

Impact of Leadership and Gender on Civil Servants' Resilience in the Romanian State's Public Administration*

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Abstract

The research analyses the leadership styles practiced in the Romanian public administration, the gender differences regarding the practiced leadership and in terms of exhibiting behaviors that could lead to the development of civil servants' resilience, trying to investigate the relation between leadership, gender, and resilience. The paper contributes to the scientific literature in the field by analyzing three concepts that are not usually explored together and especially in the public administration. The research methodology consists of a sociological survey conducted in the Romanian public administration where 766 civil servants agreed to participate.

The research revealed that the studied leaders present a mix of characteristics where transformational and transactional behaviors are predominant. Regarding gender differences, both men and women are considered to lead in a similar manner, but a higher preference for male leaders was observed. Men's leadership behaviors are better appreciated, indicating the presence of gender stereotypes and a certain level of prejudice against women. The studied leaders possess the necessary characteristics for developing civil servants' resilience, being perceived as exhibiting supportive, encouraging, and motivating attitudes when their subordinates faced difficult moments in their careers. Also, the existence of a direct relation between transformational leadership and resilience was observed.

Keywords: leadership, civil servants' resilience, gender, public administration.

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1. Introduction

The concept of leadership still represents a subject of interest for researchers in different fields of study and research conducted so far revealed that leadership has been studied predominantly in private organizations or regarding the political environment (see Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003; Bass and Bass, 2008) and less in public institutions. The approach of leadership related to public administration and other public institutions should be considered more because the development of a nation, region, or community is based not only on political leaders, but also on the public administration apparatus. It is well known that public administration influences significantly the economic and social development, exerting great impact on the successful implementation of administrative reforms. For the aforementioned reasons, the study of leadership phenomena in public administration, from the perspective of nonpolitical leaders, is necessary.

Beside leadership, this paper addresses the concept of resilience related to leadership. When facing shocks and stressors, public institutions should immediately find answers, adapt and successfully manage crises, or prevent the negative impact of certain shocks, especially the economic ones, meaning that they should develop and strengthen their resilience. In this context, leadership could be a factor of impact on strengthening institutions and human resources' resilience.

Another topic approached by the present research is the issue of gender with regard to leadership. Introducing the gender variable in the study of leadership in public institutions is also important due to the fact that 67% of the civil servants in the Romanian public administration are women (The National Agency of Civil Servants, 2020), occupying 60% of the existing leadership positions. This situation leads to the necessity of studying their leadership behaviors to observe if they lead differently or in the same manner as men do, if they are perceived positively by their subordinates and if they have the necessary abilities for developing and strengthening civil servants' resilience.

The originality of this study stems from the fact that it addresses the relation between three different concepts (leadership, gender and resilience) within the same research in a field where no such research has been conducted so far. First of all, the paper seeks to capture two topical problems of public administration: leadership, a subject closely related to organizational performance and resilience, as well as to civil servants' resilience. In addition to these two topics, the introduction of the gender variable contributes to the originality of the paper because the gender issue is not approached in regard with discrimination as in many previous studies, rather, it addresses female leaders' characteristics and behaviors in order to observe if women lead differently, what behaviors they exhibit, what abilities or skills they have, and what is the relationship with their subordinates.

2. Resilience and leadership – are they related?

Resilience is a system's ability to absorb a shock and implement changes while maintaining its core functions and structure (Gunderson, 2010). As Bruneckiene *et al.* (2018) stated, resilience is a complex concept that cannot be analyzed from just one perspective. It

is also a variable feature because even if a system regains its original balance or evolves to a new state of equilibrium, it will go through a process of change. The system will absorb the shock and adapt to new circumstances by implementing more or less substantial changes. All components of the system and the way they respond to these changes will impact its resilience. This information opens the path for exploring the relationship between resilience and leadership, as certain leadership styles, such as the transformational one, include the idea of embracing change (Bass, 1998).

Characteristics of a resilient system (Bene *et al.*, 2014) such as: promoting and encouraging diversity, flexibility, inclusion and participation, recognition of social values, acceptance of change and uncertainty, lifelong learning, community involvement, economic and social equity, cross-cutting perspectives on events and the governance process' efficiency lead to the potential existence of a link between leadership and resilience and, especially, to the impact of the transformational leadership style on human resources' resilience (Bene *et al.*, 2014).

