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Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence of Romanian Public Managers. Evidences from an Exploratory Pilot Study

Dan Florin STANESCU¹, Cristiana Catalina CICEI²

Abstract

Research regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership styles and leadership effectiveness has reached high levels of interest in recent years, focusing on the framework of transformational/ transactional leadership proposed by Bass & Avolio. 101 Romanian Public Managers enrolled in the YPS (Young Professionals Scheme) program were assessed in view of exploring the relationship between leadership styles and emotional intelligence using MLQ (5x-Revised Form) and Bar-On's EQ-i. On the investigated sample, transformational leadership was the dominant self-reported style, significant positive correlations being obtained between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence and between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence. Transactional leadership correlated with general EI score, and with the Adaptability and Interpersonal scale of EQ-i, negative significant correlation being obtained between Passive/Avoidant leadership, general EQ-i score and all the EQ-i subscales. The interaction between the Interpersonal, Stress Management and General Mood scales of EQ-i predicted 47.5% of the total variance of transformational leadership and the interaction between Interpersonal and Stress Management scales of EQ-i predicted 38.2% of the total variance of leadership effectiveness. The results offer a clearer perspective on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles, the practical implications of the research consisting in the possibility to conceive organizational selection and training programs of transformational leaders based on emotional intelligence abilities.

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Keywords: transformational leadership; transactional leadership; passive/avoidant leadership; emotional intelligence; Romanian public managers.

Introduction

According to George (2000), leadership is considered to be one of the most researched topics in the organizational sciences literature. As the author remarks, the increasing scientific literature analyzing the role of moods and emotions in organizational settings indicates that feelings have a more central role in the leadership process, rather than being a secondary factor (George, 2000). For example, Cooper (1997) considers that an important challenge which tomorrow's leaders and organizations will have to face will be to lead throughout emotional intelligence. Also, an important body of research begins to focus on the precision with which emotional intelligence can differentiate between good and poor leaders (Carmeli, 2003).

According to this fact, in the last years, an increasing interest has been noticed in examining the role of emotional intelligence in predicting leadership effectiveness (Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter, & Buckley, 2003; Riggio & Reichard, 2008). Thus, a new direction of research emerged, concentrating on the role of emotional intelligence in supporting various leadership styles (Gardner & Stough, 2002). But, despite the high interest regarding the role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership, until now, little research published have explicitly examined this relationship (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001).

Viewpoints on emotional intelligence: Ability versus mixed models

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be considered to be a factor which can contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviors and outcomes (Carmeli, 2003: 789). Yukl (2010: 65) defines emotional intelligence as "the extent to which a person is attuned to his or her own feelings and to the feelings of others and is able to integrate emotions and reason such that emotions are used to facilitate cognitive processes, and emotions are cognitively managed". As originally described by Salovey & Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence involves "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion, the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997: 10).

Analyzing the research literature, Mandell & Pherwani (2003) indicate that two main emotional intelligence models can be identified. The ability model, based on the works of Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (1999), Mayer & Salovey (1993, 1997), and Salovey & Mayer (1990), conceives emotional intelligence as a set of

abilities that involve perceiving and reasoning abstractly with information that derives from feelings (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). The second model, or the mixed model, presented in the works of Bar-On (1997), defines emotional intelligence as ability with social behaviors, traits and competencies (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003: 389).

Mayer & Salovey ability model of EI (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2002; Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2002) involves the capacity to reason with and about emotions, being composed of four dimensions: Perceiving Emotions, Facilitating Thought, Understanding Emotions and Managing Emotions (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2002), measured by an ability based-test, namely MSCEIT (The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test) (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2002).

