

The gender influence on leadership style practiced in the Romanian Government's working apparatus (Office)

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Abstract: Nowadays, the societies are still dominated by masculine values, prejudices and stereotypes still aggravate the situation of women, who want to possess more and more power of decision. Even if the gender policies are highly promoted with the purpose of stopping the discrimination amongst genders, they don't really have the expected result. Following this idea, this paper analyses gender influence above leadership styles practiced in the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office), in order to see if women practice different leadership styles than their masculine gender counterparts, or this is only an opinion influenced by social values, and if they possess the necessary qualities to be performant, efficient and even better leaders than men. The research is based on theories about transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles (Burns, 1978, Avolio, 1998; Bass, 1998) and has been conducted by using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Avolio, 1994). The research results show that the leaders of the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office) do not practice a predominant leadership style. They display a mix of characteristics of all three leadership styles which were studied, but manifest most strongly the transformational and transactional styles, fact that makes leaders effective and able to achieve performance. Another important result of the study is that, gender does not influence the leadership styles and the way that leaders act is influenced by other variables, that weren't studied in this paper.

Keywords: gender, civil service leadership, transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, laissez-faire style.

JEL: J16 J4 J45.

Introduction

More and more women wish to occupy leading positions, this situation being different from the past period, when the majority of women were working at home, raising children and taking care of their households. Along with the industrialization of society, women have become increasingly interested in leading and placing themselves in positions that require more and more power and an important role in decision making. This phenomenon is observed, in the private

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sector, where more and more women want to become CEOs, directors, managers, and in the political field and public sector, too. The number of women ministers, women parliamentarians or women occupying management positions has increased significantly in the past years due to the favourable social and political context. National and supranational structures created auspicious legislative frameworks which were favourable to the accession of women to important positions, but even so, there are still differences between women and men in terms of payment, time spent at work or duties.

In the past years, the legislation of the most states in the world, is guaranteeing women's access to the labour market, including in positions related to the management of organizations, this being a way of stopping or limiting the discrimination against women on the labour market. In these circumstances it is necessary to achieve a progress regarding the nomination of women into positions of senior management or medium level management from public and private institutions. (Macarie, Hințea & Mora, 2011).

Given the current context, because the leadership style practiced by leaders is closely linked to the performance of an organization (Androniceanu, 2014), this paper aims to study leadership styles practiced by women in the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus(Office), in order to see if they lead differently from men. The main research questions were if women, as leaders approach different leadership styles than men and if they possess the necessary qualities for efficient and performant leaders. If women do not possess these qualities, then the low representation of the persons from feminine gender among managers in public institutions and elsewhere can be explained, but if they do, therefore the issue of placing women in leadership positions is linked to other situations, issues or variables.

1. Literature review

First of all, it is important to analyse whether the women's behaviour is different from men's one when they are in leading positions, because behaviour influences the efficiency of the management process and their possibility to advance in their careers. In the literature, many authors argued that the leadership style of women is different (eg., Book, 2000; Helgesen, 1990; Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1995). In their analyses, based on personal experiences in organizations, on informal studies and on interviews with managers, these authors affirmed that female leaders, compared to male leaders are less authoritarian, more cooperative and more open to collaboration and interested in gaining the others' respect. Moreover, the same authors argued that these types of behaviour make women better leaders than men for contemporary organizations.

This topic has attracted the attention of journalists, as can be seen, for example, in the Business Weekend publication where an article called: "As leaders, women lead: New studies show that women managers put in shadow their male

counterparts in almost every field "appeared on the front page (Sharpe, 2000) or in an article about CEOs women, published in Fast Company, where it is stated that "the future of business depends on women " (Hefferman, 2002).

In the academic literature, scholars have expressed their opinions regarding gender differences and similarities in the exercise of leadership styles (see Eagly and Johnson, 1990). Most authors have argued that there are no differences between women and men as leaders (eg., Bartol& Martin, 1986; Nieva&Gutek, 1981; van Engen, van der Leeden&Willemsen, 2001) or downplayed any kind of differences which have been identified by researchers (eg Powell, 1990). The differences between leadership styles of men and women might come from the specific positions that they occupy. Starting from this idea, Kanter (1997) argued that women behave differently when they are in positions that require less power of influence, but between women and men occupying similar positions as sphere of influence, there is no difference in the performance of leadership styles.

Drawing a conclusion, researchers have different opinions (Kozubíková, Vojtovič, Rahman, & Smrčka, 2016), regarding the influence of gender on leadership styles. Some argued that there is no difference, other affirmed that the differences are insignificant and another group claimed that women lead differently and have a chance to become better leaders than their male counterparts. This divergence of opinions could be explained by the way in which society apprehend the feminine gender, the sex roles and the place of women into society (the social roles theory, Eagly, 1987; Eagly&Karau, 2002, role congruity theory Eagly&Karau, 2002). Society may apprehend differently, depending on gender, the same behavior, situation caused by stereotypes, values and social roles (the social roles theory, Eagly, 1987; Eagly&Karau, 2002, stereotypes theory, Fiske, 1998).