Most studies regarding these two concepts have been conducted from a theoretical perspective. Some authors have noticed that resilience and leadership have not been sufficiently addressed as the leading process might have a significant impact on the adaptive capacity of organizations and human resources in times of crisis (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). These authors state that resilience is an essential factor for the development of leadership and for increasing organizational efficiency.

Most of the authors did not find a direct relationship between these two concepts, but some of them considered that the practiced leadership could influence institutional resilience (Rodríguez-Sánchez and Perea, 2015; Ledesma, 2014). Moreover, leadership will have a dual role in developing resilience because it will influence human resources and also institutional resilience. This opinion is based on research regarding transformational leadership, which considers that transformational leaders inspire, motivate, help their subordinates to understand and accept the organizational culture, develop professionally, encourage them to participate in the process of change, develop their self-esteem, focus on organizational performance, leaving aside self-interest (Bass, 1998; Bass and Bass, 2008).

Other studies emphasized managers' role in developing human resources' resilience, such as planning and implementing practices that should encourage employees' participation in the decision-making process, creating a mechanism where employees would offer feedback constantly, focusing on subordinates' well-being and on developing interpersonal relationships with them as well as offering them support to better integrate into the organization and autonomy regarding tasks' accomplishments and decision making (Bohlander and Snell, 2009; Dessler, 2002; Dietz, Wilkinson and Redman, 2010; Muckinsky, 2004; Siqueira, 2008).

Additionally, according to some authors, resilience means 'increasing or adapting to disturbances, rather than returning to a system's original state' (Richardson, 2002). Moreover, resilience 'includes the ability to turn challenges into opportunities' meaning 'more than returning to the initial state before the shock but going further to achieve even greater success than before' (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2003, p. 8). Considering these points of

view, a potential relationship between leadership and resilience might exist, due to the fact that transformational leaders usually implement the management of change, and resilience includes the concept of organizational change.

Other studies concerning subordinates' resilience and leadership (Harland *et al.*, 2005; Dumdum, Lowe and Avolio, 2002) showed a positive relationship between transformational leadership dimensions (inspirational motivation, charisma, idealized influence, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation), transactional behaviors (contingent reward) and subordinates' resilience and a negative relationship between resilience and passive management (transactional dimension) and laissez-faire style. The research also revealed that subordinates whose leaders exhibit effective leadership behaviors are more resilient than those whose leaders engage in passive behaviors (Harland *et al.*, 2005).

Bass (1990) also conducted a study on transformational leadership and subordinates' behavior under stress that showed that transformational leaders have managed to turn crises into opportunities for subordinates' development, presenting them as situations that can be surpassed and providing subordinates with the necessary support. Moreover, the way in which Bernard Bass conceptualized transformational leadership as a process that goes beyond simply achieving the pursued goals, giving it greater purpose and meaning (Antonakis and House, 2013) is closely related to resilience and adaptability definitions, being based on the idea of development and growth (Harland *et al.*, 2005).

A more recent study (Valero, Jung and Andrew, 2014) conducted in several types of institutions in South Korea that sought to investigate if transformational leadership influences institutional resilience showed that employees believed that transformational leaders have a positive impact on the development of institutional resilience. Respondents who considered their leaders as exhibiting transformational behaviors also perceived their organizations as being very resilient.

In Romania's case, the literature revealed many important studies that investigated leadership in public administration, especially the transformational and transactional styles (Țiclău, 2012; Mora and Țiclău, 2013; Hînțea, 2015; Androniceanu, 2013; Nicdao, 2019; Țiclău and Hînțea, 2016). Also, resilience was analyzed in the Romanian literature, from different perspectives, such as: theoretical approach (Moldovan, 2019), related to civil servants from rural areas (Cotoranu and Moldovan, 2020), the process of governing (Țiclău, Hînțea and Andrianu, 2020), public institutions (Farca and Dragoș, 2020), labor market (Hakansson and Bejakovic, 2020), regions (Wojtowicz, 2020; Dentinho and Serbanica, 2020) or organizational culture (Andrianu, 2020). The review of the Romanian literature shows a lack of studies investigating resilience and leadership together, in a way that could determine the relation between the two concepts.