Regarding the mixed model of emotional intelligence, Bar On (1997) defined emotional intelligence as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (p. 14), conceiving a self-report instrument in order to measure this enlarged perspective of emotional intelligence (the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory). Bar-On EQ-i model includes five components: the intrapersonal (including measures of self-awareness, the ability to assert oneself, and the ability to view oneself positively), interpersonal (including skills such as empathy and social responsibility), stress management (including skills as problem solving and reality testing), adaptability (containing stress tolerance and impulse control abilities) and general mood component (including happiness and optimism) (Mayer et al., 2000). As Harms & Credé (2010) indicate, the research regarding the relationship between EI, leadership styles and leadership effectiveness has reached high levels of interest in recent years. Gardner & Stough (2002: 70) highlight the fact that the theoretical and empirical studies of leadership and EI are based on one of the two main models of emotional intelligence and have frequently examined leadership using the transformational/ transactional model of Bass & Avolio (1995).

Transformational leadership and the Full Range Leadership Model

Transformational leadership, included in Bass and Avolio’s “Full Range Leadership Model”, is one of the most extensively researched paradigms in the leadership field (Harms & Credé, 2010: 6), having five main components. The first component, Idealized influence (attributed) focuses on the socialized charisma of the leader and whether he is considered to be confident and committed to strong ideals (Harms & Credé, 2010: 6), whereas the second component, Idealized influence (behavioral) envisages the leader’s charismatic actions that are based on beliefs, values, or ideals (Harms & Credé, 2010: 6). It can be noticed that the third component, Inspirational Motivation, draws attention to the fact that

transformational leaders have to motivate and inspire their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and to enhance their creativity and inovativity by reframing problems, questioning assumptions, and approaching differently old situations (Intellectual Stimulation) (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Finally, the fifth component, Individualized Consideration, indicates that transformational leaders must act as a coach or a mentor in view of satisfying follower's achievement and growth needs, guiding them towards developing their highest potential (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Also it must be highlighted that the Full Range Leadership Model is composed of dimensions of transactional leadership behavior, and laissez-faire leadership behavior (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Previous empirical findings

Regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, Bass (1990 cited in Mandell & Pherwani, 2003) considers that for transformational leaders is mandatory to deploy multiple types of intelligence, from the author's perspective the social and emotional intelligences being important for inspiring and building relationships with employees (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). In addition, Gardner & Stough (2002: 69) mention Ashforth & Humphrey's study which indicated that transformational leadership is related to the evocation and mobilisation of emotions, whereas transactional leadership is related to a more rational model of motivation. Sosik & Megarian (cited by Harms & Credé, 2010: 7) suggested that several components of EI would sustain transformational leadership. For example, empathy may be important for transformational leaders who indicate consideration to followers; also, emotion management may contribute to positive affect and confidence in followers (Harms & Credé, 2010).

Using MLQ and EQ-i, Mandell & Pherwani (2003) examined, on a sample of 32 male and female managers and supervisors, the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style. Results indicated a significant predictive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence and significant differences in the EI scores of male and female managers (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003).

Investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership, Palmer and his colleagues (2001) conducted a research on 43 participants with management roles. Results indicated that, for example, the ability to monitor and the ability to manage emotions in oneself and others was associated with transformational leadership's Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration dimensions (Gardner & Stough, 2002: 71).

Gardner & Stough (2002) conducted a research on 110 senior level managers. The findings supported the existence of a strong relationship between transformational leadership and overall emotional intelligence, a negative relationship being found between laissez-faire leadership and emotional intelligence (Gardner & Stough, 2002). The effects of leadership (extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction) were associated with the dimensions and the global construct of emotional intelligence (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

An interesting conclusion comes from Harms & Credé's (2010) meta-analysis. The findings highlighted a validity estimate of .59 when evaluations of both emotional intelligence and leadership behaviors were made by the same source (Harms & Credé, 2010).

Baseline of the exploratory study conducted on Romanian public managers

The idea of the present research naturally arise following one's author direct involvement both in the selection and in the training process of the future Public Managers included in the YPS program – Young Professionals Scheme. The aim of the project was to prepare a nucleus of leaders of the new generation within the public service, a body of professional managers in the Romanian public administration, who have the capabilities of being politically neutral and are professionally trained in the spirit of modern principles and values of the public sector management in the European Union (Stănescu, 2009). In order to enable them to fulfill their tasks, Public Managers are exposed to a range of placements in Government departments and Agencies and they are placed in regularly changing roles of intensive responsibility to prepare them for future senior managerial positions. Thus, through the training program, they are prepared to work in different administrative contexts, at central, territorial and local level.

