increase they’re desire to succeed and willingness to try harder (specific to transformational leadership)
2. *Effectiveness* which translates in satisfying job related needs of the followers but also representing them in relation to other groups or entities inside the organization (specific to transactional)
3. *Satisfaction* (with leadership) which refers to a positive relation between leader and followers(both transformational and transactional).

Summing it up, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X) is structured on 12 dimensions³ that are aimed at measuring the full range leadership model and offering the possibility to link leadership behavior with effectiveness (at least at followers perception level).

Positive effects of transformational leadership

Regarding the relation between transformational leadership and follower, Bass and Riggio (2006) cite numerous studies⁴ for their assertion that “the strongest effects of transformational leadership seem to

³ Idealized influence from the transformational component is divided into 2 separate dimensions: idealized behavior and idealized attributes.

be on followers' attitudes and their commitment to the leader and the organization" and this is partly responsible for the exceptional performance of groups led by such leaders (p. 32). Another positive effect of transformational leaders is high follower satisfaction (compared to non-transformational leadership). Again, the authors cite several meta-analyses⁵ in order to support their claim. Finally, the positive relation between transformational leadership and performance – or the so called performance beyond expectations of groups led by transformational leaders – is supported by several empirical studies⁶ cited by Bass and Avolio (Bass, Avolio, 1999). Other studies show positive effects of transformational leadership on creativity (Jung, Chow, Wu, 2003) and innovation (Sosik, 1997). Other effects of transformational leadership include capacity to implement strategic change (Waldman, Javidan, and Varella, 2004) and capacity to develop leadership skills through mentoring (Sosik, Godshalk, 2000; Sosik, Godshalk, Yammarino, 2004; Godshalk, 2000). There is sufficient empirical evidence to support the positive effects of transformational leadership with the observation that most of the studies were conducted in the private sector. What about the public sector, then? Could transformational leaders be effective in a specific "public sector setting" ?

Transformational leadership in the public sector⁷

We have to bear in mind that there are significant dissimilarities between public and private organizations (Dahl and Lindbloom, 1953; Downs 1967; Lindblom, 1977; Wamsley and Zald, 1973; Rainey, 1989). Major differences relate to values, structure, legal framework, interest representation, purpose, culture and impact of decisions (Țiclău, Mora, Țigănaș, Bacali, 2010). Add to this the specific environment of public administration which is traditionally regarded as a system characterized by inertia, rigidity, and immovability (Hințea, 2008, p.51) and the fact that, modern public administration faces tremendous politic, economic, technologic, and social challenges (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000).

The issue of performance measurement in the public sector needs attention, as evaluation of performance is considered more difficult in the public sector, in part because of public organizations pursuit of multiple goals simultaneously and non-economic outcomes (Van Slyke, Alexander, 2006). Authority is more diffuse, fragmented and outside pressures stronger, making decisions more complex and cumbersome, leaving leaders in a continuous battle to find support of other stakeholders for their policies (Țigănaș, Țiclău, Mora, Bacali, 2011). A side effect of lack of authority is a difference in the leader-follower relationship - public sector leaders often lack "the range and flexibility of rewards and the discretion and authority with which to incentivize alignment and sanction divergence among subordinates, including the freedom to hire and fire" (Van Slyke, Alexander, 2006, p. 368).

Some authors claim that transformational leaders are expected to be both less common and less effective in public sector organizations than private sector organizations, an argument being the former

⁴ Pitman, 1993; Rai, Sinha, 2000; Brown, Moshavi, 2002; Zohar, 2002; Koh, 1990; Koh, Steers, Terborg, 1995.

⁵ Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Lowe et al., 1996; DeGroot, Kiker, & Cross, 2000

⁶ Hater & Bass, 1988; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993;