3. Resilience and gender – are they related?

Introducing the gender variable in the study of resilience is less considered in the literature. This component is integrated only in studies that analyze resilience in relation to natural disasters, conducted in developing countries. For example, a study on gender issues in

climate disaster risk management and in the context of the need to adapt to climate change (Le Masson, Norton and Wilkinson, 2015) revealed that adopting a gender perspective helps to better understand how women and men live different experiences caused by natural disasters. Another study (Mercy Corps, 2018), aiming to propose measures to integrate the gender component in the development of resilience in disadvantaged areas, outlined the need to involve women in decision-making in households, in the communities they belong to, and ensure women's access on the capital and financial market.

The studies that took gender into account in relation to resilience were conducted in societies which have different characteristics from European societies and where women still have a lower status. These studies suggested the need for a greater involvement of women in households and communities' life and not women's involvement in the leading process. Consequently, the gender component should also be introduced in the study of institutional resilience, to observe if female-led organizations or where women represent the majority of employees (such as the case of Romanian public administration) are more resilient and whether areas of the labor market, considered typically feminine, are more vulnerable and more exposed to risks. Studying gender in relation to institutional resilience and human resources is a new topic and an opportunity.

Although there is a gap in the literature due to a lack of studies which could show the impact of female leaders on resilience development, an argument in favor of this assumption would be the studies regarding leadership and gender. These studies revealed that women will predominantly use the transformational leadership style (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and Van Engen, 2003) and might have an impact on institutional and human resources' resilience. These studies could be the starting point in researching the relationship between resilience and gender through leadership perspective. Using transformational behaviors would not only help with developing resilience but would also show that female leaders possess the necessary qualities for leading well-performing organizations and develop institutional and human resources' resilience and, could help with improving the perception of female leaders, their behaviors, and their leadership outcomes.

In Romania's case, a significant number of studies approached leadership and gender in public administration, but they did not investigate the gender differences in practiced leadership. These studies mostly focused on discrimination, gender segregation, glass ceiling, the presence of women in leadership positions or the obstacles encountered by women in leadership positions (Moldovan, 2016; Moldovan, 2015). Other authors (Moldovan and Macarie, 2019) approached resilience in relation to gender discrimination. Studies related to leadership, gender, and resilience together, in public administration, could not be identified in the Romanian literature.

The relatively low number of studies connecting leadership with gender issues in the Romanian public administration and the lack of research about the three concepts together created the opportunity to investigate the gender differences regarding the practiced leadership and in terms of exhibiting behaviors that could lead to the development of civil servants' resilience, as to reveal if leadership and gender are two variables that might influence human resources' resilience.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Research objectives and hypotheses

This paper aims to analyze the practiced leadership styles in public institutions of the Romanian state's administration as well as the gender differences with regard to practiced leadership and in terms of exhibiting behaviors that could lead to the development of civil servants' resilience.

The main objective of the research is to investigate if men and women occupying leadership positions (such as Directors) in public institutions of Romanian state's administration are perceived as behaving in similar or different manners and if their behaviors could impact the development of civil servants' resilience.

The specific objectives of the study are: (1) to investigate civil servants' perceptions regarding the leadership styles practiced by the civil servants occupying top management positions in the Romanian state's administration; (2) to analyze the influence of gender on civil servants' perception regarding the leadership styles practiced by their leaders, and (3) to investigate civil servants' perceptions regarding their leaders' behaviors that could influence the development of human resources' resilience, in order to establish the existence of a direct relation between leadership, leaders' gender, and their capacity of developing civil servants' resilience.

The study is based on three hypotheses designed in accordance with the research objectives:

- H1. Civil servants in the top management positions of the Romanian state's administration are inclined to exhibit both transformational and transactional behaviors in the same manner;
- H2. Leaders' gender is a variable that influences civil servants' perceptions regarding the exhibited leadership behaviors in the Romanian state's administration; and
- H3. The practiced leadership and leaders' gender directly influence civil servants' perception of leaders' capacity to develop civil servants' resilience in the Romanian state's administration.

4.2. Research design and data collection

The research methodology consists of a questionnaire-based survey conducted in Romania's state's public administration. The state's central executive administration is composed of the Secretariat General of the Government (Government's Working Apparatus), ministries and subordinated institutions as well as Prefect's Institutions. Table 1 presents the structure of the sample chosen for the study. In the ministries and Prefects' institutions' case, the exhaustive sampling method was used, as the questionnaire was sent to all ministries and Prefects' institutions in Romania. In the subordinated institutions' case, a simple random sampling method was used as one institution for each ministry was chosen.