Methodology

The design proposed for the current study is cross-sectional, self-report instruments being used in order to assess the leadership style and emotional intelligence of the candidates included in the YPS program. MLQ (5x-Revised Form) and EQ-I were applied on a sample composed of 101 public managers, assuring the anonymity & confidentiality of the results. Data were then analyzed using SPSS 17.00. Due to the cross-sectional design of the study, a causal relationship between the two constructs cannot be highlighted. Short description on methodology

Objectives and research questions

Starting from the theoretical framework that examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership, the current study was conducted having in view the following main objectives: 1. to identify the dominant leadership style reported by the participants in the study, 2. to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and the leadership style exerted, 3. to identify the fittest model of EI dimensions that predicts the transformational leadership style, and 4. to identify the fittest model of EI dimensions that predicts leadership effectiveness in the case of Romanian public managers.

Thus, the following research questions outline the current exploratory investigation:

Q1: What is the dominant leadership style exerted by the Romanian public managers?

Q2: What relationship exists between emotional intelligence and the leadership style of the Romanian public managers?

Q3: Which is the fittest model composed of EI dimensions that predicts the transformational leadership style?

Q4: Which is the fittest model composed of EI dimensions that predicts the leadership effectiveness?

Participants

The present research was conducted on 101 public managers (40 males and 61 females) enrolled in the 4th Young Professionals Scheme project cycle, with ages between 23-34 years old, and high educational level (undergraduate and graduate level) (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Participants' ages by gender

Gender/Age	20-25	26-30	> 30	Total
Male	8	28	4	40
Female	18	38	5	61
Total	26	66	9	101

Measures

Starting from the „Full Range Leadership Model”, the MLQ (5x-Revised Form) is composed of 45 items and assesses the five components of transformational leadership (Idealized Influence (Behavior), Idealized Influence (Attributed), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration), two components of transactional leadership (Contingent Reward, Management by-Exception (Active)), two passive/ avoidant leadership components (Management by-Exception (Passive), Laissez-faire leadership), and three outcome components (Satisfaction with the Leader, Individual, Group, and Organizational Effectiveness, and Extra Effort by Associates). The 5x-Revised version of MLQ is available in two forms: the self-rating form and the rater form (where associates rate their leaders), in the current study being used the self-rating form.

The EQ-i is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent behavior, composed of 133 items that provide a global EQ score and scores on 5 composite scales that comprise 15 subscale scores. The five main composite scales are labeled “Intrapersonal” (assessing self-awareness and self-expression competencies and skills), “Interpersonal” (assessing social awareness and interpersonal relationship competencies and skills), “Adaptability” (assessing the ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures), “Stress Management” (assessing emotional management and regulation), and “General Mood” (an indicator of an individual’s ability to enjoy life).

Discussion

Data were collected and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packet for Social Sciences), version 17.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of EQ-i composite scales

		Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Adaptability	Stress Management	General Mood	General EQ-i score
Total	Mean	177.00	128.96	113.37	77.42	78.29	575.05
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
	Std. Deviation	13.37	9.88	8.86	6.83	5.82	37.63

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of MLQ composite scales

Total	Mean	3.40	2.93	.75
	N	101	101	101
	Std.	.30	.43	.38
	Deviation			

In what regards the first research question, on the current sample composed of Romanian Public Managers, the scores obtained for transformational leadership style ($M=3.4$, $SD=.307$) were higher compared to the scores obtained for the transactional ($M=2.93$, $SD=.438$) and Passive/Avoidant styles ($M=0.75$, $SD=.383$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Leadership profile scores

	Transformational	Transactional	Passive / Avoidant
Mean	3.40	2.93	0.75
Standard dev.	0.30	0.43	0.38

Following the same approach, we have analyzed the distribution of scores on the five transformational leadership subscales of MLQ (Table 5).

