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*Leadership transformațional în sectorul public*

**REZUMAT**

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**Key words:** *leadership, public organizations, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, public administration, organizational results, organizational performance, MLQ5X,*

The PhD. research entitled "Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector" aims to analyze the phenomenon of leadership in public institutions of local government in Romania, based on the theoretical model of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). The general goal of the research is to provide a clear image on the leadership style practiced by those who occupy senior positions in local government. This approach is mainly motivated by the following arguments:

- The subject leadership is itself an attraction for researchers. Leadership, especially leaders, are the focus of any discussion about current problems that need to be resolved but also about envisioning and building the future. If we take as a benchmark the financial crisis of 2008, which transformed into an economic crisis, we can say that a significant part of the responsibility for identifying and implementing viable solutions for its resolution bears upon leaders. For example, a lot of important voices speak out about the need for a strong and united leadership in the issue of the euro crisis and the lack of leadership in the case of countries like Greece. There is also the issue of change. When we are faced with implementing major changes, leaders (politicians) are the ones who have to take responsibility (recent elections in Italy, Spain, Greece, before the implementation of the austerity packages). I think that Romania is no exception to this rule. Romanian society leaders bear a significant responsibility in the current position of the state (whether we consider this position in a positive or negative light). Going into public administration area, local authority leaders are key drivers of change (or stagnation), so studying how they work can be a focal point for any researcher in the social sciences.
- Lack of research at local government level regarding leadership style practiced using a validated research tool is another important argument. Current administrative construction in Romania is relatively new, although it faced many changes in the last 20 years. However, administrative reform always remains a focus in the domestic political discourse. Local government leaders are essential to any process of change. Type of leadership practiced, especially openness and resistance to change are variables that can significantly influence the success of any policy reform. For this reason, I believe that this research can provide some information that will allow us to find out to what extent the current leadership typology of public administration is open to change or not and whether it can improve overall performance.
- The relationship between the type of leadership practiced and institutional performance is the third argument. I tried to find out to what extent a particular type of leadership practiced by "lead" institution leads to better results. Organization results (good or poor) are largely the responsibility of management. From this perspective, identifying those behaviors that foster a positive effect on members and ultimately lead to high performance is consistently one of golden questions raised in leadership studies.

- Opportunity of exploiting results by practitioners. One of the qualities of the instrument used - MLQ5X – is the possibility to use the results to correct the problems identified. In this respect, the data collected and the analysis results will be sent to public institutions that have expressed a desire to receive them. Opportunity to make informed decisions based on real data is relatively small in the government so that any such opportunity deserves to be exploited.

The paper is structured in three main parts:

- The first part - *Theoretical analysis of the concept of leadership* - includes two chapters. Chapter 1 – *The concept of leadership* - aims to provide an overview of the significance of leadership, and the extent to which it differs from management. Warren Bennis, one of the most important authors on the subject noted (1959) that from all areas of social psychology, leadership clearly occupies the first position in terms of confusion and ambiguity surrounding it. The second chapter - *Approaches to the study of leadership* - is a brief analysis of the evolution of studies on this topic. The aim was highlighting how the approaches have evolved from simplistic models focused on a single variable to complex theoretical paradigms that attempt to describe and explain the phenomenon in an integrated manner.
- The second part – *The scientific study of leadership. Main theories* - represents the theoretical foundation for the empirical approach to studying the leadership typology in Romanian public institutions. Main theories relevant to the subject of the present study were analyzed extensively. The order was determined based on two criteria: chronology and complexity. Of course, in most cases the chronological evolution coincides with increasing complexity. I started with classical theories (Chapter 3) including two sets of theories - superhuman theory and theories based on traits. The relevance of this set of theories lies in the possibility of identifying those traits, abilities or powers that influence effectiveness and success of the organization and the ability to identify the missing factors not included in these approaches but that are relevant for the phenomenon. Chapter 4 is devoted to behavioral theories. This is an evolution of the previous theories moving to a more complex analysis of the phenomenon of leadership – analysis based on behavior. These approaches seek to identify sets or types of behaviors that would lead to improved performance of the group of followers. Also, unlike previous theoretical approaches, the basic premise is that leaders can be developed and are not born. Contingency theories (Chapter 5) represent a significant paradigm shift from the previous approaches. The focus on the leader is replaced by a focus on a more general level: context, situation. Consequently, we can not speak of a universal successful behavior, the classic one best way to leadership, but rather about a recommended or appropriate behavior of the leader depending on the situation. Chapter 6 shows the main theories on leader-member relationship. This is another element that to this point had not been analyzed and proved relevant to the idea of leadership. These theories show how relationships are created between leader and group members

and how they may influence some elements of motivation, satisfaction and group performance. The last chapter of the theoretical analysis (Chapter 7) includes a number of modern theories in the study of leadership. I have included here three interrelated theories - transactional leadership theory, charismatic leadership theory and ultimately transformational leadership theory. They represent a largely theoretical paradigm from which I started the empirical study - a comprehensive model of leadership that includes both transactional and the transformational dimension.