The questionnaire was sent via email to all institutions included in the sample along with a request in which the participants were asked to express their agreement of participation in the study. From each institution, an average of 20 responses was received and a total of 766 civil servants participated in the study.

Table 1: The structure of the sample

Institutions included in the sample	Institutions that responded to the questionnaire
Center of Government	Governments Working Apparatus
22 Ministries	15 Ministries
22 Institutions subordinated to ministries	7 subordinated institutions
42 Prefect's institutions	21 Prefect's institutions

Source: The Authors

4.3. The research instrument used in the study

The questionnaire was designed by the authors and had a complex structure, divided into three main sections. The first part contained five identification questions regarding the respondent's hierarchic position, gender, age, seniority in the institution, and the evaluated Director's gender.

To investigate civil servants' perceptions regarding the leadership styles practiced by their Directors, the second section of the questionnaire contained 40 items that measured three leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles. The items represented leadership behaviors and were built accordingly to the theories of Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio (1990), and Bass and Bass (2008) regarding these three leadership styles, considering that previous studies (Dumdum, Lowe and Avolio, 2002; Harland *et al.*, 2005) revealed positive and negative correlations between leadership behaviors related to these styles and human resources' resilience. The questionnaire does not replicate the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire created by Bass and Avolio (1990) to measure leadership and its outcomes. The items were designed taking into consideration the characteristics of the transformational and transactional leaders, as conceptualized in the authors' theories (Burns, 1978; Bass and Bass, 2008, Avolio, 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1993) and were built considering public institutions characteristics.

From all items, 26 behaviors were characteristic to transformational leaders, ten behaviors to transactional leaders, and four behaviors described passive leadership attitudes (*laissez-faire*). The participants were asked to express their opinion regarding the frequency of those behaviors in their leaders' general attitudes, on a scale from one to five (the Likert scale), where the scale meant: 1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – quite often, 5 – frequently, if not always.

As to study the perception of leaders' capacity of developing civil servants' resilience, in the third part of the questionnaire, the respondents were presented with eight different difficult situations in their careers. These different situations were divided into two categories (stressors and shocks) and the majority were specific only to public institutions. The civil servants were asked to express their opinions about their leaders' behaviors in the mentioned situations. They had to choose from two opposed behaviors: (1) indifferent and (2) supportive, encouraging, and motivational behaviors. From the presented situations, five were considered stressors that can appear constantly in the civil servants' careers. These stressors are civil servants' personal problems, professional problems, problems at

the beginning of their careers when civil servants need mentors and guidance, changes in the organizational charts, and changes of leadership at the organizational level. Other three situations were considered shocks, namely: income cuts generated by the economic crisis, budgetary cuts faced by the institution, and organizational restructuring. The purpose of these questions was to reveal civil servants' perception of their leaders' attitudes in face of shocks and stressors with a negative impact on their careers, as well as to investigate the potential relation between gender, resilience, and the practiced leadership.

4.4. The main characteristics of the sample

Based on the level of power and attributions, the public positions in the Romanian Civil Service are divided into public positions corresponding to management public positions, and execution public positions. The execution public positions are structured in professional grades based on the seniority as follows: beginner, assistant, principal, and superior grade, which is the maximum level. The conditions for recruitment in the civil service are related to the level of education and tenure (The Administrative Code, 2019).

The civil servants included in the sample of the present study were execution civil servants and civil servants in management positions of head of office and head of department. The respondents evaluated their leaders' behaviors and not their direct hierarchic superiors' behaviors. There were considered leaders, the persons occupying positions of General Director/ Deputy General Director/ Director/Deputy Director.

Out of the total number of institutions included in the sample, a number of 766 civil servants participated in the study. Regarding the public positions held by respondents, according to the level of the attributions, 138 persons (18%) held positions of head of office and head of department and 628 (82%) were execution level civil servants.

Regarding participants' age, 16% (123) were between 20 and 35 years old, 56% (429) were between 35 and 50 years old, and 28% (213) were between 50 and 65 years old. Only one respondent was over 65 years old.