Table 5. Transformational leadership scores

	IA	IB	IM	IS	IC
Mean	3.23	3.47	3.53	3.56	3.21
Standard dev.	0.416	0.421	0.447	0.383	0.473

Thus, as we can observe, the scores obtained for all the five scales, IA (Idealized Attributes) - builds trust ($M=3.23$, $SD=.416$), IB (Idealized Behavior) - acts with integrity ($M=3.47$, $SD=.421$), IM (Inspirational Motivation) - inspires others ($M=3.53$, $SD=.447$), IS (Intellectual Stimulation) - encourages innovative thinking ($M=3.56$, $SD=.383$), and IC (Individualized Consideration) - coaches people scale ($M=3.21$, $SD=.473$), were higher than the established Romanian normative sample (Figure 1).

In what concerns the first research question, we can conclude that the Public Managers included in the study manifested transformational leadership style, the levels of the five components of transformational leadership being higher than the national normative sample. Thus, the Romanian Public Managers investigated tend to inspire power and pride in their followers, by going beyond their own individual interests and focusing on the interests of the group and of its members, to manifest positive and highly valued behaviors (as dominance, consciousness, self-control, a high moral judgment, optimism and self-efficiency), tend to provide

visions of what is possible and how to attain it, encourage innovative thinking and mentor in view of enhancing the growth potential of their followers.

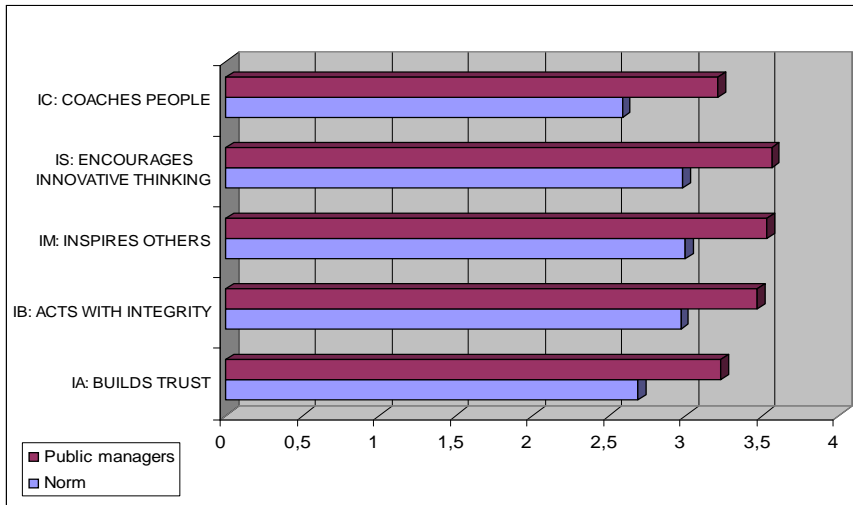


Figure 1. Scores obtained for the five components of transformational leadership versus the Romanian normative sample

In what regards the second research question, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the composite scales of MLQ and EQ-i, the correlation matrix being presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlation matrix for the scales of MLQ and EQ-i

		RA	ER	AD	SM	GM	EQQ
Transformational	Pearson Correlation	.556**	.519**	.565**	.565**	.611**	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Transactional	Pearson Correlation	.179	.321**	.287**	.179	.159	.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.001	.004	.073	.111	.006
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Passive/ avoidant	Pearson Correlation	-.448**	-.352**	-.402**	-.402**	-.382**	-.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.437**	.550**	.460**	.472**	.492**	.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101

