Leadership and resilience in Romanian public administration from county level

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Abstract: *The present paper presents the results of a pilot study conducted in one county council from Romania (Neamţ County Council) aiming to explore the civil servants' perception of the leadership styles practiced by the top executives (Directors/General Directors/Deputy Executive Directors/Executive Directors), as well as about their capacity of building employees' resilience. The research methodology consists of an opinion survey that was conducted using a questionnaire designed by the author. The research started from the theories of Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio (1985) about Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire leadership styles. The main objective is to investigate the potential relationship between leadership and civil servants' resilience, considering a series of factors that could negatively influence civil servants' careers. The respondents were asked to express their opinion regarding the attitudes and behaviors of the studied leaders in 40 situations, aiming to observe which are the most exhibited leadership behaviors. Leaders' capacity to build civil servants' resilience was measured from four perspectives: leaders' attitudes towards personal problems, leaders' attitudes towards professional issues, leaders' attitudes concerning financial issues affecting the institution, and the attitudes concerning management changes.*
The research revealed that the studied leaders exhibited mostly transformational behaviors, but also transactional characteristics, to a high extent. The results also showed that the top executives had a high capacity of building employees' resilience being perceived as supportive and understanding leaders, who helped their subordinates to overpass the problematic moments from their careers. The research will be further continued in all Romanian County Councils with the purpose of studying civil servants' resilience as an impact factor for public institutions' resilience.

Keywords: *leadership, resilience, top executive civil servants, county council*

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Introduction

Human resources' resilience is a matter of interest as, during their careers, employees face many difficult situations in which they must adapt, adjust, or change their behaviors. Civil servants' resilience should be studied due to their special status and public functions' particularities. Public sector employees' resilience is a matter of interest as the public administration is a field with many peculiarities which is affected by a variety of shocks and stressors. Civil servants' careers could be influenced by various situations as budgetary cuts, economic crises, political instability, constant changes at the managerial level, or in the organizational charts. Also, the legal framework and bureaucracy are factors that could be considered stressors with an impact on daily activities.

Civil servants' resilience is essential considering that highly resilient civil servants could help at building institutional resilience. When analysing institutional resilience, the first factor to be taken into consideration should be the human resources. If the civil servants present a high level of resilience, they will continue working efficiently and effectively, no matter the external shocks (e.g. economic crisis or budgetary cuts) or the internal shocks (e.g. constant changes in the top management structures) the institution is dealing with. If civil servants are capable of surpassing all the shocks and stressors from their careers, they will have a meaningful impact on building institutional resilience. Moreover, resilient institutions will influence local communities' resilience. Therefore, due to the connection between these concepts, the first step in studying the concept of resilience in public administration would be to investigate civil servants' resilience.

Furthermore, leadership might also be a variable with significant impact on employees' resilience, helping them to adapt and surpass the difficult moments during their careers. Certain leadership styles might strengthen human resources' capacity to respond to shocks or stressors. If leaders inspire, motivate, or develop a strong relationship with their teams, maybe the employees will react better to the daily problems as well as to the most important setbacks of their careers. If the persons who are leading are acting more like leaders and less like managers, human resources could become more resilient. On the contrary, passive leadership behavior might conduct to less resilient employees. So not only leadership but also the practiced leadership styles could influence resilience negatively or positively. In addition, if human resources' resilience might have a substantial impact on organizational resilience, leaders should focus on developing and strengthening employees' resilience as the first step in building resilient organizations.

Considering the previous studies which tried to establish a connection between leadership and resilience (see Shankar Sankaran et al., 2015, Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 256, Franken et al. 2019), this research further explores the perception of the executive civil servants from public administration about the leadership behaviors exhibited by the top executives and also about their capacity of building individuals' resilience. The research starts from the theories regarding three leadership styles, namely transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire

(Burns, 1978, Avolio, 1999, Bass, 1998), and from previous studies, which tried to demonstrate that leaders' behaviors influence subordinates' resilience (see Harland et al., 2005, Bass, 1990).