⁷ The information included in this section has been published (with minor differences) in Mora C., Țiclău T., "Transformational leadership in the public sector. A pilot study using MLQ to evaluate leadership style in Cluj County local authorities", 2012, *Review of research and social intervention*, vol. 36, pp. 74-98

relying more on bureaucratic control mechanisms (Wright, Pandey, 2009, p. 75; similar claims in Bass and Riggio 2006; Howell 1997). But as cited above, there is empirical evidence to refute such a claim and support the idea that transformational leadership behavior is at least as common and effective in public organizations as it is in private ones (Dumdum, Lowe, Avolio 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Public administration reform is another factor that should be accounted for when examining the relevance of transformational leadership in this sector. Reform trends related to New Public Management have seen an increasing emphasis on creativity, innovation, flexibility, responsiveness from public organizations at the same time with cost reductions, increased effectiveness and sensitivity to citizen's needs. In this scenario often leaders are the ones who are seen as initiators and catalysts for such reforms but at the same time, have to bear the responsibility for any kind of stumble, be it economic, social or even political (Hințea, 2007). Lastly, ethics is a variable in need of consideration, but it can be argued that leaders would use their charisma in a socially constructive way to serve others (Bass, Steidlmeier, 1999) while being very effective ethical leaders (Keeley, 1995).

An analysis of transformational leadership in Romania's local public administration

Romania, as most of the Eastern Europe Countries has been in dire need of reform after the fall of the communist regime, and although many changes have been implemented regarding the organizing and function of the public administration, it's difficult to assess the level of effectiveness and whether we can talk about a modern administration (in the western European sense of the word). At a very general level we could argue that EU accession can be an indicator of at least minimum standards of public administration reform, although here to the monitoring process continued after 2007 motives being lack of reform in justice and high levels of corruption.

One major drawback of reform initiatives in Romania was the lack of a coherent vision regarding what needed to be done, a clear direction and specific implementation tools and measures to produce measurable results (Cepiku and Mititelu, 2010). The incoherence of reform initiatives is supported by some empirical evidence which points to this perception at least from public servants (Șandor, Tripon, 2008). Actual reform was scarce, ambiguous and incremental especially in the beginning of the '90's (Mora, Țiclău, 2008, p. 91). In most cases, the implementation process was fragmented or done partially, mainly because of lack of consistent political support for reforms and confusion and ambiguity in the body of the law, which was the major instrument used for adopting reform measures (Hințea, Țiclău, 2012) which could point to rather a superficial change without the "cultural backy" to support it.

This is the context in which we framed our study. We were interested to see whether transformational leadership is present at the level of the local public administration and whether the main assumptions regarding the positive effects on follower results hold up.

Methodology

Our study was dedicated to analyzing leadership in local public administration authorities in Romania in two types of institutions: decentralized and deconcentrated (representatives of the central government).

We used Bass and Avolio’s Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X) (1995) to study leadership behavior in City Halls, County Councils and Prefectures at national level. We sent out the MLQ5X to three types of institutions (the first two being decentralized while the last – Prefectures – were representing the central government at local level:

- City halls
- County Councils
- Prefectures

The sample consisted of all City halls head of their county (42), all county councils (41) and all Prefectures (42). Our general response rate was of 39.84% - we collected 250 questionnaires out of a total of 625. Table 1 shows the details regarding responses for each category:

	City hall (42)	County Council(41)	Prefectures (42)
250 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17 leaders - 64 subordinates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 leaders - 68 subordinates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 leaders - 68 subordinates

Table 1. Response rate distribution

We sent the MLQ5X in written form to the official address of the institutions. The envelope contained 5 questionnaires - one self-evaluation questionnaire for the leader –which we defined as head of the institutions – and 4 questionnaires for the direct subordinates. This is somewhat different than Bass and Avolio’s (1999) recommendation for a 360 evaluation which would need a minimum of 9 peer evaluations for each individual identified as a leader – 3 subordinates, 3 from individuals at the same organizational level as the leader and 3 from superior of the leader. This was not possible in our case as the category “leader” consisted in – Mayors and Deputy Mayors for City Halls, President and Vice President of County Councils and Prefects and Vice-Prefects, which formally are the top ranking officials in their respective institutions. Thus the results reflect only self evaluation and peer evaluation from subordinates.

The MLQ5X is divided in 4 big dimensions – transformational behavior, transactional behavior, passive avoidant and results - which in total leads to 45 statements⁸, each being measured from a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 means “not at all” while 4 means “frequently if not always”.

