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The Necessity of the Process of Modernisation of the Human Resources of the Military System[2]

The field of human resources has an important role in the process of militarisation and it is necessary that human resources of the military system to adapt to all the transformations which are taking place. In recent years, the Romanian military system had to upgrade, to adapt and to transform all the structures, which are implied in ensuring national security. Those transformations entailed the necessity of modernisation of human resources of the military system because militaries have new responsibilities, they have to apply different procedures and in most of the cases, the way of working has changed. In order to adapt to all those changes, employees have to modernise and commanders are those who support them in this process of modernisation.

The deployment of military resources also implies an effective organisation of the military system, establishing clear procedures. Human resources are the first stakeholder in the modernisation process, which is why it is necessary to research this area in order to understand what the modernisation of human resources in the Romanian military system entails.

Keywords: *human resources, militarisation, modernisation, security*

Introduction

The modernisation of human resources of the military system is necessary because it increases the performance of the whole system. It is hard to imagine what would happen if an organisation does not invest and establish human resource strategies.

It could result in an underperforming HR management which may lead to a decline of the performance for the entire organisation and to a loss of top talent. The military system should invest and implement innovative solutions in order to keep the talents in the organisation and to attract new talents. HR departments should be proactive and permanently should seek talents.

Human resource departments have an essential role in maintaining a peaceful and productive environment, but they need smart instruments in order to permanently adapt to all the changes that appear in the military system. Here we might include innovative recruiting strategies, digital tools such as an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) or cloud computing.

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The modernisation of human resources also involves an increase in the quality of life, new training programs for militaries and the discovery and the development of leaders in the organisation.

The evolution and modernisation of human resources of the military system

For a long time, human resource management was dealing only with personnel affairs, but now it is involved in many processes such as evaluation, career management, recruitment and selection, performance management, personnel motivation, salary management. Being involved in so many processes, human resource management is enforced to upgrade, to automatise its processes and implicitly with the modernisation of the human resources.

In 1961, at the University of Michigan studies referred to the fact that Management of Personnel Quarterly includes labour management and firstly in 1972 the term of HRM – Human Resource Management appeared.

Since the 1990s, different academicians have used more and more the term strategic Human Resource Management because globalisation conducted to this development or transformation from management of personnel to Human Resource Management and then to Strategic Human Resource Management – SHRM.[3] SHRM refers to the fact that HR policies and procedures contribute to the future development of the organisation and the achievement of its objectives. The main objective for SHRM is to develop inside the organisation different policies in order to have capable and motivated workforce, using different recruiting techniques, supporting and developing high-quality employers.

David Ulrich in his book *Human Resource Champion* identified four main functions of the Human Resource system. Firstly, described as a strategic partner, which is following to create a balance between the organisational goals and employees' goals. Secondly, playing the role of administrative expert, respecting the law and the human rights, creating a pleasant place for work. Last, as an employee champion and change agent which is always looking to get the best results, to improve the key performance indicators, to be a problem solver, developing leadership inside organisations.[4]

In 2015, Armstrong and Taylor set the most important goals of Human Resource Management. Firstly, HRM has the role to support the organisation in achieving its objectives by developing and implementing human resource strategies that are integrated in the business strategy. Then, HRM should contribute to the development of a high-performance culture because this way employee engagement can be best developed.[5]

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[3]   Boxall, Peter (1996): The Strategic HRM Debate and the Resource-Based View of the Firm. *Human Resource Management,* 6(3), 59–75.

[4]   Ulrich, David (1997): *Human Resource Champions. The Next Agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

[5]   Armstrong, Michael – Taylor, Stephen (2015): *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice.* London: Kogan Page. 55.

By ensuring that the organisation has the talented, skilled and engaged people it needs, HRM should be involved in the design of every job by establishing as clearly as possible the responsibilities of that job and what type of people are necessary on those jobs.