1. Literature review

In previous studies, organizational resilience was approached from two perspectives. Some authors (see Balu, 2001, Dutton et al., 2002, Gittell et al., 2006, Horne, 1997, Horne & Orr, 1998, Mallak, 1998b, Robb, 2000, Rudolph & Repenning, 2002, Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003) considered it as the capacity of bouncing back after a shock or an unexpected situation to the previous conditions in which the organization was. Others (Coutu, 2002, Freeman et al., 2004, Guidimann, 2002, Jamrog et al., 2006, Layne, 2001, Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2003, 2005, Weick, 1988, Zhang et al., 2018) explained organizational resilience as the capacity of recovering from shocks and challenging situations and progress, by achieving new features and developing new opportunities. From this point of view, building resilience requires to develop strategies and responses to many types of situations that an organization might encounter. Also, it means to approach management in a transformational way, as to succeed in avoiding potential threats and in preventing the new problems that could affect the organization's survival (Coutu, 2002, Freeman et al., 2004, Guidimann, 2002, Hamel & Valikangas, 2003, Jamrog et al., 2006, LengnickHall & Beck, 2005, 2009, McManus, 2004).

There has been little research concerning leadership and resilience, and much of it was conducted through a theoretical perspective. Most of the authors did not find a direct relationship between these two concepts. Still, some of them considered that leadership could influence organizational resilience (see Shankar Sankaran et al., 2015, Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 256).

A brief review of the leadership concept showed that some authors concluded that effective leaders inspire their subordinates and motivate them to contribute to organizational development. Burns (1978) named it transformational leadership. Later research (Bass, 1985, 1998) showed that transformational leaders earn subordinates' trust and inspire them, becoming a role model. Other authors (Burns, 1978, Avolio, 1999, Bass, 1998, Jacobsen & Andersen, 2017) have identified and studied the transactional style, when leaders draw responsibilities for every employee, rewarding those who have fulfilled their tasks and sanctioning those who did not. Both leadership styles were considered effective for organizational development (Taylor, 2017, Nielsen et al., 2018). In addition to these styles, researchers identified the laissez-faire style characterized by the fact that leaders do not take responsibility for the management process (Eagly et al., 2003).

Considering that transformational leaders inspire, motivate, help others to embrace the organizational culture and grow professionally, encourage them to participate in the change process, increase employees self-esteem and emphasize the importance of organizational performance, leaving behind the personal interest

(Bass, 1998), the possibility that these qualities have a meaningful effect in building both individuals' and organizational' resilience, appeared.

Also, research on transformational leadership showed a correlation between the transformational style and organizational change (Bass & Riggio, 2006, Pawar & Eastman, 1997, der Voet et al., 2016, Groves, 2020). Because transformational leaders are the ones who "recognize the need for change, they can create and share a compelling vision and motivation, which can help employees adapt to change and inspire" (Bass, 1998). The literature has also shown that the concept of change is integrated into resilience definitions. According to some authors, resilience means "growth or adaptation through disruption rather than just to recover or bounce back" (Richardson, 2002, p. 313) and "includes the ability to turn challenges into opportunities" as well as "more than bounce back from the edge of catastrophe ... to move forward with even greater vigor and success than before" (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2003, p. 8). Considering these theories, a relation between leadership and resilience might exist as transformational leaders are capable of change, and resilience includes the concept of organizational change.

A study regarding leadership and subordinates' resilience (Harland, et al., 2005) showed a positive relation between the dimensions of transformational leadership style (Charisma, Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration) and subordinates' resilience. Also, the authors identified a positive connection with a transactional dimension, namely Contingent Reward. More than that, a negative relation with passive management (also a transactional dimension) and with Laissez-Faire style has been observed. These findings revealed that subordinates who have effective leaders are more resilient than those whose leaders are not involved in the management process.