⁸ Sample statement

The structure of the MLQ5X is detailed below in table 2

Dimension	Sub-dimensions	Nr of indicators
Transformational	Idealized influence - attributes (IA)	4
	Idealized influence – idealized behaviour (IB)	4
	Inspirational motivation (IM)	4
	Intellectual stimulation (IS)	4
	Individual consideration (IC)	4
Transactional	Contingent reward (CR)	4
	Management by exception – active (MBEA)	4
Passive Avoidant	Management by exception – passive (MBEP)	4
	Laissez Faire (LF)	4
Results	Extra effort (EE)	3
	Effectiveness (EF)	4
	Satisfaction (SAT)	2

Table 2 – The structure of the MLQ5X

The scores were calculated according to Bass and Avolio’s (1999) recommendations:

- The score for a certain leadership attribute –e.g. idealized influence – was given by the average scores of each of the four indices
- The general score for a dimension –e.g transformational behavior – was calculated by averaging the final scores of each sub dimension. Thus, the final score for transformational leadership is the average of the scores obtained on the 5 dimensions – idealized attributes, idealized behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration.
- the scores from self-evaluation, peer evaluation and final score (average of all questionnaires on that particular leader) were calculated separately in order to identify potential differences between evaluators.

Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved 0 1 2 3 4
 Shows that he/she is a firm believer in “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”.....0 1 2 3 4

We had two general objectives in our empirical endeavor: (1) create a general image regarding leadership behavior in local public organizations in Romania and (2) identify the type of leadership that is perceived as leading to better performance. Starting from these objectives we put forward 3 assumptions that we tested

A1: Leadership behavior will be mostly transactional or passive avoidant.

We made this assumption taking into consideration one hand the specific characteristics of the public sector (inexistence of competition, higher rigidity and resistance to change, less encouragement for innovation, diffuse authority, higher external pressures). Coupled with some of the qualities of transformational leadership – especially individual consideration and intellectual stimulation – which translate into performance beyond expectations, transformational leadership seems far less likely in such a setting. This belief is backed up by other authors (Bass and Riggio 2006; Howell 1997; Pawar and Eastman 1997, Wright, Pandey, 2009) who believe that there is a „natural” barrier for such leaders in the public sector.

A2: The type of institution will influence the type of leadership adopted

We selected two major types of institutions: decentralized – City halls and County Councils – and deconcentrated (or representatives of the central government at local level) – Prefectures. There are several important differences between these two types of institutions. First, the leaders of the decentralized institutions are elected by the people (Mayor and County Council President) while the leaders of the deconcentrated institutions are appointed by the Prime Minister (the Prefects). Secondly, decentralized institutions are organized based on the principles of autonomy, public service decentralization, eligibility and consultation of citizens in matters of interest while the deconcentrated institutions are directly subordinated to the central government. Thus, we assumed that, the dominant leadership behaviour will be influenced by these differences.

A3: There will be a positive relation between transformational leaders and results.

Bass and Avolio (1999) have shown that transformational leadership leads to better results compared to either transactional or passive avoidant. Furthermore, the augmenting effects of transformational leadership have been indicated by several studies (Hater, Bass, 1988; Howell, Avolio, 1993; Yammarino, Spangler, Bass, 1993).

Results

The general scores were calculated using the procedures described in the methodology. In order to have a better understanding of the scores we compared them to the *scientific benchmark*⁹ for the national

⁹ The scientific benchmark for Romania has been obtained from our personal calculations starting from the scores presented by Iliescu, D., Beldean, F., Sîntion, F. (2007), *Manual tehnic și interpretativ al MLQ, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*, Cluj-Napoca, Odiseea - Raport DEMO pentru evaluare 360. The scores can have an error of +/- 0.03, and have been calculated based on what is presented in Raport Demo 360, p. 11

level. The line marked with purple represents the median score which gives the baseline. All scores above the median are high on that particular dimension, while all scores below are considered low.