2. Theories about the congruence between gender and leadership

Over time, researchers have launched a number of theories based on their accomplished studies, in order to see the gender influence on leadership styles, the gender roles in the society, the influence of stereotypes on leaders or whether gender is a factor that influences how leaders and their activities are perceived.

The social roles theory (Eagly, 1987, Eagly&Karau, 2002) assumed that the same behaviour exhibit by men and women is perceived differently by society because of sex roles. Sex roles refer to socially shared expectations of how women and men should behave and are often analyzed in terms of agency and communion.

Social roles theory (Eagly, 1987) argued that society expects women to be communal (helpful, nurturing, gentle), while men are expected to be agentic (assertive, confident, controlling). When a person behaves out of line with his or her role, he or she will be perceived negatively by the society (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson&Rosenkrantz, 1972; Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, &Diekman, 2000; Heilman, 2001).

Since the society has certain expectations regarding men and women behaviours because of sex roles, they have expectations regarding leaders behaviours, too. The society expects leaders to behave in a certain way, leading to the concept of *leadership prototype*. When a leader behaves consistently with an observer's leadership prototype, he or she is seen as an effective leader by that individual (Lord & Maher, 1993). Problems arise for female leaders, as expectations of how they should behave in society are in contrast with expectations on how leaders should behave (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This apparent conflict between the female sex role and the leadership role was explained by *role congruity theory* (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

This theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) assumed that agentic qualities manifested by men mirror more the expectations that society has on leaders, than communal qualities manifested by women. The disparity between female gender role and leadership can result on two types of biases: descriptive and prescriptive (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

From the *descriptive bias* the lack of congruence between the female gender role and leader role, led to the conclusion that women do not possess the necessary qualities to be leaders. *Prescriptive bias* occurs when a woman adopts a more masculine style of leadership, in violation with her sex role expectations. In both cases, female leaders are evaluated in a negative way (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie & Reichard, 2008).

Numerous studies have shown the connection between leaders and masculine sex roles simultaneous with the possessing of masculine features (Powell, Butterfield & Parent, 2002; Schein, 2001). Also, these studies showed greater preference for male leaders than for female leaders, although this choice scored a slight decrease (Simmons, 2001). Because the society doubts the competence of women for leading, they must achieve and prove higher standards of competence than men. For women to be regarded by society, as competent as men for leading, they must demonstrate their competence or advantage over their male counterparts (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Foschi, 1996; Shackelford, Wood & Worchel, 1996; Wood & Karten, 1986).

So, leaders whose behavior and attitude match leadership prototypes are perceived in a more positive way than those who do not (Lord, Foti & De Vader, 1984; Lord & Maher, 1993; Smith & Foti, 1998). Although the prototypes differ from one individual to another (Lord, Brown, Harvey & Hall, 2001) and may be influenced by membership in a group or organization (eg, Hogg et al, 2006), there are dimensions of leadership prototypes, that are held among all individuals (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). Researchers (Offermann, Kennedy & Wirtz, 1994) found that there are eight dimensions of leadership prototypes: sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, intelligence, strength and masculinity. These dimensions were the most important and accurate discovery on leadership prototypes and based on these discoveries, subsequent investigations were conducted (ex. Epitropaki & Martin, 2004).

Power, masculinity and tyranny are dimensions of agentic leadership prototype. Sensitivity is a dimension of communal leadership prototype, while dedication, charisma, attractiveness and intelligence are considered non-gender leadership prototype dimensions (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie&Reichard, 2008).

Some studies have examined whether the expectations of the prototypes are different for male and female leaders, even though studies related to this topic have shown that we have different expectations from each gender. For example, Schein (1973, 1975) asked male and female leaders to rank whether certain characteristics listed were most similar to "women in general", "men in general" or "middle managers". The characteristics ranked for managers were more similar to those identified for "men in general" than to "women in general", suggesting that our expectations for men are similar to our expectations for leaders than our expectations for women. The same result was found in research conducted 15 years later (Brenner, Tomkiewicz& Schein, 1989; Heilman, Block, Martell & Simon, 1989).

3. Research methodology

For studying the influence of gender on the leadership styles in Romanian Government's Working Apparatus, we conducted an opinion survey. The questionnaire used was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire5X (short form) developed initially by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio (1994).The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) is the standard instrument for assessing transformational and transactional leadership behaviour (Avolio& Bass, 2004). The MLQ was applied online to public servants in both leading and executive positions from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and General Secretariat of the Government, part structures of the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus, via email, between March and April 2016. We applied a number of 168 questionnaires, 147 of them for executive positions and 21 for management positions. Since the statistical population was a small number, we chose to apply the questionnaire to all the staff from the two structures. The response rate was 51%, and the results were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire measures five transformational subscales, three transactional subscales, a laissez-faire subscale and three outcomes. The questionnaire contains 45 standard affirmations, measured on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 means that the respondents do not display at all that behaviour and 4 shows that the behaviour is exhibit frequently by the respondents (Rowland, 2000). For the study we used only the data which measured the transformational, transactional and laissez-faire subscales.