Also, Bernard Bass (1990) researched the connection between transformational leadership and subordinates' behavior under stress. He observed that transformational leaders were able to turn crises into development challenges by presenting them as situations that can be surpassed and by providing intellectual stimulation to subordinates. Also, these leaders help employees to be more creative and adaptable. The idea presented by Bass is following the conceptualizations regarding resilience.

Another study based on leader-member exchange theory (Kakkar, 2019) revealed that leaders' behaviors and their interactions with subordinates have a significant impact on building employees' resilience. The study also showed that the leadership styles are not so important when building resilience, but leaders' behaviors, as building trust or motivation, certainly are.

Consequently, leadership and, more specifically, leaders' behaviors might have a substantial impact on employees' resilience, helping them to adapt and adjust to the difficult moments in their careers.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Aim and objectives of the research

The study aims to explore civil servants' perceptions about the leadership styles practiced by their leaders as well as about their capacities of building resilience. The study is also trying to investigate if the leadership styles used by the top executives strengthen individuals' resilience and the potential relation between transformational leadership and resilience.

The main objectives of the study are:

Ob.1: To establish the leadership style practiced predominantly in the studied county council.

Ob.2: To establish the existence of a direct relation between transformational leadership and resilience.

Ob.3: To explore civil servants' perception of their leaders' capacity of building resilience.

The research started with the following hypothesis:

H1: The leadership style practiced predominantly in the Romanian public administration from county level is the transformational style, which makes leaders capable of building employees' resilience.

H2: The civil servants considered that their leaders had an understanding attitude helping them to continue their activities efficiently.

H3. The civil servants considered that their leaders were more supportive and understanding concerning personal and professional problems as to financial and managerial issues, which could affect the public institution.

H4. The practiced leadership styles influence civil servants' resilience directly.

2.2 Research design and data collection

The present paper presents the results of a pilot study conducted in one county council of Romania (Neamț County Council). This is the first phase of a complex research regarding leadership and resilience in the public administration from county level which aims to investigate the factors that can strengthen civil servants' resilience as well as its impact on institutional resilience. The research will be further conducted in all Romanian County Councils, and the results will be used for the author's Ph.D. thesis. The choice of conducting a pilot study is based on the necessity of observing the preliminary findings and improve the questionnaire, if needed. The selected institution was Neamț County Council, and it was chosen based on accessibility.

The research methodology consists of an opinion survey conducted using a questionnaire built by the author. The civil servants were asked to express their opinions about the Directors/General Directors/Deputy Executive Directors /Executive Directors' attitudes and behaviors in order to observe the practiced

leadership styles and their capacity of building civil servants' resilience. The study was approached in a comparative manner. A comparison between the executive civil servants' and the senior civil servants' perceptions has been made since the different hierarchical distance could lead to different opinions.

The questionnaire was built from five identification questions, one question with 40 subitems that measured two leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and passive leadership behaviors and one question with eight subitems that measured the civil servants' resilience. The identification questions referred to the hierarchic position, gender, age, seniority into the institution, seniority into the public function, and the Directors' gender.

The practiced leadership styles were measured using 40 subitems, which were built in accordance with Burns (1978), Bass and Avolio's (1985) theories about Transformational and Transactional leadership styles, as well as about Laissez-Faire style. The subitems contained 26 behaviors exhibited by transformational leaders, ten behaviors exhibited by transactional leaders, and four subitems which described forms of passive leadership. The questions measured the frequency of the mentioned situations in leaders' behaviors, using Likert scales. The civil servants were asked to rate their leaders' behaviors on a scale from one to five where the scale meant: 1-not at all, 2- to a small extent, 3- to a medium extent, 4- to a high extent, 5-to the highest extent. The question regarding resilience presented specific difficult situations from their careers in order to investigate leaders' capacities of building civil servants' resilience. The civil servants were asked to express their opinions about their leaders' attitudes in the mentioned situations. They had to choose if leaders' attitudes were characterized by indifference or if they understood and helped them to continue their activities efficiently. *Leaders' capacity to build civil servants' resilience* was measured from four perspectives: *the leaders' attitudes towards personal problems*, *the leaders' attitudes towards professional issues, the leaders' attitudes concerning financial issues affecting the institution*, and *the attitudes concerning management changes.*

The study's participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. This sampling method was chosen because it included the most accessible persons for research participation.