Concerning respondents' distribution according to their seniority in the institutions included in the sample, 8% (59) were beginners with a seniority of 0-1 year, 26% (197) were assistant civil servants with seniority between 1 and 5 years, 8% (61) were civil servants on principle grade with seniority between 5 and 7 years and the majority, 58% (448), had seniority of more than 7 years, standing at the last professional-grade, namely, the superior grade.

Regarding respondents' distribution by their gender, 69.6% (533) were women and 30.4% (233) were men; the gender structure of the population participating in the study was similar to the gender structure of the body of civil servants. Regarding Directors' gender, 56.8% (435) of the respondents worked in Directorates led by female Directors, and 43.2% (331) by men.

5. Leadership and resilience in the Romanian state's administration: results of the survey

5.1. The leadership styles of men and women in the Romanian state's administration

To test the first hypothesis of the study, that the civil servants in the top management positions of the Romanian state's administration are inclined to exhibit both transformational and transactional behaviors in the same manner, three composite variables have been computed, based on the scores attributed to each behavior from the questionnaire, namely: variable transformational leadership (VTR), variable transactional leadership (VTZ) and variable passive leadership (VLP) and the results were compared.

Figure 1 presents the averages' distribution for the transformational and transactional styles and the passive-avoidant component, by Directors' gender and for the total population evaluated in the survey.

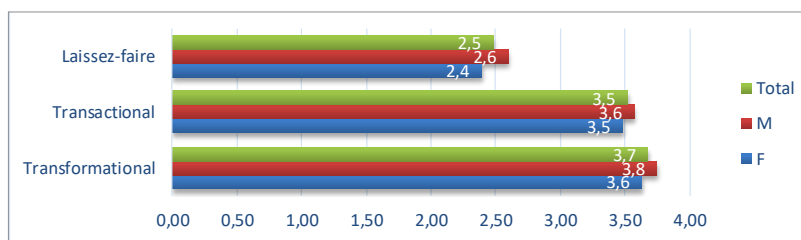


Figure 1: The leadership styles practiced in the Romanian state's administration

Source: The Authors

In terms of transformational leadership, leaders scored 3.68 (out of a maximum of 5), meaning that civil servants considered that Directors exhibit these behaviors on average, quite often. Male leaders scored slightly higher (3.75) than women (3.68). Small differences in perception show that civil servants believe that their leaders manifest these behaviors in a similar manner.

In terms of transactional leadership, the studied leaders manifest these behaviors on average quite often, scoring 3.52. Regarding gender differences, the studied leaders are perceived similarly, women scoring slightly lower (3.48) compared to men (3.57).

Regarding passive leadership, the studied leaders exhibit behaviors associated with this dimension, rarely to sometimes, scoring 2.48. Concerning the gender differences, female leaders scored lower (2.39) than men (2.6). Being perceived as less uninvolved in the leadership process is in women's favor. Analyzing the scores on this dimension, it can be considered that the leaders obtained a high score, indicating the need to increase their involvement in the leadership process and a greater ability to make decisions at the right time and not when the problems have already become very serious.

The averages of the three types of leadership behaviors validated the hypothesis because the scores obtained in terms of transformational and transactional styles are close.

Although the results show that the most used leadership style is the transformational one, the small differences between the two scores, lead to the idea that the studied leaders present a mix of leadership characteristics, being transformational and also transactional leaders.

To test the second hypothesis of this study (that leaders' gender is a variable that influences civil servants' perceptions regarding the exhibited leadership behaviors in the Romanian state's administration) a general multivariate linear model in SPSS was developed, to observe whether the Directors' gender influenced the manner in which civil servants evaluated the leadership behaviors. The variable respondents' gender was also used in the model because perception is subjective and can be influenced by various factors. Consequently, civil servants' opinions about their leaders could also be influenced by their experiences or qualities, based on their gender role.

The results of the multivariate linear model are presented in Table 2. A statistically significant relationship can be observed between the results for the three analyzed leadership styles and Directors' gender, as the value of Sig. is .001. The model suggests that civil servants' decision of evaluating leaders' behaviors, in the manner they did it, was influenced by the Directors' gender. The scores for each dimension measuring leadership behaviors and the results of this model, revealed the existence of a slightly higher preference for male leaders and a better appreciation of their behaviors. Regarding the variable respondents' gender, it cannot be stated that it influenced the manner in which they evaluated their leaders, as in this case, the value of Sig. is over .05. The results validate the stated hypothesis.