%	IA	IB	IM	IS	IC	CR	MBE-A	MBE-P	LF	EE	EFF	SAT
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0,5	0,4	0,5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,2	0
20	0,5	1,15	1,1	1,11	0,35	0,79	0,1	0	0	0,7	0,89	0,48
30	1,21	1,73	1,71	1,72	1,1	1,5	0,9	0	0	1,43	1,56	1,22
40	1,98	2,35	2,36	2,37	1,85	2,2	1,7	0,5	0,2	2,2	2,29	2,07
50	2,69	2,98	3	2,98	2,59	2,93	2,51	1,22	0,86	2,93	2,97	2,85
60	3,4	3,58	3,62	3,6	3,3	3,62	3,3	1,9	1,5	3,66	3,65	3,62
70	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2,7	2,2	4	4	4
80								3,35	2,83			
90								4	3,5			
100									4			

Table 3 – Scientific benchmarks for Romania in measuring transformational leadership using MLQ5X

The demographics of the study population are as follows

- from 250 respondents, 178 agreed to declare their gender – 57.3% male, 42.7% female.
- Average age of respondents: 44,42 years, with a min. of 23 years and a max. of 65
- 222 agreed to declare their educational level: 0.5% have high school diploma, 36.5% have undergraduate diploma, 56.8% have a masters degree while 5.9% have finished a PhD.
- Average period of time spent in the organization (seniority) – 6.63 with a min. of 1 and a max of 23.

General leadership scores

Looking at table 4 we can observe that the highest scores have been on the transformational dimension, from both self evaluation (3.20) and peer evaluation (3.09). The most notable differences are on the passive avoidant scale and results scale. The average score on passive avoidant (1.21) was 0.17 above the scientific benchmark value (1.04) while on the results scale, the difference between the average (3.22) and the scientific benchmark value (2.92) is of 0.3 points.