The questionnaire was administrated via email between July and September 2019. The civil servants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. They filled in the questionnaire voluntarily. The collected data were processed in SPSS, and the findings were used to validate the study's hypothesis and to answer the research objectives.

2.3 The main characteristics of the sample

The questionnaire was addressed only to the civil servants from the selected county council without including the contractual personnel. The study's participants were executive civil servants and civil servants in management positions. The selected county council is divided into seven Directorates in which

work 169 civil servants. After sending the questionnaire, I asked for ten answers from each Directorate and I received 64 filled questionnaires.

Regarding respondents' responsibilities, 54 (84 %) were *executive civil servants*, and ten (16%) were *civil servants from management level,* occupying positions of *head of office and head of departments*.

In terms of professional expertise, two respondents (3.1%) were beginners, 15 (23.4%) were assistants, three (4.7%) were middle officers, and 44 (68.8%) were senior officers with over seven years of experience in the public administration.

As far as the age structure of the sample was concerned, 7.8% (5 respondents) were between 20 and 35 years old, 59.4% (38 respondents) were between 35 (inclusively) and 50 years old, 32.8% (21 respondents) were between 50 (inclusively) and 65 years old.

Regarding the gender distribution of the respondents, 78.1% (50) were women, and 21.9% (14) were men. 56.3% of the respondents (36) had women as Directors/General Directors, and in 43.8% (28) cases, the position was occupied by a man.

3. Main findings of the study

3.1 The leadership styles practiced in the public administration from county level

In the following section, the results of the study will be presented as well as the hypothesis validation. To test the first hypothesis of the study (*The leadership style practiced predominantly in the Romanian public administration from county level is the transformational style, which makes leaders capable of building employees' resilience)* the scores for all 40 analyzed behaviors have been computed in order to observe which are the most exhibited behaviors by the evaluated leaders. After presenting the results, three composite variables were computed for each analyzed leadership style (***VTR- variable transformational style, VTZ- variable transactional style, and VLF- variable Laissez-Faire style***). The responses of the civil servants were compared in terms of hierarchic levels in order to observe if there were significant differences between the opinions of the two groups (executive civil servants and civil servants from management level). To establish if the differences of opinion between the two groups were statistically significant, the Independent Samples T-Test was used.

Table 1. Civil servants' perception of leaders' transformational behaviors

Transformational behaviors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assists subordinates in their daily activities.	4.2500	1.06904
Appoints explicit assignments to subordinate civil servants.	4.4062	.92099
Uses brainstorming sessions with subordinates for problem-solving.	3.3125	1.25831

Transformational behaviors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prefers to prevent problems rather than solve them.	4.1562	1.11581
Acts in a manner as to build the subordinates' trust.	4.0000	1.15470
Pays attention to the subordinates' needs.	4.0937	1.07966
Suggests new approaches of solving problems.	3.9844	1.04642
Acts in a manner as to build subordinates', colleagues,' hierarchical superiors' trust.	4.2031	1.02632
Considers that every person from his/her team has different needs, expectations, and competencies.	4.0469	1.14683
Uses satisfying methods for managing daily activities.	4.2656	1.02728
Encourages subordinates to develop professionally.	3.9219	1.23834
Is confident that the objectives of the organization can be achieved.	4.1875	1.13913
Inspires the people he/she is working with.	4.0000	1.14087
Encourages subordinates to work in teams.	4.2813	1.01526
Listens to subordinates' complaints.	4.0156	1.22788
Tries to solve subordinates' complaints.	4.0313	1.22109
Builds relationships with subordinates inclusively outside working hours.	3.0625	1.39016
Supports subordinates in developing competencies and skills.	3.7500	1.25988
Is an inspirational leader.	3.8594	1.19346
Goes beyond self-interest for the team's good.	4.0156	1.09098
Implements organizational changes.	3.6094	1.17672
Suggests new ways of completing assignments.	3.8281	.95210
Is an understanding and empathic leader.	4.4375	.68718
Appreciates and takes into consideration subordinates' ideas.	4.2500	.87287