Moreover, from their perspective, HRM should create a positive relationship between management and employees in a climate of mutual trust by encouraging the application of an ethical approach to people management.

Digitalisation of the human resource management system

According to the development of the HR system over the years, specialists had to find different solutions in order to modernise it, one of the main solutions being by digitising it. Digitalisation represents the path to success both in public and private system. There are different solutions to digitalise human resource management systems according to the need of the organisation.

One solution could be the use of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). All those processes have an important role in the development of the organisation and in the development of the employees. Military organisations should implement an ERP because this way employees could automatise their tasks, they will be more efficient, they will communicate easier with their colleagues from other services and have access to information easier. Employees are looking more and more for digital experience and by implementing an ERP in a military organisation might reduce workforce retention. An ERP might help militaries because this way they have access rapidly to all kinds of information and they can access it everywhere, at any moment.

For example, by using an ERP employees might participate in different trainings all over the world. Moreover, electronic meetings can be organised. An ERP brings benefits both for the employees and for the organisation, saving time and money. By implementing an ERP, the organisation can eliminate or reduce the bureaucratic activities specific to the human resource field, by automatising administrative tasks and speed up internal processes. An ERP could be used on processes like trainings, payroll, recruitment, evaluation of professional performance.

An ERP might also be upgraded in order to migrate its processes to the cloud environment. Implementing cloud-based technologies in the military system brings different advantages, such as cost-efficiency, collaboration and security benefits and with time it is recommended as most of the national defence organisations migrate to cloud services and technologies.

How can cloud technologies influence cost cutting in the military system?

Firstly, using on-site servers to stock data is more expensive than using cloud solutions. In this domain, there are high amounts of sensitive data and huge amounts of money are spent in order to secure it. In addition, cloud technologies allow personnel to work and to access information in real time, improving collaboration and communication

between departments and external institutions. In this way, manual and repetitive tasks are reduced and better levels of interoperability are delivered across military systems.

Cloud technologies also improve the security measures implemented in this system, reducing IT incidents. Cloud technologies should be secured against cyberattacks and respect legal duties, being necessary to attract, retain and develop cyber professionals in the system and also develop strategic partnerships with different organisations.

Cloud technologies might also contribute to the development of cyber capabilities as an integral part of military operations by the development of cyber means for tactical use and the setup of defensive digital means during missions.

Using cloud computing is more secure, being developed with the security of information at its core, you can control any moment who accesses what information and you can eliminate the heavy workload created by paperwork. Also, data is protected in case of different disasters, like an office fire.
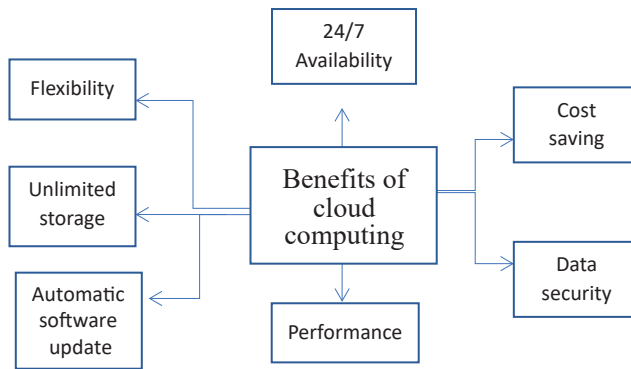

Figure 1: Benefits of cloud computing

Source: Compiled by the author.

For maintaining their employees, it is necessary to develop career plans in order to draw the career path of the employees in the organisation for a longer period, to establish a transparent and objective evaluation and remuneration procedure.

In recent years, the Romanian military system had to upgrade, to adapt and to transform all the structures, which are implied in ensuring national security. Those transformations and the fact that nowadays we can use the advantages of the digital era represent a great challenge for the employees who are working in the military system. For understanding and adapting to all those changes, people need help and the Human Resource (HR) department has an important role in this process. The HR department should be the main connection between employees and the commander and the HR manager has to be organised, to send clear messages and to establish clear strategies. The modernisation process of the Romanian Military system implies also the modernisation of the HR management system.