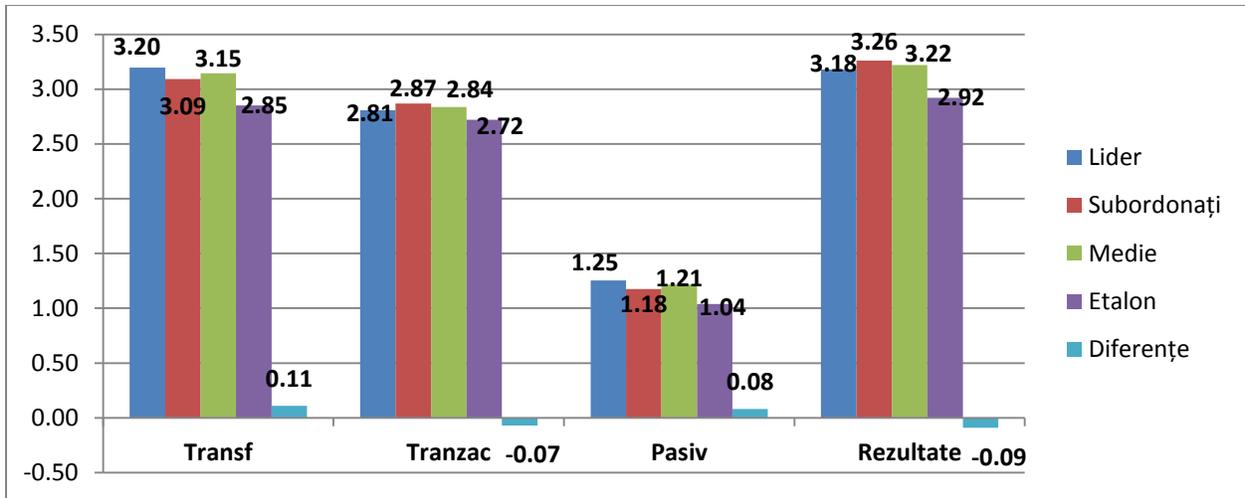


Table 4 – general leadership scores

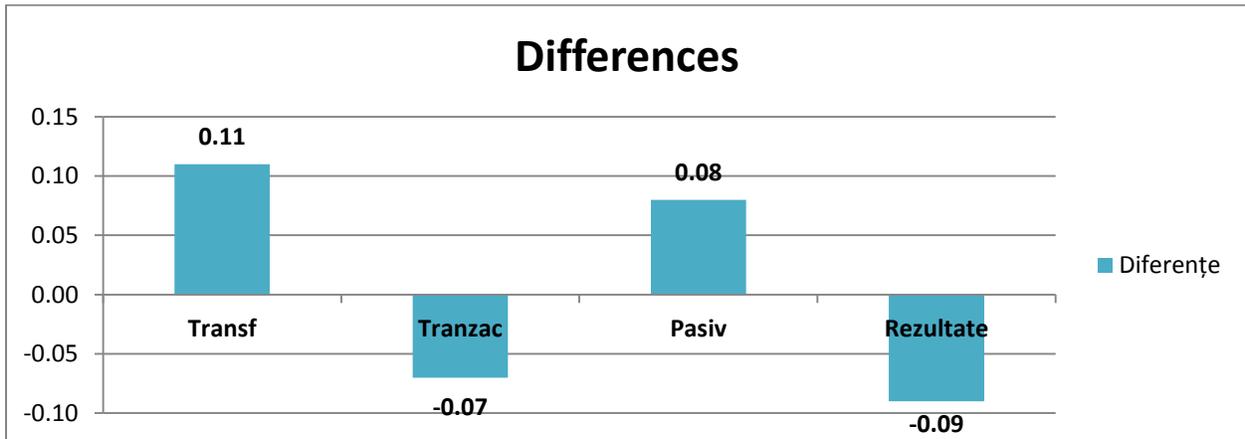


Table 5 – differences between self-evaluation and peer evaluation at national level

Comparing the differences¹⁰ between self evaluation and peer evaluation we can see that there are no major discrepancies, so it would be fair to state that leadership perception is quite homogenous in the population analyzed. The small differences that were recorded would point to the fact that leader tend to over evaluate a bit their transformational and passive avoidant behavior in relation to their subordinates while the under evaluate their transactional behaviors and their capacity to achieve results.

A1: Leadership behavior will be mostly transactional or passive avoidant

In order to verify this assumption we compared the scores calculated for each dimension with the scientific benchmark. In order to confirm our assumption we should have higher scores on the transactional and passive avoidant scales compared to the scientific benchmark.

¹⁰ A positive score means that the leader gave himself/herself a higher score compared to that of the peers, while a negative score means the leader gave himself/herself a lower score compared to that of the peers.

	Transf	Tranzac	Pasiv	Rezultate
Leader	3.20	2.81	1.25	3.18
Sub	3.14	2.92	1.18	3.32
Average	3.17	2.86	1.22	3.25
S. Benchmark	2.85	2.72	1.04	2.92
Difference	0.32	0.14	0.18	0.33

Table 6 – average scores on the dimensions of MLQ5X at national level

Our results point the other way – the highest scores both in absolute terms but also in relation to the scientific benchmark have been on the transformational and on the results scale, with low to medium differences of 0.32 and 0.33 respectively. Thus we can say that our initial assumption was proven wrong. However, the scores have a certain amount of “inconclusiveness” because all scores are slightly above the scientific benchmark and if we go back to Table3 we will see that all place themselves exactly in the 6th decile.

A2: The type of institution will influence the type of leadership adopted

Our second assumption was that because of a different form of organization and a different relations with other institutions (mainly the central government), the leadership type displayed in decentralized and deconcentrated institutions will be also different. In other words, the type o institution will have an influence on leadership behavior. In order to test this we used compare means between the organization type variable and the three dimensions of leadership behavior – transformational, transactional and passive avoidant. We only found a significant relation between the passive avoidant behavior and institution type but it is very low, the type of institution explaining only 3,37% of the passive leadership behavior. Thus, our second assumption is confirmed but only partially because only the passive avoidant dimension was influenced by type of institution and the influence itself is very weak.

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PasivS * ORGANIZATIA	Between Groups	(Combined)	3.677	2	1.839	3.738	.026
		Linearity	3.217	1	3.217	6.539	.011
		Deviation from Linearity	.461	1	.461	.937	.334
	Within Groups		95.915	195	.492		
	Total		99.592	197			

Measures of Association

	R	R Squared	Eta	Eta Squared
PasivS * ORGANIZATIA	-.180	.032	.192	.037

A3: There will be a positive relation between transformational leaders and results.

Our third assumption is simply put one of the main arguments for adopting transformational leadership and transformational behaviors inside organizations – performance beyond expectations. As we have pointed out earlier there are numerous studies (Bass, Riggio 2006; Boerner, Eisenbeiss, Griesser, 2007; Zhu, Chew, Spangler, 2005; Jorg Schyns, 2004; Barling, Weber, Kelloway, 1996; Howell, Avolio, 1993) that point to the impact that transformational leaders have upon organizational performance. In order to test this we will try to see whether there is a correlation between the three leadership dimensions (behaviors) and the results dimension/scale. We will also try to build a linear regression model.