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

Table 1 presents the scores obtained by the evaluated leaders at the transformational behaviors. It could be observed that leaders scored high in all the mentioned situations, meaning that they exhibited transformational traits in their leading behaviors from a high to the highest extent. In the majority of the presented situations, the computed means showed that the civil servants perceived their leaders as behaving in a transformational manner to a high extent. The leaders were interested in helping subordinates to achieve their objectives, to develop new skills, and to evolve professionally. Also, they involved subordinates in the managerial process by considering and appreciating their proposals. Regarding the brainstorming sessions, the Directors used the method only to a medium extent. Also, it seemed that leaders were trustful about leading teams capable of working efficiently. They were also trying to understand the problems and necessities of every civil servant, which has positive impact on building individuals' resilience. Another revealed aspect was that the leaders were trying to embrace organizational change and implement new techniques for improving the daily activities. The fact that leaders were perceived as being oriented towards preventing problems showed their capacity of preparing their teams for future issues that might appear. This led

to the idea that they could be able to build individuals' resilience and further, organizational resilience.

Table 2. Civil servants' perception of leaders' transactional behaviors

Transactional behaviors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Involves directly in solving problems even if they are not severe.	3.2031	1.56530
Pursues the errors, mistakes, irregularities or deviations of the subordinates.	3.9219	1.18596
Prefers to make decisions by herself/himself and the subordinates are executants who are sanctioned or compensated.	2.2969	1.29320
Rewards the executive civil servants through non-financial instruments.	3.2656	1.40568
Involves directly in solving problems.	4.2500	1.00791
Uses delegation as a method to appoint assignments to the subordinate civil servants.	4.3437	.92956
Appoints explicit assignments to the subordinate civil servants.	4.3594	.82360
Is preoccupied with motivating his/her's subordinates in any possible way.	3.5313	1.33296
Sanctions subordinates who did not accomplish assignments.	3.1875	1.23282
Discusses in specific terms to the persons responsible for achieving performance targets.	3.9531	1.10453
Expresses satisfaction when subordinates achieve their goals.	4.1563	.96311
Makes clearly the rewards for those who achieve their goals.	3.4844	1.32128

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

As far as transactional behaviors were concerned, the results presented in Table 2 showed that in the majority of cases, the evaluated leaders exhibited those traits from a medium to a high extent. There were behaviors, mostly related to human resources development, in which leaders scored even higher, presenting those traits from a high to the highest extent. Also, the civil servants considered that they were involved in the managerial process. They declared that the hierarchic superiors preferred to make decisions by themselves only to a small extent. The leaders scored high at using delegation to appoint assignments, showing a high level of trust in their subordinates. A negative aspect was that the civil servants opinioned that their leaders pursued errors, mistakes, irregularities, or deviations to a high extent. This situation could impact human resources development and resilience negatively. Another concerning aspect was that leaders scored less on the behaviors related to the rewarding process and that they used motivation techniques only to a medium extent.

Table 3. Civil servants' perception of leaders' passive behaviors

Passive behaviors (Laissez-Faire)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Avoids making decisions.	2.3594	1.46241
Involves in solving problems only when they get severe.	2.0156	1.39719
Is not involved in the managerial process.	3.2969	1.32951
Is absent when needed.	2.2344	1.44466

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

Related to the passive behaviors presented in Table 3, the respondents considered that their leaders exhibited them to a small extent excepting the involvement in the managerial process. The civil servants believed that their hierarchic superiors' involvement was only to a medium extent. The result was in opposition to their previous evaluations (concerning transactional behaviors), where leaders were perceived as being highly involved. A non-involvement attitude could be considered a risk for building individuals' resilience.