The Romanian military system confronts with more and more complex internal and external missions. Especially the missions outside the national territory influence the

modernisation process of the Romanian military system through the modernisation of the human resource management. Those aspects are available for militaries all over the world because their missions are very difficult and besides the dangers, they are confronting with difficult weather conditions as well.

Overall, we can say that the entire modernisation of the Romanian military system implies the two most important structures of the organisation. One is the modernisation of the equipment used by the soldiers and the second one is the modernisation of the human resource management, including the education and training of the employees. Those aspects should be taken into consideration by militaries all over the world.

The main steps when an organisation decides to implement different HR practices are for managers to establish clear objectives, to establish the things they want to change and to explain to their employees, which are the reasons they want to change those things.

Managing change is difficult, but managers have different tools, which they can use in order to make this process easier. Managers should explain to their workers that using different high-performance practices, managing change is easier. It was shown that organisations, which use high-performance work practices have motivated staff, have an excellent system of training the employees and provide an excellent career plan.[6] It is relevant for the Head of Personnel and Mobilisation to present to all the employees the organisation's plans regarding the implementation of different HR practices. People need to know why the organisation took those decisions, which are the plans and if the management is open and they trust in their employees, people are more open to accept those changes. In my opinion, changes should be done by a long period, people should receive official information and all of them at the same time because this way managers avoid employees to be misinformed. According to different studies, companies implement different HR practices, have a lower labour turnover and an ascending profitability because they reduce costs when they have a small rate of labour turnover.[7] Those aspects are also available in the military system because when militaries feel that their rights are respected and when they have perspectives to evolve in the organisation, then they want to stay with the organisation for a long time.

It is important for military organisations to analyse the connection between people management and performance before establishing a transformation strategy. Different authors concluded that using different HR practices, establishing clear HR objectives, which are clearly presented and explained to all the employees, may influence employee attitudes and also could improve worker performance.[8]

A possible method of analysing the effectiveness of HR practices could be by establishing direct discussions with militaries, asking for their opinion because this way insights could be obtained regarding the effectiveness of HR practices. In addition, different surveys could be deployed in order for employees to express their opinion regarding the connection between human resource management and organisational performance,

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[6]   Beardwell, Julie – Thompson, Amanda (2017): *Human Resource Management.* London: Pearson Education Limited. 17.
[7]   Beardwell–Thompson 2017: 15.
[8]   Beardwell–Thompson 2017: 16.

regarding their needs and their objectives and how they perceive the strategy of implementing different HR practices.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2006) had an important role in the research regarding the strong connection between human resource management and performance. According to their studies, it was demonstrated that organisational performance and productivity depends a lot on the model of management chosen by the organisation, being important for the organisation to believe that effective people management together with a contemporary system of work organisation influence the performance of the organisation.[9]

Furthermore, in the military domain an option of modernising the human resource management department could be the use of different HR systems, in order for the HR personnel to be involved more in strategic activities, to focus on bringing value to the organisation, to the objectives established by the organisation and to spend less time on transactional activities.

For being present and active in the general strategy established by the military organisation, the HR personnel need to know the detailed plans established by the commander, in order to build strong HR strategies. At this moment, from my point of view, an important objective for the HR services of the military should be the focus on the modernisation of the recruitment process, retention process and career plan.

Moreover, it is interesting to study the modernisation of the Romanian Armed Forces through the transformation of the human resource management in terms of ergonomic requirements. An important aspect in the modernisation of the human resource management is represented by the ergonomic factor because employees need to learn to use the equipment with maximum efficiency.[10] The military receive more and more complex fight equipment and they need special training for learning how to work, to use that equipment. Military organisations should send people to trainings at the companies, which produce that equipment and then they should organise in-house trainings for the other employees. It is more efficient to send a reduced number of employees to external trainings and then they maintain in-house trainings for the other colleagues or for the new entries.