5.2. Leadership and resilience in Romania's state administration

The next part of the analysis presents the results regarding civil servants' perception of leaders' behaviors in difficult times encountered by respondents during their careers. Respondents were presented with eight situations that were divided into two categories (stressors and shocks), chosen by considering the particularities of public institutions. Civil servants were asked to express their opinions on how their Directors reacted, in order to observe whether they had supportive, encouraging, and motivating behaviors, helping and mentoring subordinates to continue their activities in an efficient manner or, on the contrary, they reacted indifferently and did not provide the necessary support.

This analysis sought to investigate if the studied leaders are perceived to exhibit behaviors that could contribute to civil servants' resilience. The development of civil servants' resilience was considered to be based on Directors' supportive behaviors. It was assumed that exhibiting supportive behaviors in all the mentioned situations it would be likely to have a positive impact on civil servants' resilience and their perception. For each mentioned situation, the distribution of the frequencies of the answers was computed. The results are presented comparatively, by Directors' gender, to observe civil servants' perception of the supportive or indifferent behaviors of their male and female leaders.

Table 2: The results of the general linear multivariate model**Descriptive Statistics**

		The respondent's gender	The Director's gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VTR	F		F	3.6760	1.01592	326
			M	3.7076	1.01474	206
			Total	3.6883	1.01462	532
	M		F	3.4968	1.01934	108
			M	3.8225	.89086	125
			Total	3.6715	.96431	233
	Total		F	3.6314	1.01855	434
			M	3.7510	.97004	331
			Total	3.6832	.99897	765
VTZ	F		F	3.5135	.62497	326
			M	3.5223	.67317	206
			Total	3.5169	.64345	532
	M		F	3.3870	.74295	108
			M	3.6592	.61750	125
			Total	3.5330	.69056	233
	Total		F	3.4820	.65770	434
			M	3.5740	.65513	331
			Total	3.5218	.65774	765
VLP	F		F	2.3328	.91633	326
			M	2.5388	1.01558	206
			Total	2.4126	.96031	532
	M		F	2.5579	.91624	108
			M	2.7100	.99919	125
			Total	2.6395	.96259	233
	Total		F	2.3888	.92042	434
			M	2.6035	1.01133	331
			Total	2.4817	.96604	765

Multivariate Tests^a

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.969	7919.129 ^b	3.000	759.0	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.031	7919.129 ^b	3.000	759.0	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	31.301	7919.129 ^b	3.000	759.0	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	31.301	7919.129 ^b	3.000	759.0	.000
Respondent's gender	Pillai's Trace	.009	2.382 ^b	3.000	759.0	.068
	Wilks' Lambda	.991	2.382 ^b	3.000	759.0	.068
	Hotelling's Trace	.009	2.382 ^b	3.000	759.0	.068
	Roy's Largest Root	.009	2.382 ^b	3.000	759.0	.068
Director's gender	Pillai's Trace	.021	5.356 ^b	3.000	759.0	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.979	5.356 ^b	3.000	759.0	.001
	Hotelling's Trace	.021	5.356 ^b	3.000	759.0	.001
	Roy's Largest Root	.021	5.356 ^b	3.000	759.0	.001
Respondent's gender*	Pillai's Trace	.009	2.176 ^b	3.000	759.0	.089
	Wilks' Lambda	.991	2.176 ^b	3.000	759.0	.089
Director's gender	Hotelling's Trace	.009	2.176 ^b	3.000	759.0	.089
	Roy's Largest Root	.009	2.176 ^b	3.000	759.0	.089

a. Design: Intercept + Q3 + Q7 + Q3 * Q7

b. Exact statistic

Source: The Authors

Table 3: Leaders’ attitudes in the face of shocks and stressors with a negative impact on civil servants’ careers (%)

Difficult situations/ Director’s gender		Supportive, encouraging, and motivating behaviors		Indifferent behaviors	
		F	M	F	M
Stressors	Subordinate’s personal problems	87.27%	89.2%	12.73%	10.8%
	Subordinate’s professional problems	86.7%	84.3%	13.3%	15.7%
	The problems at the beginning of the subordinates’ career	77.5%	78.5%	22.5%	21.5%
	Changes in the organizational charts	69.8%	70.1%	30.2%	29.9%
	Changes of leadership at the organizational level	68.4%	71.9%	31.6%	28.1%
Shocks	Income cuts generated by the economic crisis	62.9%	66.2%	37.1%	33.8%
	Budgetary cuts faced by the institution	63.8%	65.9%	36.2%	34.1%
	Organizational restructuring	68.7%	71.9%	31.3%	28.1%