Table 4. The practiced leadership styles

	Mean	Std. Deviation
VTR	3.9512	.86897
VTZ	3.7578	.64065
VLF	2.4766	.93299

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

The computed means for the three composite variables presented in Table 4, revealed that the evaluated leaders behaved in a transformational manner to a high extent. The transactional behaviors were also exhibited almost to a high extent. The findings revealed a positive perception of the top executives' attitudes. The differences in perception were not significant but in favor of the transformational leadership style. The results validated the first hypothesis of the study establishing that the most practiced leadership style was the transformational one. The results were in accordance with the theories of Burns, (1978), Avolio, (1999) and Bass (1998) on transformational and transactional leadership styles and led to the idea that the leaders from the county council were effective leaders capable of reforming the public administration and of building individuals' resilience, with positive impact on organizational resilience too.

Table 5. Comparison of perception regarding the practiced leadership styles

Public function		VTR	VTZ	VLF
Civil servants in management positions	Mean	3.9250	3.8167	2.6000
	N	10	10	10
	Std. Deviation	.59278	.58637	1.29743
Executive civil servants	Mean	3.9560	3.7469	2.4537
	N	54	54	54
	Std. Deviation	.91529	.65476	.86340

Public function		VTR	VTZ	VLF
Total	Mean	3.9512	3.7578	2.4766
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	.86897	.64065	.93299

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

Table 6. The result of the Independents Samples T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diffe-rence	Std. Error Diffe-rence		Lower	Upper
VTR	Equal variances assumed	1.998	.163	-.103	62	.918	-.03102	.30153		-.63377	.57173
	Equal variances not assumed			-.138	18.102	.892	-.03102	.22506		-.50366	.44163
VTZ	Equal variances assumed	.039	.845	.314	62	.755	.06975	.22215		-.37432	.51382
	Equal variances not assumed			.339	13.514	.740	.06975	.20572		-.37297	.51248
VLF	Equal variances assumed	4.253	.043	.453	62	.652	.14630	.32324		-.49986	.79245
	Equal variances not assumed			.343	10.525	.739	.14630	.42678		-.79823	1.09083

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

Comparing the results by respondents' hierarchic positions (Table 5), no significant differences in perception between the two studied groups have been observed. In the transformational style's case, the civil servants occupying managerial positions evaluated their Directors even lower than the executive civil servants did. The senior civil servants perceived their leaders as being more transactional and more engaged in passive leadership behaviors than the executive civil servants did. On the whole, the power distance did not influence the civil servants' perceptions as the differences were small and based on subjectivity

The results of the Independents Samples T-Test (Table 6) proved that the differences of perception were not statistically significant, considering that the level of significance (Sig.) was higher than 0.05. This could lead to the idea that the civil servants expressed their opinions honestly and objectively.

3.2 The resilience of the civil servants from county level

In the next section, the results concerning civil servants' perception of leaders' capacity for building resilience will be presented. To test the following two hypotheses related to top executives' capacity of building resilience (*The civil servants considered that their leaders had an understanding attitude helping them to continue their activities efficiently* and *The civil servants considered that their*

leaders were more supportive and understanding concerning personal and professional problems as to financial and managerial issues which could affect the public institution), Descriptive Statistics have been used to compute the frequencies of the responses from each question. The analysis will be presented in a comparative approach in order to observe if there are differences between the civil servants from management positions and executive civil servants' evaluations.

Table 7. The attitude towards personal problems

			Frequency	*Percent*
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	51	94.4
		Indifferent	3	5.6
		Total	54	100.0

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

The respondents were asked to express their opinions about their leaders' attitudes when they were facing personal problems. Personal problems could be considered stressors with a negative impact on work quality. The results presented in Table 7, showed that the majority believed that the Directors had supportive and understanding attitudes, providing them encouragement and emotional help. The differences of opinion between the two groups were not significant and only three executive civil servants faced indifference from their leaders.