Human resource management in the military system is still going through a complex process of modernisation and the ergonomic factor has an important role in this process because it influences the training of military and civilian personnel in the military domain. Also, we mention that the ergonomic factors have an important role in the process of developing new strategies of the military organisation. Managing the human resource activity in a military institution may be a very difficult and challenging task because you work with people who are involved in dangerous activities and you have to be aware of their emotional and physical needs.

Nowadays, we are living a very difficult period regarding the Covid pandemic which has changed our personal and professional lives a lot. The HR departments should be aware

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[9]   Beardwell–Thompson 2017: 17.
[10]   Opincă, Mihai (2016): *Improvement of the Human Resource Management from the Perspective of Ergonomics Requirements in the Romanian Military.* PhD thesis. Bucharest. 8.

of those changes, which affects also the professional lives of their employees. Militaries are also involved in different activities regarding the Covid pandemic and commanders have to manage very well the tensions which appeared in the last two years, such as taking special measures regarding the health of their employees, maintain motivation and take measures to not reduce the size of the workforce.

Over the years, military organisations focused to recruit for upper levels only personnel from within the organisation, but they realised that it was not the wisest choice. Candidates from external organisations can also be fit for these tasks, because if they are specialists on a certain field, they can also perform in military organisations.[11] For improving the quality of the new human resource personnel of the military organisation, firstly organisations should upgrade their selection and recruiting process. One solution could be to improve the theoretical tests. On the other hand, by modernising the process of promoting the available jobs and by promoting those jobs inside universities, then military organisations could attract specialists from specific fields, with potential, who are open to support the development of the military system.

Moreover, several studies confirm that the compensation system in military organisations should also be transformed because the promotion of military and civilian personnel is presently by rank, the salary is linked directly to rank and years of service, i.e. it is not directly linked to performance.[12] Military and civilian personnel might be disappointed of those conditions and they could be not interested to develop their experience, to perform, to learn new things because these do not help them to increase their salaries.

In the military domain, employees are changing often the department where they are working and their responsibilities are completely different. They are doing this thing for obtaining a higher rank and sometimes it is possible in the conditions of working in another field. To make the transition easier, militaries should participate in a training oriented on the responsibilities of the new job. In this way, productivity becomes higher in a very short time. For doing this, it is necessary for commanders to establish training programs for new employees, even if they are coming from an internal department. In-house trainings are very useful because it is a common change of knowledge. If organisations are interested to develop a program of in-house trainings, every department has to establish a training program with the support of the human resource department.

In most of the cases, the employees working in the human resource departments of military organisations are not being prepared for delivering trainings. Being a trainer is not an easy job. From my point of view, employees from HR departments should participate in external trainings and after that, they would support the managers from other departments to deliver specific trainings on the job, to establish a training program for the new employees. In-house trainings could also be very useful because new employees discover the organisation and its objectives in a very short period. In this way, the organisation supports the modernisation of the human resource department within the organisation.

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[11] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation: *NATO Human Resources (Manpower) Management*. [online], NATO, 2012. Source: sto.nato.int [04.11.2022]. 49.

[12] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation 2012: 49.

Leadership

Managers have an important role in the modernisation process of human resources in military organisations. For supporting this process, they have to know very good the members of their team, how they work and which are the responsibilities they are in charge. Managers can propose different solutions of modernisation to their colleagues, but it is very important that they act as leaders. People are not born leaders; the qualities of being a good leader develop daily. The organisation should support the process of developing leaders inside the organisation. Managers should develop the ability to effectively lead and motivate a group of people. Leaders choose the right action at the right time, they innovate, permanently come up with better solutions to accomplish the goal, they respect people and their rights and they do what is right – legally and morally. Military leaders build and motivate teams, they are interested permanently about the projects. Change processes are dynamic and that is why it is good to have one or more leaders in your organisation when you start a process of transformation or modernisation.[13] A leader is always revising the change plan when something is wrong, and remains calm, optimistic and centred even when problems appear.