Source: The Authors

Respondents were asked to express their opinions on the eight situations presented in Table 3 as stressors and shocks. Personal problems can be considered stressors with a negative impact on the quality of work performed by civil servants. The vast majority of respondents (87.27% in the female leaders’ case and 89.2% in men’s case) considered that their leaders had supportive attitudes, helping them to continue their activities, giving them encouragement and emotional support. An almost equal percentage of respondents had this opinion regardless of their Directors’ gender.

Professional problems are also stressors that could impact daily activities. It can be observed that over 80% of the respondents positively appreciated their leaders’ behaviors. In the case of female leaders, their attitude was appreciated by 86.7% of respondents and only 13.3% considered that they behaved in an indifferent manner. In men’s case, civil servants’ perceptions were similar, 84.3% considering that the leaders supported them and only 15.7% appreciated the attitude of the leaders as indifferent.

Respondents were asked about leaders’ attitudes at the beginning of subordinates’ careers. The starting point of a career could be a factor with negative impact on civil servants’ activities if they are not provided support and guidance from their hierarchic superiors. Most civil servants (77.5% in female leaders’ case and 78.5% in male leaders’ case) positively appreciated their leaders’ attitudes, considering that they helped them to develop their skills and acquire new knowledge.

Civil servants were also questioned about leaders’ attitudes regarding changes of leadership and of organizational charts. These situations could be influenced by changes at the political level, either appeared after elections or in moments of political instability, they could act as stressors. Even though civil servants are familiar with these types of situations, their activities can be disturbed and disrupted. Changes in the organizational charts could have a negative impact (respectively dismissals or blocking of recruitments) or they can

lead to layoffs or being understaffed. In both mentioned situations, almost 70% of the respondents appreciated leaders' behavior as supportive, regardless of their gender.

As far as shocks are concerned, three situations were analyzed: income cuts generated by economic crises, budgetary cuts faced by public institutions, and organizational restructuring. Income cuts can have a negative impact on the efficiency and motivation of civil servants, especially due to the fact that in addition to these income cuts, in times of austerity, leaders have few ways of motivating their subordinates. Budget cuts also have a negative impact on working climate even if civil servants' incomes are not affected. If the budget of an institution is reduced, the proper functioning of activities, projects' development, or the initiation of new projects are affected. Organizational restructuring happens often, especially in ministries' case, when they merge or are divided by reallocating activities to other institutions. The proportion of civil servants who positively appreciated their leaders' behaviors was high in all three cases, regardless of their gender (from 62.9% in the case of women to 71.9% in the case of men).

The analysis revealed some important facts for the studied institutions:

- The proportion of civil servants who perceived their leaders as being supportive, was high in all mentioned situations (over 60%);
- The situations where the highest proportion of respondents positively appreciated their leaders' attitudes were: personal problems as well as professional problems, followed by leaders' attitudes towards problems at the beginning of their subordinates' career;
- The situations where there was a decreasing proportion of respondents who positively appreciated their leaders' attitudes were: income cuts generated by the economic crises, budgetary cuts faced by the institution, followed by organizational restructuring;
- Leaders displayed more supportive attitudes in front of stressors than in front of shocks;
- Both men and women in leadership positions have been positively appreciated by relatively equal proportions of respondents;
- In all situations, men were appreciated as being supportive by a large number of civil servants, who have shown a better perception regarding them;
- The studied leaders could be considered to have a high capacity of developing subordinates' resilience, due to the positive appreciation received from the respondents based on the fact that they reacted in a supportive, encouraging and motivational manner in all the presented cases.

The last hypothesis of the study (the practiced leadership and leaders' gender directly influence civil servants' perception of leaders' capacity to develop civil servants' resilience in the Romanian state's administration) was tested using a regression model. For the regression model, a new composite variable, called the resilience variable (VRZ), was computed from the results of the eight questions investigating the civil servants' perception of leaders' capacity of developing resilience. We considered that leaders' supportive behaviors would help at building civil servants' resilience. If in the mentioned situations, the leaders

were considered to behave in a supportive manner by the majority of respondents, it was assumed that they had a high capacity of developing subordinates' resilience.