Table 8. The attitude towards professional issues

Which was your leader's attitude when you faced professional problems?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	8	80.0
		Indifferent	2	20.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	45	83.3
		Indifferent	9	16.7
		Total	54	100.0
Which was your leader's attitude at the beginning of your career?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	48	88.9
		Indifferent	6	11.1
		Total	54	100.0

(*Source*: Author, 2019)

When the civil servants faced professional problems, their leaders' behaviors were appreciated as being supportive and understanding. As it can be observed in Table 8, most of the civil servants considered that the Directors helped

them to manage professional obstacles and effectively continue their work. The results were in accordance with the previous findings concerning leaders' involvement in solving problems. As the beginning of the career is a critical moment, the leaders' attitudes could impact the professional evolution of the civil servants. As far as the civil servants occupying managerial positions were concerned, all of them were helped to improve their skills and competencies, and their leaders guided and mentored them. Almost 90% of the executive civil servants had the same opinion.

Table 9. The attitude concerning financial issues affecting the institution

Which was your leader's attitude during the economic crises?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and motivating	6	60.0
		Indifferent	4	40.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and motivating	35	64.8
		Indifferent	18	33.3
		Total	53	98.1
	Missing	System	1	1.9
	Total		54	100.0
Which was your leader's attitude during budgetary cuts?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	6	60.0
		Indifference	4	40.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	36	66.7
		Indifference	18	33.3
		Total	54	100.0

(*Source*: Author, 2019)

In order to investigate leaders' attitudes during financial problems affecting the institution, the respondents were asked to express their opinions concerning the following situations: which was the Director's attitude during the economic crisis and budgetary cuts. The economic crisis was considered a shock that affected the whole public sector, consequently affecting the civil servants' careers. Budgetary cuts could be regarded as stressors. Even if the civil servants' incomes are not influenced, the budget of an institution is important for the well-functioning of the daily activities and projects. As presented in Table 9, the majority of the respondents from the studied groups considered that their leaders had a supportive attitude, helping them to continue working in order to obtain the best results. The situation was similar concerning the attitude during budgetary cuts. It should be mentioned that in these particular cases, the number of respondents who considered that their leaders did not offer them support was much higher (between 30% and 40%).

Table 10. The attitudes concerning management changes

Which was your leader's attitude during organizational restructuring?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	8	80.0
		Indifferent	2	20.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	38	70.4
		Indifference	16	29.6
		Total	54	100.0
Which was your leader's attitude during changes on the organizational chart?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	6	60.0
		Indifferent	4	40.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	39	72.2
		Indifferent	15	27.8
		Total	54	100.0
Which was your leader's attitude concerning the leadership changes?			Frequency	Percent
Civil servants in management positions	Valid	Supportive and understanding	6	60.0
		Indifferent	4	40.0
		Total	10	100.0
Executive civil servants	Valid	Supportive and understanding	39	72.2
		Indifferent	15	27.8
		Total	54	100.0

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

In order to investigate civil servants' opinions about leaders' attitudes with regard to management changes, three situations were presented: organizational restructuring, changes in the organizational chart and leadership changes. All these situations could be influenced by politics and appear after elections and also in moments of political instability. The question regarding leaders' attitudes during changes on the organizational charts considered only the moments when those changes had a negative impact (namely layoffs and hiring freezes) or when they led to understaffing. The question concerning the leadership changes considered the situations when the county council's president was changed after elections or by other reasons.

The answers presented in Table 10, showed that generally, the civil servants' perception was positive, and the majority considered that their Directors had a supportive attitude and helped them to fulfill their duties efficiently. Regarding organizational restructuring, the civil servants occupying management positions opinioned on a higher proportion (80%) that their leaders had an encouraging attitude than the executive civil servants did (70%). Concerning the other two situations, the perception of the executive civil servants was better in both cases. 72% believed their leaders had a supportive attitude to 60% in civil

servants from management positions case. Even if there were differences in perception, there were not significant.

The data validated the second hypothesis as the majority of the respondents believed that their leaders helped them to surpass all the mentioned difficult situations.