The nine subscales of MLQ were abbreviated:

- Inspirational Motivation- IM
- Idealized Influence attributed- Iia
- Idealized Influence behaviour- Iib

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- Intellectual Stimulation- IS
- Individualized Consideration- IC
- Contingent Reward- CR
- Active Management-by-Exception- AMbE
- Management-by-Exception passive- MbEP
- Laissez-Faire- LF

The study was based on three hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The gender influences the leadership styles adopted by the leaders from Government's Working Apparatus (Office).

Hypothesis 2: Female leaders from Government's Working Apparatus (Office) show characteristics of the efficient leadership styles, which makes them better leaders than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 3: The executive public servants perception about the leadership styles of their hierarchical superiors is not influenced by gender.

4. Empirical results (analysis):

After systematization and processing the data obtained from respondents, we conducted distributions of the various averages calculated for each subscale, we correlated the scores for each subscale in order to see if they influence each other and if they are influenced by respondents' gender.

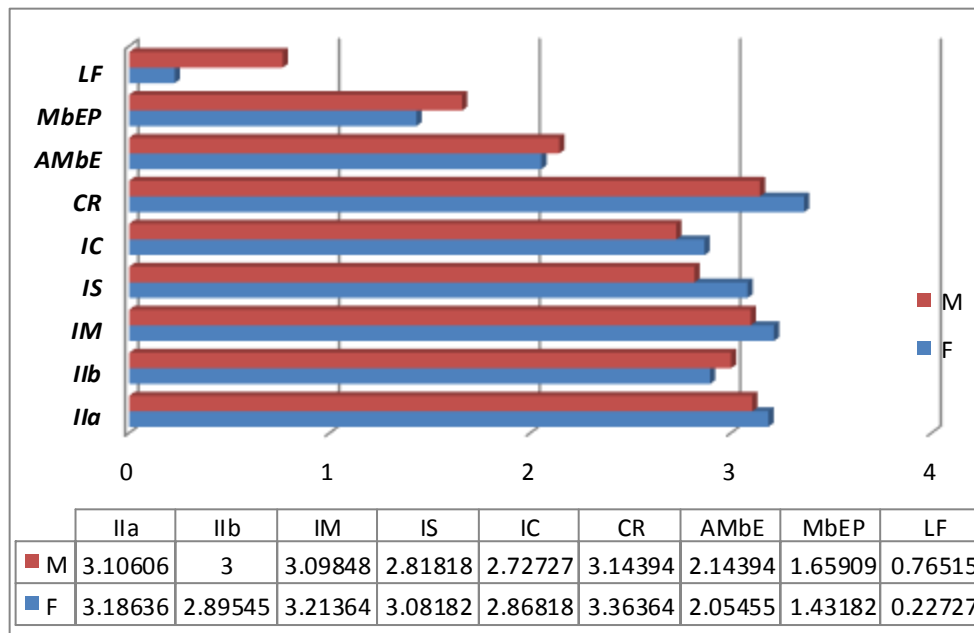


Figure 1 The average scales distribution of gender
(Source: Authors,2016 adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

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From the chart above, it can be observed the fact that female respondents have achieved high scores for the five transformational leadership subscales and for one transactional leadership subscale, named contingent reward (CR) (3.36). For all these subscales, female respondents have obtained higher scores than male respondents, excepting the second subscale, idealized influence (behaviour) (IIb) where male respondents obtained a slightly higher score (3 for male and 2.89 for female respondents).

As for laissez-faire scale (LF), men have obtained a higher score than women (0.76 > 0.22), but it can not be strongly affirmed that men's leadership style was dominated by these characteristics, because both scores obtained by women and men, are lower, compared with the results obtained for all the other dimensions.