TransfL = transformational leadership, leader self evaluation

TransfS = transformational leadership, peer/subordinate evaluation

TransacL = transactional leadership, leader self evaluation

TransacS = transactional leadership, peer/subordinate evaluation

PasivL = passive-avoidant leadership, leader self evaluation

PasivS = passive-avoidant leadership, peer/subordinate evaluation

ResultsL = results, leader self evaluation

ResultsS = results, peer/subordinate evaluation

Transformational leadership and results

Table 7 points out to the relation between transformational leadership and results (perception). There is a significant and strong correlation both at self evaluation level (0.651) and at peer evaluation level (0.778).

Correlations

		TransfL	ResultsL	TransfS	ResultsS
TransfL	Pearson Correlation	1	.651**	. ^a	. ^a
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.	.
	N	50	50	0	0
ResultsL	Pearson Correlation	.651**	1	. ^a	. ^a
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.	.
	N	50	50	0	0
TransfS	Pearson Correlation	. ^a	. ^a	1	.778**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.		.000
	N	0	0	199	198
ResultsS	Pearson Correlation	. ^a	. ^a	.778 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.000	
	N	0	0	198	198

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

Table 7 – Transformational leadership and results

When testing the correlation between transactional leadership and results, we also got a significant relation with Pearson r Correlation was 0.370 for self evaluation (sig. 0.08, N=50) and 0.615 (sig. 000) for peer evaluation (N=198). The last dimension, passive avoidant behavior correlated negatively (-0.417, sig. 000) only in the case of peer/subordinate evaluations.

Linear regression model

We put all the three dimensions as independent variables in a regression model with results being the dependent variable – see table 8

Liniar regression model (transformational, transactional, passive avoidant leadership)x results (peer/subordinate evaluation)					
Correlations					
		ResultsS	TransfS	TransacS	PasivS
Pearson Correlation	ResultsS	1.000	.777	.618	-.417
	TransfS	.777	1.000	.641	-.281
	TransacS	.618	.641	1.000	-.149
	PasivS	-.417	-.281	-.149	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	ResultsS	.	.000	.000	.000
	TransfS	.000	.	.000	.000
	TransacS	.000	.000	.	.019
	PasivS	.000	.000	.019	.
N	ResultsS	197	197	197	197
	TransfS	197	197	197	197
	TransacS	197	197	197	197
	PasivS	197	197	197	197

Variables Entered/Removed			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PasivS, TransacS, TransfS ^a		Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.821 ^a	.674	.669	.33167

a. Predictors: (Constant), PasivS, TransacS, TransfS

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.975	3	14.658	133.254	.000 ^a
	Residual	21.231	193	.110		
	Total	65.206	196			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PasivS, TransacS, TransfS

b. Dependent Variable: ResultsS

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.757	.178		4.244	.000
	TransfS	.679	.065	.577	10.447	.000
	TransacS	.221	.055	.216	4.028	.000
	PasivS	-.181	.035	-.223	-5.194	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ResultsS

Table 8 –Linear regression model – leadership behavior x results

We got an R square value of 0.674 which means that the three dimensions explain around 67% of the variance in the results variable. We can also see that the first two dimensions correlate positively with results while the passive avoidant behavior value is negative (- .417 Pearson r, and -.223 Beta).

We can also see, in the table of coefficients that transformational leadership (dimension) has the biggest influence on results – beta 0.577 – compared to transactional – 0.26 – and passive avoidant - -0.223.

We went further with our analysis and introduced each sub dimension of each leadership behavior in the model – see table 9 for abbreviations.

IA2S = idealized influence (atributes)	Transformational
IAB2S = idealized influence (behavior)	
IM2S = inspirational motivation	
IS2S= intellectual stimulation	
IC2S= individual consideration	
CRS=contingent reward	Transactional
MBEAS= management by exception (active)	

MBEPS=management by exception passive	Passive avoidant
LFS= laissez faire leadership	

Table 9 – sub dimensions abbreviations

Only idealized influence (both attributes and behavior), intellectual stimulation, contingent reward and laissez faire leadership had a significantly statistic relation with results.