Becoming a successful leader is specific to the organisation and to the rank, which a leader has. We have no recipe for becoming a successful leader, but some authors established which are the main steps a person could follow in order to become a successful leader. Leaders are those who supports the best process of modernisation of human resources because they enjoy innovation and transformation. Leadership is "influencing people by – providing purpose direction and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization".[14]

A good leader is the person who inspires and counts on trust and confidence from the part of their team members. In addition, one of the best qualities of a leader is the fact that they have a special way of ensuring that the mission and vision of the organisation are understood.[15]

Leaders should possess creativity, innovation and psychological abilities. Communication, time management and stress management are qualities, which leaders should possess in order to find solutions to the problems, which appear on different missions. In such kind of problematic missions, military leaders should be prepared psychologically because you need to understand the people from your team, to know how to react when one of your colleagues has a serious problem and find solutions in the moment. Commanders should establish different procedures and different measures in order for the militaries who are involved in different missions to have a high morale, a positive mood because in stressful conditions, a pessimistic mood does not help. Militaries often confront with dangerous operations and in those moments, it is good for them to be balanced and not to be tired. Commanders have an important role to ensure a positive

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[13] McLagan, Patricia (2002): *Change Is Everybody's Business.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. 638.
[14] Campbell, Donald J. – Dardis, Gregory J. (2004): *The "Be, Know, Do" Model of Leader Development.* Human Resource Planning Society. 26.
[15] Campbell–Dardis 2004: 26–39.

state of mind of the militaries by different techniques, such as involving militaries in fun activities, in order to have some laughter and good mood. Militaries have a positive mood when they trust in their commanders, when they benefit of a decent space to sleep, when they benefit of all the necessary instruments in order to communicate with their families and friends.

In addition, if their families have different problems, commanders should find different solutions in order to help them to solve their problems. In these conditions, militaries are relaxed and they can concentrate on their work. Leaders should also help militaries to adapt quickly to changes.

However, leaders also need special psychological training before the mission because they are also stressed and they have a lot of work to do. Training helps them to organise, to communicate, not to panic and to find solutions. Communication and time management trainings may help leaders to make the best for their team.

The creation of mixed teams is recommended because military missions imply high risks and mixed teams from the point of view of personality have real success.

The technique of negotiating is very important in this process because there are common interests and it is beneficial to follow a common goal. Militaries working in special and difficult missions should receive a special training because they have to learn to work together in cold weather conditions – on land, in the air and at sea.

Digitalisation may help human security, providing different tools in order to ensure people's wellbeing, rights and capabilities. Digitalisation contributes to ensure global security and nowadays investing in different solutions in order to reduce global warming is necessary all around the world.

Conclusion

Nowadays, modernisation of the human resource management system of the military system is based on digitalisation and leadership. More and more processes need to be automatised in order for the militaries to establish different strategies to confront electronic warfare, using cloud computing and other technologies. Cloud computing might be used by military units to overcome constraints, to modernise operational capabilities, being aware of cybersecurity.

Leaders become more and more important in the development of militaries and in the evolution of the military system. More and more leaders are participating in different trainings and different assessment centres in order to develop different capabilities, which will help them to lead their teams, to offer the best professional advices.

Leaders need to be very well organised, to possess technical and personal skills, because soldiers face constant professional challenges. However, they also face private problems regarding their health or their families' health and in those moments leaders should find solutions for them. Leaders are developing continuously, wishing to develop certain capabilities regarding the ways soldiers have to fight, modernising the equipment, and the most important, prepare the people who are working in the military system by different trainings.

Military digitalisation is the most recent instrument, which contributes to the modernisation of human resources of the military system by implementing new informatics systems and processes.

Technology contributes to the modernisation of HR processes, transforming them, making them more accurate and effective, creating a productive environment.

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