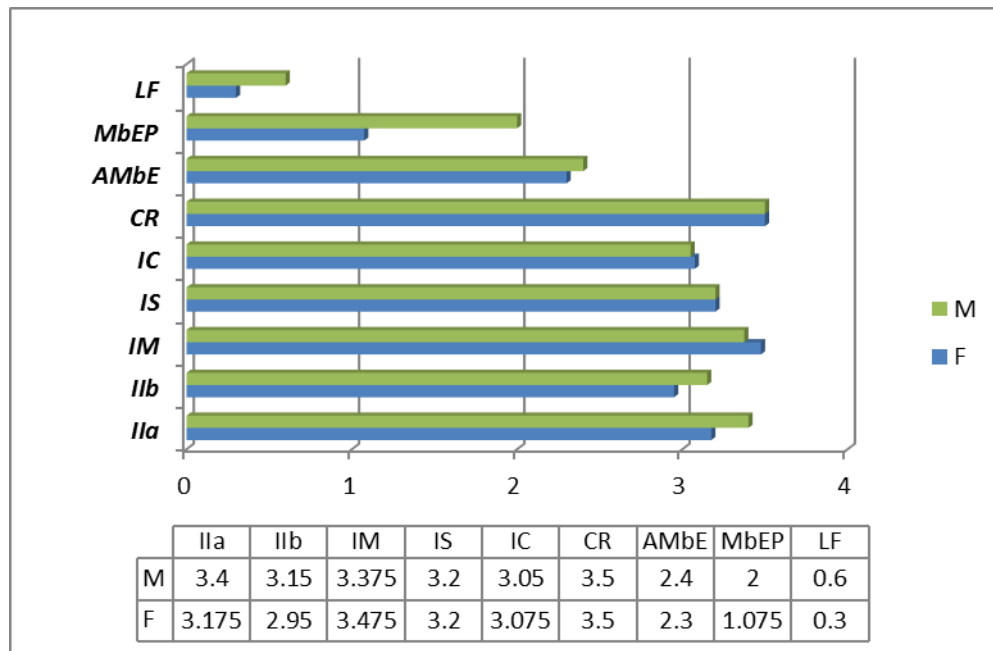


Figure 2 The average scales distribution of management positions
(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

The average scales distribution of management positions showed, that in the studied sample, the behaviour of women in leading positions converged to transformational behaviours in their leadership style and to one transactional behaviour, namely contingent reward (CR). Female respondents obtained the lowest scores on laissez-faire (LF) leadership scale (0.3) and on management by exception passive (MbEP) (1.075), subscale of transactional style. Taking into account the score obtained by female respondents, on management by exception active

subscale (AMbE) (2.3), which is pretty high, and observing the scores obtained on all scales, it may be noted that women in management positions did not practiced a certain leadership style, but presented a mix of characteristics of both transformational and transactional styles. It can be noted that female respondents in management positions had the power to influence others and possessed the necessary qualities to inspire them. The questioned subordinates attributed their female leaders, idealized attributes, were proud to be associated with them and respected them as superiors. It also can be observed the fact that the studied female leaders motivated their team, giving a meaning to their work and showing them, the provocative nature of the work performed. As leaders, these women inspired their subordinates, were optimistic, helped them to see the future in a positive manner and were confident that the objectives could be achieved if each person was involved. Female leaders from the studied sample presented idealized behaviours, such as dominance, scrupulosity, efficiency, self-control and put the collective interest to the detriment of their own interest. These attributes resulted from the fact that female leaders scored highly on idealized influence attributed and behaviour subscales (IIa, IIb) (3.17, 2.95), but, taking into consideration that the scores were lower than their' males counterparts (3.4, 3.15), it could be concluded that both categories of leaders have very well represented characteristics from the first two subscales of transformational leadership with emphasis on the fact that male leaders exhibited more of these types of behaviours, with all their attributes.

Regarding intellectual stimulation subscale (IS), female leaders obtained same score as their male counterparts (3.2), which showed that both types of leaders, were focused on stimulating intellectually their subordinates, on creativity and innovation, encouraging the ask of questions, the reconsideration of situations, the seeking for innovative solutions and the looking from different perspectives. These leaders did not criticize their subordinates and encouraged them to be creative by finding new solutions to daily problems and experiment, which may seem in contradiction with the opinion that most people have regarding work in public administration.

At individualized consideration subscale (IC), female leaders from the studied sample achieved a higher score than male leaders (3.075, 3.05), but due to the close value, it could be concluded that both types of leaders were paying attention to the necessities of achievement and development of each individual and gave the others the necessary time to evolve. The leaders considered that they knew their subordinates, their needs and treated each individual concordantly with their' potential and their' abilities.

At contingent reward subscale (CR) of transactional style, female leaders from the Government's Working Apparatus, scored equally with male leaders (3.5), which showed that both tended to establish clearly the objectives that must be achieved, determined the level of performance that was expected and rewarded those who have achieved their targets or penalized those who did not fulfil their objectives.

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At passive and active management by exception subscales (AMbE, MbEP), male leaders scored higher (2.4, 2) than female leaders (2.3, 1.075) which meant that male leaders manifested stronger these types of behaviours than women who occupy similar positions. This showed that, more than female leaders, males were carefully monitoring the errors, deviations and they were implementing corrective measures when necessary. These leaders acted only when problems become serious and chronic, they were not visionary leaders, and did not manifest an innovative behaviour, but rather followed the idea that if something is not broken, do not require repairing.

As concern laissez-faire leadership style (LF), the highest scores were achieved by men (0.6 for male respondents, 0.3 for female respondents), but taking into consideration the low values, it could not be concluded that the leaders of the Government's Working Apparatus were laissez-faire leaders.