The third hypothesis validated, too, as the proportion of the civil servants with a positive perception was higher in the situations related to personal and professional problems.

3.3 The relation between leadership and resilience

The last hypothesis (*The practiced leadership styles influence civil servants' resilience directly*) was tested using regression in order to observe the existence of a direct relationship between resilience, and the three studied leadership styles. A composite variable (Variable Resilience) has been computed from the results obtained at the eight questions regarding civil servants' perception of their leaders' capacities of building resilience. The composite' variable also showed that in six of eight cases, the civil servants considered that their leaders had a supportive attitude and helped them surpass the obstacles encountered in their careers. The leaders' scores showed that they had a high capacity of building civil servants' resilience.

Table 11. The regression model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.179[a]	.032	-.016	2.43993

a. Predictors: (Constant), VLF, VTZ, VTR

b. Dependent Variable: VR

ANOVA[a]					
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	11.805	3	3.935	.661	.579[b]
Residual	357.195	60	5.953		
Total	369.000	63			

a. Dependent Variable: VR

b. Predictors: (Constant), VLF, VTZ, VTR

Coefficients[a]							
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95.0% Confidence Interval for B**	
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
(Constant)	5.732	1.964		2.918	.005	1.803	9.661
VTR	-.469	.732	-.169	-.642	.523	-1.933	.994
VTZ	.880	.989	.233	.890	.377	-1.098	2.858
VLF	-.428	.346	-.165	-1.236	.221	-1.120	.265

a. Dependent Variable: VR

(*Source:* Author, 2019)

As it can be observed in Table 11, the last hypothesis did not validate because the value of Sig. was over 0.05, meaning that there was not a significant relation between resilience and the leadership styles practiced. The results are in concordance with Shankar Sankaran et al., (2015), Luthans and Avolio, (2003), as a direct relation between the two concepts did not exist. However, the evaluated leaders presented transformational traits. Consequently, they could be able to strengthen civil servants' resilience.

4. Research limitations

The study was conducted only in one county council, consequently, the results cannot be considered representative for all the civil servants from the Romanian County Councils.

Conclusions

The study revealed that the evaluated top executives had an encouraging and supportive attitude helping their subordinates to develop their careers and surpass all the obstacles without affecting their daily activities. This positive perception existed in all the presented cases and led to the idea that the leaders from the studied county council had the necessary qualities to build their subordinates' resilience. Even if a direct relationship between leadership and resilience could not be established, the presence of transformational traits in leaders' behaviors should have a positive impact on civil servants' resilience. Regarding the resilience score, the results showed that the top executives had a high capacity of building resilience as in six of eight cases, their attitudes were positive and encouraging.

Regarding the practiced leadership, the top executives scored high at the effective leadership styles, exhibiting both transactional and transformational traits to a high extent. Concerning the responses for all the exhibited behaviors, there are several aspects which could be improved by the top executives. Even if the public institutions cannot motivate financially, the leaders should try to motivate their subordinates using nonfinancial instruments. Consequently, the civil servants would work more effectively. The transactional traits exhibited by leaders could strengthen resilience as they seemed to involve subordinates in the decision-making process and themselves into solving problems, which has a positive impact on both groups. The leaders could try to engage more the subordinates in the decisional process and to organize brainstorming sessions more often. In this way, the subordinates' trust will raise, and they will feel more confident in expressing their ideas.

In conclusion, the results about the leadership styles exhibited and the perception about leaders' capacity of building resilience led to the idea that the top executives from the county council were effective leaders, exhibiting behaviors identified with the effective leadership styles. They were capable of building civil

servants' resilience and prepare them from the external and internal threats and shocks, having an important impact on organizational resilience, too.

Future trends of research

In the second phase of the research, the questionnaire will be sent to all Romanian County Councils in order to create a comprehensive analysis regarding the influence of leadership on building civil servants' resilience. In the last phase, the research will also be conducted in the most important City Halls in order to compare the results from the two administrative levels.

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