Table 4: The results of the regression model

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.480 ^a	.231	.227	2.33331		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Directors' gender, VTR, VLP, VTZ						
ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1193.987	4	298.497	54.827	.000 ^b
	Residual	3979.817	731	5.444		
	Total	5173.804	735			
a. Dependent Variable: VRZ						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Directors' gender, VTR, VLP, VTZ						
Coefficients ^a						
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.523	.526		12.406	.000
	VTR	1.338	.144	.506	9.309	.000
	VTZ	.228	.206	.057	1.108	.268
	VLP	.109	.102	.040	1.073	.284
	Directors' gender	.145	.176	.027	.823	.411
a. Dependent Variable: VRZ						

Source: The Authors

The regression model is statistically significant because of Sig. <.05, but the relationship between variables is not very strong, as only 23% of the variation of the dependent variable (VRZ) is explained by the variation of the independent variables. There is a direct, positive relationship only between transformational behaviors and resilience. A statistically significant relationship cannot be observed between the other variables and resilience.

The results partially validate the hypothesis, because only a certain leadership behavior is related to resilience, and Directors' gender does not influence civil servants' perception regarding leaders' capacity of developing subordinates' resilience. The results are consistent with studies that have attempted to demonstrate the existence of a relationship between leadership and resilience and have observed that the dimensions of transformational style are positively related to the resilience of subordinates (Harland *et al.*, 2005; Kakkar, 2019).

6. Conclusions

The study revealed that the leaders in Romania's state administration exhibited transformational and transactional behaviors on average quite often, meaning that they used these two leadership styles to a high extent. They also exhibited passive avoidant behaviors less frequently, from rarely to sometimes and were focused on errors, irregularities, deviations, and sanctions, quite often, manifesting these behaviors to a medium extent. We cannot consider that the Directors use a certain leadership style, but rather present a mix of characteristics where transformational and transactional behaviors are predominant.

Concerning gender differences in leadership behaviors, both men and women are considered to lead in similar manners. However, the evaluations have shown a better appreciation of male leaders. In a field where women represent the majority of civil servants (66%), men scoring higher may be a sign that certain prejudices towards female leaders still exist. In addition, the study revealed that leaders' evaluations were influenced by their gender, and considering the lower scores achieved by women, the research has shown a higher preference for men and their leadership behaviors, which are better appreciated. Gender stereotypes, even if not demonstrated, might be present in the studied institutions, but at a lower intensity.

Regarding leaders' capacity of building civil servants' resilience, the fact that they exhibit, to a greater extent, transformational behaviors has demonstrated that they possess the necessary abilities for developing subordinates' resilience. Moreover, the results have shown that the studied leaders were evaluated in a positive manner, as being supportive, encouraging, and motivating, and less indifferent, regardless of their gender. Additionally, men have been positively appreciated by a higher proportion of respondents, in all the presented situations, revealing again a preference for male leaders. Also, the study revealed a direct relation between transformational leadership and resilience, and could not demonstrate a relation with the gender variable. Women are not considered better suited for developing resilience, but through the usage of the transformational style, they have the necessary abilities for developing subordinates' resilience.

Similar to previous studies (Țiclău, 2012; Mora and Țiclău, 2013; Hințea, 2015; Androniceanu, 2013; Nicdao, 2019; Țiclău and Hințea, 2016), this research also revealed a positive perception about the leaders (Directors) in the Romanian public administration. The results are in accordance with previous research but rather in contradiction with the results of the reports published by institutions such as the European Commission (2022) and World Bank (2022), which argue that the effectiveness of the Romanian public administration is low. The international evaluations reveal that Romania is still struggling with low administrative capacity, average effectiveness and efficiency and civil servants' poor performance. These discrepancies might come from the fact that this study is based on civil servants' perceptions and does not measure leaders' outcomes, competencies and performance. Perception is a matter of subjectivity and civil servants' might have subjective opinions about their leaders. In addition, the study presents the results of an internal assessment of leaders' behaviors by their subordinates, while the international reports reveal assessments done by external sources based on the actual outcomes of the Romanian

public institutions. Consequently, leaders' behaviors can be positively appreciated inside the system, but the limit of this research is that it cannot measure perceptions from outside the system, as well as the proper outcomes of the leadership behaviors and the real level of civil servants' resilience.

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