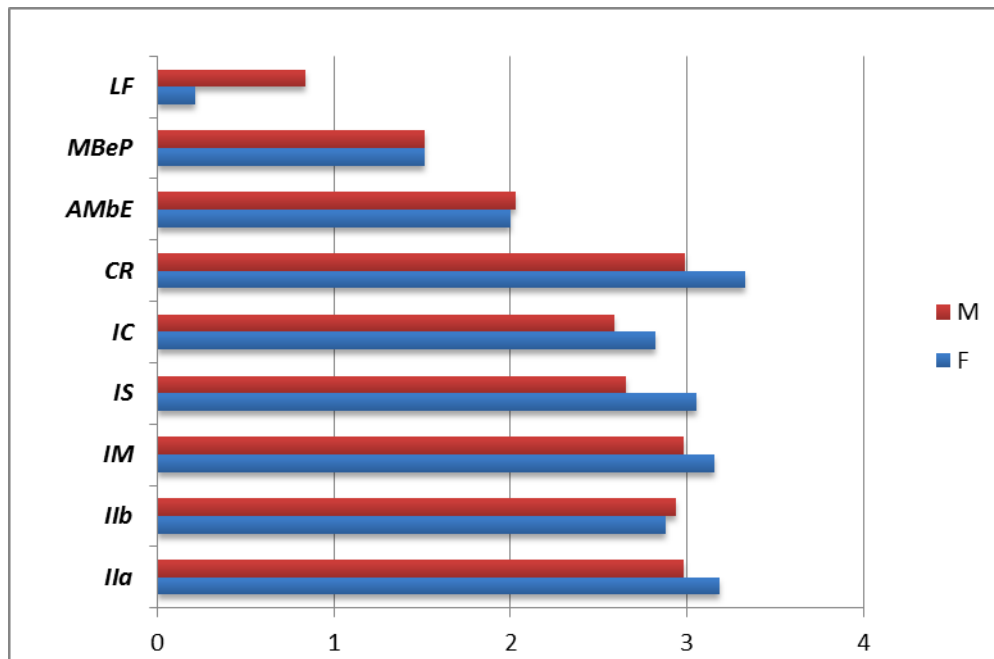


Figure 3 The average scales distribution of executive positions
(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

The average scales distribution of executive positions shows how civil servants in the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office) apprehend their hierarchical superiors. It can be observed that subordinates considered that their female superiors displayed, in the management process, a transformational leadership style and the contingent reward behaviour (CR), of transactional leadership style. Regarding the leadership styles of male leaders, their subordinates

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considered that they showed characteristics from transformational leadership style, but they have evaluated them with lower scores than the female leaders. Men were perceived as transactional leaders, too, obtaining high scores for transactional style subscales, but similar to their female counterparts. At laissez-faire style, females were evaluated by their direct subordinates, with a lower score than their male counterparts. Given the fact that the scores for laissez-faire style were very low it can be said that neither of these leaders are characterized by laissez-faire leadership style.

Analyzing the perception of executive public servants from the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office) above the leadership styles of their immediate hierarchical superiors, it could be concluded that female leaders were perceived as more transformational leaders than male leaders, showing also transactional characteristics. Male leaders were perceived in a similar way to their female counterparts, but they obtained lower scores on transformational subscales and on contingent reward subscale.

Table 1 The leaders perception about themselves vs. the subordinates perception about their hierarchical superiors

Gender	Civil Servants	IIa	IIb	IM	IS	IC	CR	AMbE	MBeP	LF
M	Management	3.4	3.15	3.375	3.2	3.05	3.5	2.4	2	0.6
	Executive	2.9783	2.9348	2.9783	2.6522	2.587	2.9891	2.0326	1.5109	0.837
F	Management	3.175	2.95	3.475	3.2	3.075	3.5	2.3	1.075	0.3
	Executive	3.1889	2.8833	3.1556	3.0556	2.8222	3.3333	2	1.5111	0.2111

(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

The way leaders evaluated themselves in comparison with the way they have been evaluated by their direct subordinates, revealed some differences of perception, due to the fact that at self-assessment, leaders obtained higher scores at transformational and transactional leadership styles than they scored from the evaluations of their subordinates. From the averages calculated on subscales, for each gender, for management and executive position, it could be observed the fact that the perception that leaders had about themselves differ from the perception of their' subordinates. The conclusion is that the leaders from the Government's Working Apparatus, perceived themselves as being more transformational, more visionary and more innovative than they actually were.

Regarding subordinates opinion about the leadership styles of their hierarchical superiors, subordinates believed that their female superiors exhibited strongly than their male counterparts, characteristics of transformational and transactional style.

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Figure 4 The means for each leadership style
(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

Comparing the averages calculated for respondents for each leadership style, it could be observed that for all styles male leaders obtained a higher score than female leaders (3.23 vs. 3.17, 2.95 vs. 2.9, 1.3 vs. 0.68). Overall, for all management positions, females and males had similar behaviours and exhibited similar characteristics. Only for laissez-faire style, men realized a double score from women leaders (1.3 vs. 0.68).