The correlation table – table 10 – shows strong positive relations between the sub dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership with the laissez faire leadership having a strong negative relation.

Correlations

		ResultsS	IA2S	IAB2S	IS2S	CRS	LFS
Pearson Correlation	ResultsS	1.000	.724	.641	.604	.703	-.547
	IA2S	.724	1.000	.613	.563	.681	-.527
	IAB2S	.641	.613	1.000	.512	.571	-.344
	IS2S	.604	.563	.512	1.000	.558	-.268
	CRS	.703	.681	.571	.558	1.000	-.442
	LFS	-.547	-.527	-.344	-.268	-.442	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	ResultsS	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	IA2S	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	IAB2S	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	IS2S	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	CRS	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	LFS	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
N	ResultsS	198	198	198	198	198	198
	IA2S	198	198	198	198	198	198
	IAB2S	198	198	198	198	198	198
	IS2S	198	198	198	198	198	198
	CRS	198	198	198	198	198	198
	LFS	198	198	198	198	198	198

Table 10 – correlation coefficients – leadership behavior and results

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.827 ^a	.684	.676	.32791

a. Predictors: (Constant), LFS, IS2S, IAB2S, CRS, IA2S

ANOVA^d

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.744	5	8.949	83.224	.000 ^a
	Residual	20.645	192	.108		
	Total	65.389	197			

a. Predictors: (Constant), LFS, IS2S, IAB2S, CRS, IA2S

b. Dependent Variable: ResultsS

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.801	.191		4.194	.000
	IA2S	.226	.065	.225	3.460	.001
	IAB2S	.211	.057	.201	3.702	.000
	IS2S	.171	.049	.185	3.525	.001
	CRS	.220	.054	.243	4.059	.000
	LFS	-.135	.032	-.202	-4.190	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ResultsS

Table 11 – regression model for each sub dimension of leadership behavior

The R square values is quite high (0.684) which means that the 5 sub dimensions explain almost 70% of the variance in results. Surprisingly, taking each sub dimension independently, the most positive impact is made by contingent reward, which is in fact a sub dimension of transactional leadership but overall, the highest impact is made by transformational leadership through idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation. As expected, the absence of leadership – or laissez-faire dimension – has a negative influence on results.

If we would try to draw an image of what type of leader is perceived as achieving results, we could say that it is a person which is seen as a role model, admired, respected, that goes beyond personal interest, focusing on the groups grater good and that can be counted upon to do the right thing (Idealized influence or charisma); it is a person that is capable of motivating people to be creative, think outside the box and encourages innovation, helping followers to view and solve problems in new ways (Intellectual stimulation); it is a person that is capable of defining and clarifying what is expected from the followers, offers assistance and support in reaching the objectives defined and shows recognition when targets are met, rewarding performance (Contingent reward); it is a person that DOES NOT avoid taking responsibility, making decisions and getting involved when he or she is needed (laissez faire).

Conclusions

The present study had the purpose to investigate the leadership behavior in the local public administration in Romania and identify the influence of transformational leadership upon results.

We were able to show that against common sense and some data from other studies, at least in the organizations (50) that were analyzed, transformational leadership is the dominant behavioral pattern of the heads of institutions in the local public administration, although it is mostly just above average values. A more comprehensive research, which would be representative at national level would be useful in analysing the myth of the „bureaucratic leader” in public administration. At first sight it seems more of a myth than a reality.

Secondly, we have shown that the type of institution has little influence on the leadership behavior adopted, but we have to mention that we only looked at type of institution –decentralized or deconcentrated – and did not take any other factors into consideration (institution dimension, nr of employees, financing and so forth). Thus a more detailed study on this relation would be adequate to properly answer our question

The most interesting finding is that related to transformational leadership and its impact on (perceived) results. According to data presented, transformational leadership has the most significant impact on results while passive avoidant leadership is negatively correlated with results.

Also we have shown that not all factors from transformational leadership have had an influence, rather idealized influence and intellectual stimulation being the ones which make them stand out. They should be doubled by contingent reward – a transactional leadership behavior – in order to increase the positive effects. This is in accordance with the arguments of Bass and Avolio (1999) which state that transactional leadership complements transformational leadership and they are basically sides of the same coin.

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