As we can observe, significant positive correlations have been obtained between transformational leadership and the general score of EQ-i ($r=.664$, $p<.01$), and transformational leadership and all the scales of EQ-i. A positive significant correlation ($r=.556$, $p<.01$) has been obtained between transformational leadership and Intrapersonal (RA) and Interpersonal (ER) scale ($r=.519$, $p<.01$). The results suggest the fact that transformational leadership is associated with the ability to be conscious of the own emotions and with the ability of being conscious of the feelings, concerns and needs of the followers, transformational leaders being able to sustain constructive and mutually satisfying cooperation relationships with them. Transformational leaders are aware of their own emotions, are independent and determined to clearly express their own ideas and feelings (RA scale) and also are responsible, trustful persons, which have high social skills and obtain performance in tasks that imply team effort. Significant positive correlations have also been obtained between transformational leadership, Stress Management (SM) ($r=.565$, $p<.01$) and Adaptability (A) ($r=.565$, $p<.01$) scales, suggesting the fact that transformational leaders are capable of effectively managing stress and emotions, being rarely impulsive and working good under pressure and flexible when adapting to the situational changes.

A high positive correlation has been obtained between transformational leadership and General mood (GM) scale ($r=.661$, $p<.01$), indicating the fact that transformational leaders are positive, and cheerful persons, being able to create a motivating and positive climate at work.

In what regards transactional leadership style, a significant positive correlations have been obtained with general EI score ($r=.273$, $p<.01$), with the Adaptability ($r=.287$, $p<.01$), and Interpersonal scale ($r=.321$, $p<.01$), suggesting the fact transactional leadership is in some extent associated with the ability to be conscious of the feelings, concerns and needs of the followers and sustain constructive and mutually satisfying cooperation relationships with them and slightly with the ability of adapting to the situational changes.

Negative correlations have been obtained between the Passive/Avoidant form of leadership, the general EI score ($r=-.497$, $p<.01$), and all the scales of EQ-i: Intrapersonal ($r=-.448$, $p<.01$), Interpersonal ($r=-.352$, $p<.01$), Stress Management ($r=-.402$, $p<.01$), Adaptability ($r=-.402$, $p<.01$), and General Mood ($r=-.381$, $p<.01$) scales.

Regarding leadership effectiveness, positive correlations have been obtained between the general EI score ($r=.570$, $p<.01$), and all the scales EQ-i Intrapersonal ($r=.437$, $p<.01$); Interpersonal ($r=.550$, $p<.01$), Stress Management ($r=.472$, $p<.01$), Adaptability ($r=.460$, $p<.01$) and General Mood ($r=.492$, $p<.01$).

In what concerns the third research question, in view of identifying the fittest EI model in predicting transformational leadership, Linear Multiple Regression Analysis was performed, the model being composed of the Interpersonal (ER),

Stress management (SM) and General Mood (GM) factors ($R^2=.457$, $F=29.20$, $p<.01$) (Table 7). It was found that General Mood was the strongest predictor of transformational leadership ($\beta=.310$, $p<.01$), followed by Stress Management ($\beta=.308$, $p<.01$), and by Interpersonal ability ($\beta=.214$, $p<.05$).

Table 7. Model for predicting transformational leadership

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
Interpersonal Stress management General Mood	.689	.475	.458	.226	29.20	.000

Table 8. Beta coefficients for the model predicting transformational leadership

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.191	.349		.549	.584
GM	.016	.005	.310	3.017	.003
SM	.014	.004	.308	3.457	.001
ER	.007	.003	.214	2.319	.022

As we can observe, 47.5% of the total variance of transformational leadership is predicted by the interaction of the three EI factors (Interpersonal, Stress Management and General Mood).

Regarding the fourth research question, a Linear Multiple Regression Analysis was performed, Interpersonal and Stress Management factors of EQ-i being included in the most adequate model of predicting leadership effectiveness ($R^2=.382$, $F=30.23$, $p<.01$) (Table 9). Interpersonal EI factor ($\beta=.432$, $p<.01$) was the strongest predictor of leadership effectiveness, followed by Stress Management ($\beta=.306$, $p<.01$).