It could be certainly affirmed that women occupying management positions in the Government's Working Apparatus, manifested characteristics of the efficient leadership styles and were performant leaders, but it could not be said with certainty that they were better leaders than men, taking into consideration the fact that the latter, had better scores on the scales of both leadership styles. On laissez-faire leadership style, women's characteristics were different and placed them on a superior position above their male counterparts.

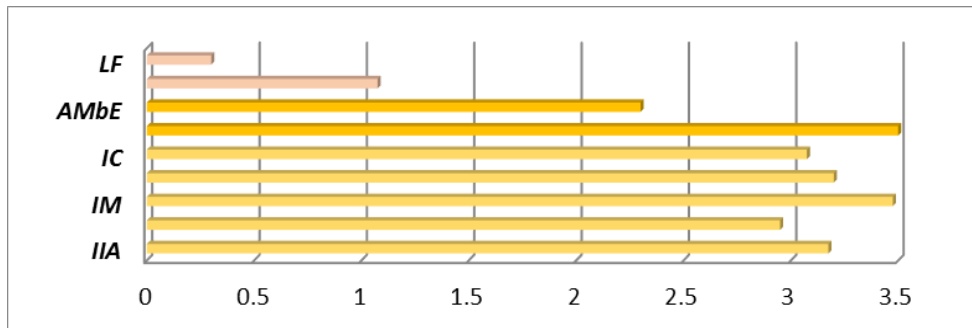


Figure 5 The average scales distribution for female leaders
(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

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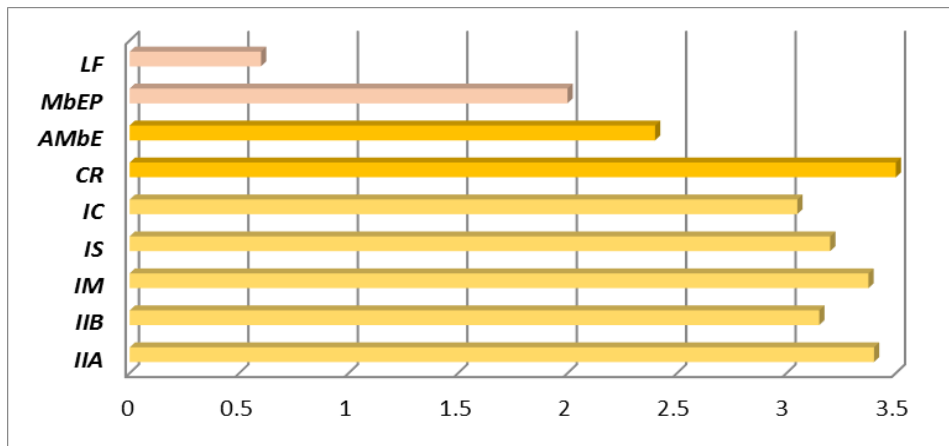


Figure 6 The average scales distribution for male leaders
(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

Regarding the subscales averages distribution, by gender, it could be noticed that both genders exhibit most the characteristics of a transactional subscale, contingent reward (CR), along with all the characteristics of transformational style subscales. It could be concluded that the studied leaders, were using in the management process the transformational and transactional leadership styles which made them efficient leaders, the usage of these styles not being necessarily influenced by gender.

In comparison with male leaders, female leaders tended to have a more transformational behaviour and they were committed to rewarding subordinates who were performant. Male leaders tended more than women to exhibit two characteristics of transactional leadership: active management (AMbE) (assist their subordinates in their mistakes and failures to meet the standards) and passive management (MbEP) (waiting for problems to become very serious for to intervene). Men were scoring higher on laissez-faire scale, showing thus, their lack of involvement in the management process.

4.1 The correlation between gender and leadership styles

In order to explore the influence of gender over the performance of public service leadership in the Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office), we calculated a correlation between gender and the nine subscales of leadership styles. The gender was the independent variable and the subscales of leadership styles were the dependent variables. The correlation showed that gender and the nine subscales of leadership styles do not correlate, so, they do not influence each other. Since the p value was more than 0.050 in all cases, this means that there is

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no significant correlation between the two variables, so the performance of public service leadership is influenced by other variables than those analyzed.

The nine subscales, though, are correlated with each other, showing that oft only transformational behaviours may be accompanied by transactional behaviour, due to the existence of a positive correlation between these subscales. Both behaviours can be related mainly to taking a leadership position and are inconsistent with the refusal to assuming this position and avoiding the responsibilities. Leadership efficiency, viewed through an extra effort from the public servants, from a greater efficiency in meeting the professional needs of others and from the ability to generate satisfaction in interaction with others, is closely linked to transformational and transactional styles.