- The third part of the study - *An empirical study on leadership style in the public sector* – represents the empirical study on leadership in local public institutions. In Chapter 8 I synthesized the main features of the public sector that need to be taken into consideration when studying leadership. I also examined the issues of transformational leadership in the public sector in terms of elements of interest in empirical research: the possibility of applying this model in public and group effects and ultimately the impact on organizational outcomes. Chapter 9 is the empirical analysis of the typology of leadership style adopted by local government organizations in Romania. The main objectives were: (1) to generate a complete picture regarding the typology of leadership in the local public administration institutions, both decentralized and deconcentrated and (2) identify the type of leadership that produces the best results. The methodology adopted is quantitative and the analysis is focused on the leaders of the two types of institutions - decentralized institutions (municipalities, county councils) and decentralized institutions (Prefectures). I chose two types of institutions in an effort to see whether the type of leadership varies depending on this variable.

The three main assumptions that were tested are:

1. *The behavior of the leaders included in the study will be generally transactional or passive .*
2. *The type of institution will make a difference in the style of leadership adopted.*
3. *There will be a positive correlation between transformational leadership and perceived results.*

After analyzing the results, two hypotheses were confirmed and one invalidated. From the point of view of the behavior with the highest scores or dominant behavior, data at regional and national level have shown a prevalence of transformational leadership over the transactional component, but the difference was small. Also from this perspective it should be noted that all three types of behavior recorded average scores compared to standard values for Romania, but the differences were insignificant. In other words, leaders included in this study are part of the general pattern of the leaders of Romanian organizations. However, finding a slight predominance of transformational leadership can be a first step in dismantling the myth of "purely bureaucratic administration" in which concepts such as strategic vision, creativity, innovation, intrinsic motivation, taking responsibilities are considered a rarity.



From an institutional perspective, the data provide interesting information (and relevant) regarding the influence of the institution variable on leadership type. Thus, we have shown that in general there is no statistically significant relationship between the type of organization - decentralized or devolved - and leadership practice. The exception was in a single case: a significant relationship between passive behavior and types of institution (on evaluating subordinates) but of very low intensity ( $\eta = 0.037$ ). So overall we can say that institutional typology is rather irrelevant in leadership behavior analysis (at least from the perspective of this research). On the other hand it should be noted that a larger and more diverse population in terms of institutions, and a larger set of indicators (hierarchical structure, location in relation to the central power, legal framework, roles and responsibilities, autonomy, budget, etc.) could provide a more comprehensive picture of the issue.

Regarding the relationship between leadership and organizational results, we started from the premise assumed by the theoretical model of transformational leadership that states that the transformational leader is superior in results achievement compared to transactional or passive forms of leadership. I was able to confirm my initial assumption, the correlation being strongest between transformational leadership and results. An extensive analysis allowed me to identify precisely the factors that influence the variation of results: thus the positive influence factors are contingent reward (CRS) (transactional leadership), idealized influence (attributes) (IA2S) (transformational leadership) idealized influence (behavior) (IAB2S) (transformational leadership) and intellectual stimulation (IS2S) (transformational leadership). At the same time we were able to demonstrate a negative correlation between passive behavior and results particularly in the indicator uninvolved, laissez faire leadership. The regression model built has achieved a power of explanation of variance of results up to 68% for evaluation carried out by subordinates.

The originality of the study lies mainly in its capacity to provide useful information on the phenomenon of leadership based on empirical data, a situation rarely encountered in particular in the sphere of public organizations. The use of the MLQ5X questionnaire for the leadership style analysis in local public institutions is a new element in the landscape of research in the field.

Confirmation of links between type of leadership practiced and organizational results is another element which can be used by practitioners mainly due to the details given on each behavioral dimension that would allow the adoption of "performing behaviors" in administrative practice. Of course the last step depends entirely on openness and desire of occupying top positions in public institutions to change their approach to document management.

On the other hand we should mention some limitations of the study:

- While covering the entire institutional spectrum in the selected study population (sampled exhaustively the three types of institutions) the results cannot be considered representative of the entire Romanian institutional landscape. A large study covering rural institutions and institutions at

central level, would provide a far wider and more representative range of information on the phenomenon of leadership.

- Information gathered only by using MLQ5X instrument, although valuable, can not provide a high level of depth regarding the phenomenon. A comprehensive research which involves on the one hand an analysis of organizational culture and on the other an objective analysis of performance would substantially increase the usefulness of the results.
- The general evaluation of leadership behavior done in the study is 2 sided - self assessment and assessment by subordinates. A complete picture would require a 360 degrees view – e.g. inclusion of two additional categories of respondents population: individuals who occupy the same hierarchical position of leaders and individuals occupying higher positions. This limitation is in this case a natural one, the selected leaders occupy the highest positions in the three types of organizations thus making it impossible to select individuals from a higher authority.

## **Note**

**The questionnaire used in the study - Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X) was purchased from [www.mindgarden.com](http://www.mindgarden.com) for specific use in this study for a limited period of one year starting from 31.01.2012. Copyrights belong to Bernard M. Bass and Bruce Avolio (1995, 2000, 2004). Any reproduction, copying, distribution or use of the questionnaire all or parts of it without the express consent of the author is breaking the law no. 8/1996 with subsequent amendments regarding copyright is punishable as such.**