Table 9. Model for predicting leadership effectiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
Interpersonal Stress management	.618	.382	.369	.348	30.23	.000

Table 10. Beta coefficients for the model predicting leadership effectiveness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	-.579	.514		-1.127	.263
ER	.019	.004	.432	5.013	.000
SM	.020	.006	.306	3.549	.001

Thus, the combined interaction of Interpersonal EI factor (that includes interpersonal and social skills, the ability of understanding others’ emotions and needs, as well as the ability to interact and establish positive relationships), and the Stress Management EI factor (including personal abilities of reacting to stress) predict 38.2% of the total variance of leadership effectiveness measured by MLQ.

Conclusions

Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence were assessed using MLQ (5x-Revised Form) and EQ-i on 110 Romanian Public Managers enrolled in the YPS (Young Professionals Scheme) program. On the investigated sample, transformational leadership was the dominant self-reported style, the scores obtained for all the five transformational scales of MLQ being higher than the national normative sample. Significant positive correlations have been obtained between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, supporting the findings of authors like Barling et al. (2000) and Gardner & Stough (2002) and between all the subscales of EQ-i and transformational leadership. Also, significant positive correlations have been obtained between leadership effectiveness, general emotional intelligence and all the EQ-i scales. The interaction between Interpersonal, Stress Management and General mood EQ-i factors predicted 47.5% of the total variance of transformational leadership and the interaction between Interpersonal and Stress Management predicted 38.2% of the total variance of leadership effectiveness.

The results suggest that transformational leadership is associated with high levels of emotional intelligence, with the ability to be conscious of the own emotions and of the emotions and needs of the followers, to effectively manage stress and adapt to the situational changes and to be positive, and with the ability to enjoy life. The interaction between the ability to be conscious of the followers’ feelings, needs and concerns, to manage stress properly and to have a positive attitude towards life predicts almost half of the variance of transformational

leadership, and the interaction between the ability to be conscious about the followers' feelings, needs and concerns, and the ability to manage stress properly predicts 38% of leadership effectiveness, suggesting the fact that an effective leader should be able to identify and take into account its followers' feelings and to efficiently manage stress when faced with challenging situations.

The transactional leadership style was positively (although low) associated with the general emotional intelligence and with the Adaptability factor, and moderate with the Interpersonal factor, suggesting the fact transactional leadership is in some extent associated with the ability to be conscious of the feelings, concerns and needs of the followers and slightly with the ability of adapting to the situational changes.

Negative correlations have been obtained between the Passive/Avoidant form of leadership, the general EI score, and all the scales of EQ-i. The results support the findings of authors like Gardner & Stough (2002), indicating that Passive/Avoidant leaders do not have emotional abilities.

As Mandell & Pherwani (2003) consider, the implications of the positive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence could bring important gains and benefits for companies. Thus, as the two authors state, if emotional intelligence scores can determine transformational leadership, organizations might consider emotional intelligence instruments as important tools in view of hiring, promotion and development of organizational leaders (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003: 40). Also, training programs can be delivered in view of enhancing Interpersonal abilities, Stress Management and positive attitudes towards life, as well as the overall emotional intelligence, in view of stimulating the development of transformational leaders in companies.

Given the fact that the current study was an exploratory one, proposing to examine the relationship between leadership styles, especially the transformational style, and emotional intelligence on Romanian Public Managers, a series of research limits emerge. Firstly, regarding the results obtained, it has to be mentioned that the managers were relatively young, with ages between 23 and 34 years old, being thus more opened towards being and perceiving themselves as transformational leaders. Also, due to the fact that they were selected and enrolled in an extended training program, their emotional intelligence abilities could have been enhanced and the leadership style adopted could have become more transformational.

Regarding the current study, correlations between the transformational and transactional scales of MLQ and the general Emotional Intelligence and EQ-i scales have not been computed, and the predictors of the other leadership outcomes assessed by MLQ were not identified. More studies have to be conducted on more heterogeneous samples composed of Romanian managers from previous YPS cycles, and, as Harms & Credé (2010) suggest, in future studies multiple

ratings sources have to be used in order to obtain bigger research consistency. Also, research conducted on Romanian public managers' population can take into account the gender differences in examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles, especially transformational leadership and new studies can examine the relationship between personality traits, nonverbal sensitivity and leadership styles.

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