A negative correlation existed between the active management, the passive management and laissez-faire on one side and transformational leadership subscales on the other side, which indicated that these dimensions evolve in negative ways and a transformational leader will manifest as few characteristics of laissez-faire style or passive management behaviour.

The correlation showed the leadership styles of the civil servants from the studied sample are not influenced by gender but by other factors that were not analyzed in this research. More than that, transformational leaders will have transactional characteristics too and will manifest as few behaviours of laissez-faire style and passive management.

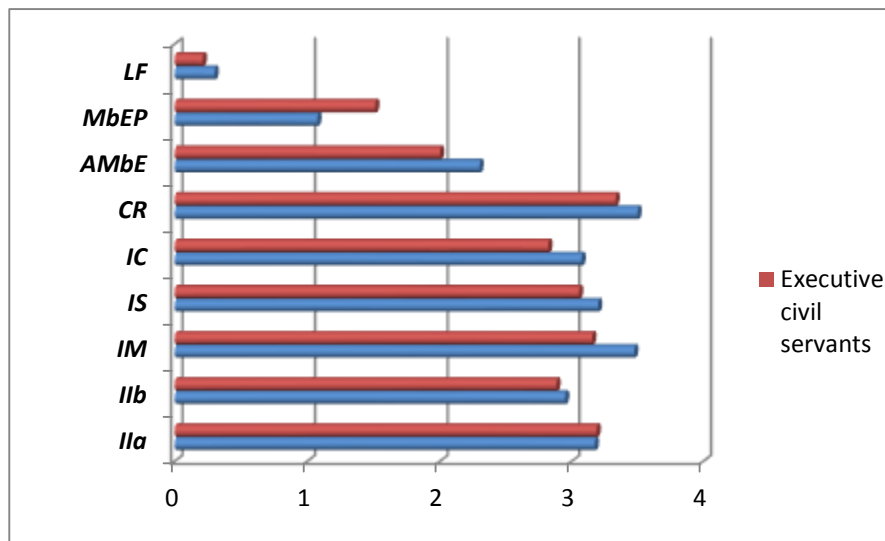


Figure 7 The perception of female leaders vs. the perception of female subordinates of their hierarchical superiors

(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

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Regarding the perception of female leaders vs. the perception of female subordinates of their hierarchical superiors of the same gender, it could be noted that female leaders perceived themselves as being more transformational than their subordinates considered them. Female leaders perceived themselves as rewarding leaders and their subordinates believed that the situation was different, although there were not big differences between the scores from the two evaluations. This difference in perception could influence negatively the management process because the executive public servants considered that there were many situations in which their leaders did not intervene unless the problems have become critical, while leaders believed the opposite, fact that could lead to obstacles in solving efficiently the problems.

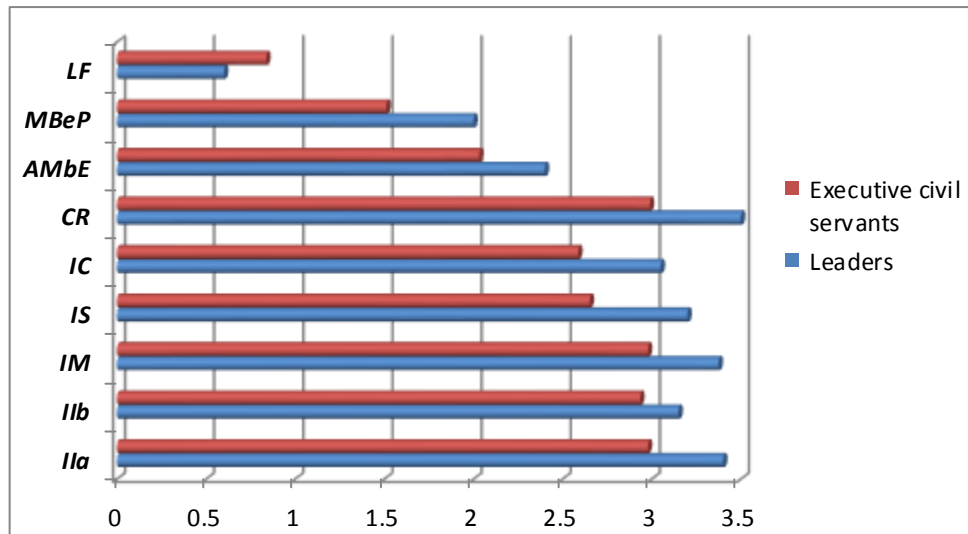


Figure 8 The perception of male leaders about themselves vs. the perception of male subordinates of their hierarchical superiors

(Source: Authors, 2016, adapted from MLQ 5X (Avolio and Bass, 2004))

The perception of male leaders about themselves, revealed a difference between how they thought their behaviour was and how their male subordinates perceived them. In all cases, excepting laissez-faire style, leaders evaluated themselves with highly scores than their subordinates did. In this case problems may arise in the management process, in solving the problems, in motivating their employees or on rewarding them. There is a possibility that leaders consider themselves to be better and more efficient than they actually are.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the research showed that both female and male leaders, have achieved high and similar scores on the subscales that measured transformational style and the contingent reward (CR), which conducted to the idea that the leaders from the Government's Working Apparatus were transformational leaders, innovative, visionary, involved in solving problems, concerned about motivating and rewarding subordinates, that put the collective interest before self-interest. Male leaders ranked on a superior position at laissez-faire style and passive management (MbEP), which showed a predilection for practicing ineffective leadership styles. However, given the fact that male leaders obtained low scores on these subscales it could not be concluded that they practiced these ineffective leadership styles, but in certain situations they would rather not get involved until the problems become very serious.

In this case, male leaders should observe their behaviour and their attitude towards the important problems, in order to lower the laissez-faire and the passive behaviours. This would have positive consequences for organizational performance and efficient settlement of issues.

The studied leaders, regardless of gender did not behave in concordance with a certain leadership style, being simultaneously transformational and transactional. Study's results are in concordance with the social role theory, because it has shown that female leaders tend to have a communal behaviour, being more motivational and caring more for their subordinates and male leaders tend to be agentic, being more concerned about control and monitoring errors. In conclusion, it could be affirmed that both categories of leaders behave in concordance with their sex roles, consequently they are not perceived in a negative way.

About the characteristics of female leaders from Romanian Government's Working Apparatus (Office), it could be concluded that they were efficient leaders, but it could not be said with certainty that they were better leaders than their male counterparts because the scores on the subscales related to efficient leadership styles were similar to those of male leaders or slightly lower. Female leader's tendency towards the practice of laissez-faire style was low and they manifested mostly transformational and contingent reward behaviour (CR), making them efficient leaders, visionary, innovative, being capable of running a performant organization.

Female leaders of Romanian Government's Working Apparatus could become better leaders than their male counterparts because they possessed the necessary qualities, but they need to change their vision and perspective. The fact that they obtained lower scores than male leaders on transformational scales could be a result of working in an environment dominated by masculine values or maybe, male leaders are more experienced in this field. In this case it could be useful for

female leaders to follow several management courses, participate in exchange programmes and adopt a more proactive attitude in the management process.

Regarding the influence of gender over civil servants' perception about leadership styles of their hierarchical superiors it could be concluded that the perception was not influenced by gender, but by other variables which were not analyzed in this research. However, the perception over inspirational motivation (IM) and laissez-faire style were influenced by gender because the subordinates considered female leaders as being more motivational as men, and male leaders to manifest strongly the laissez-faire style, than female leaders.

Male leaders considered themselves more transformational than they really were, and more rewarding, situation that requires a change in their attitude, because this can lead to an inefficient management process.

As the meta-analyses conducted by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen (2003) showed, this research also concluded that, compared to male leaders, female leaders tend to have a more transformational behaviour and they are more committed in rewarding their subordinates showing characteristics of transactional style. Male leaders tend more than women to exhibit two characteristics of transactional leadership: active management (assists their subordinate's mistakes and their failures to meet the standards) and passive management (waiting for problems to become very serious for to intervene). Men have obtained a higher score at laissez-faire style, showing a tendency to manifest a lack of involvement in the management process. In conclusion, the study identified minor gender differences in civil service leadership.

Gender differences in the transactional and transformational leadership have implications over arguments in the benefit of women because researchers defined these styles in correlation with effective leadership (Burns, 1978; Avolio, 1998; Bass, 1998). Given these findings, the tendency of women in exceeding men in the characteristics of leadership styles that relates positively to the efficiency (ie, transformational leadership and contingent reward (CR) of transactional leadership) and men's tendency to overcome women in inefficient leadership styles (ie. passive management (MbEP) and laissez-faire leadership) demonstrate women's capacity to be good leaders. So, research on transformational, transactional and laissez-faire styles suggests the possibility of women having advantage, although it is quite small.

Regarding the hypothesis of the study, the first one did not validate, because in the studied sample, the leadership style is not influenced by gender, and the correlation between variables showed that these variables do not influence each other.

The second hypothesis of the study validated partially, because the female leaders could become better leaders, due to the manifested characteristics, but at the moment, they are not better leaders than their male counterparts.

The third hypothesis about the influence of gender over civil servants' perception about the leadership styles of their hierarchical superiors was validated,

because the perception was not influenced by gender, but by other variables which were not analyzed in this research.

Therefore, as the study showed, the advantage that female leaders have, could be exploited because of the scores they obtained and from the number of women occupying public leadership positions, it could be affirmed that they have managed to break the glass ceiling and take certain masculine values. Moreover, female leaders are perceived in a positive way by their subordinates, which shows that men do not see an incongruity between leadership and the female sex role. All these arguments are in favour of female leaders, who have all the circumstances to become more efficient and performant leaders than they are today.

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