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Challenges of Modern Public Management
from a Human Resources Perspective

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Abstract

Human resource management is not a new idea to be imposed on public services. This is a natural and essential part of management, all managers playing an active role in the process of managing their own staff. Managers manage people, and this is one of their basic responsibilities. But managers also manage other resources, including budgets and material resources. The description of people as resources can lead to the rejection of such labelling, because the human factor has a much higher intrinsic value than money or other material aspects. However, their non-recognition as a resource has led to diminished attention to the task of managing people. Accepting people as a resource emphasizes that they are at least as important as other resources, and that their good management requires levels of training similar to those needed to manage any other type of resource. This is especially true in the public sector where people remain the most valuable asset, as the provision of efficient public services largely depends on the competence of civil servants. All managers are responsible for the efficient management of their resources, the role of directors in the management and evolution of staff being as important as that of the manager specializing in human resources. Human resource management refers - like all management activities - to policies and procedures. The main objective of the article is to analyse the process elements that can influence human resource management.

Keywords: management, human resources, public sector, procedures, processes.

JEL Classification: M12.

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1. Introduction

It is known that the value of an administrative system is, first of all, given by the human potential it has, and by the realization of its functionality, which ensures the implementation of political decisions and economic and social progress in general. The value of an administrative system consists not so much in the material and financial means at its disposal, but especially in its human potential. All public positions require thorough professional training, because the professional competence is absolutely necessary to obtain efficiency at the level of the administrative institution. Competence is the ability of a person to perform their tasks properly and with maximum efficiency. Performance is dependent on competence, and the performance of a civil servant influences the performance of the public institution in which they operate.

Human resources are the most dynamic of all the resources that any organization has. That is why it needs to be given special attention by the management if it wants to exploit it to its maximum capacity in the professional activity. Human resource development is a complex process that is approached both nationally and internationally (Greene, 2020). The identification of knowledge, skills and experiences necessary for different categories of administrative staff must take into account the permanent changes that occur in public administration, in society, the fact that some categories are necessary for vocational training, others for professional development and specialization, and others for cultural change the level of the professional community, determined by the new administrative context. Human resources in public administration can be a major problem because the desired results in this area cannot be achieved if civil servants, those responsible for law enforcement, do not show professionalism and certain qualities. The quality of human resources in public administration is an important factor for its ability to meet the general interest by providing quality public services. We can say that the achievement of the mission and performance of a public entity depends almost entirely on the professionalism, competence and integrity of the committed human resources available to it, which is why human resource management becomes, from this point of view, one of the key processes in the functioning of public entities. Public management of human resources is the set of operational activities (consisting in planning, recruiting and maintaining staff) and energy (by creating an appropriate organizational climate), which provide the organization with the necessary human resources and their efficient use (Gilbert, 2020). Public human resources management is a relatively new term, which has a global, interdisciplinary and professional approach to issues related to the staff of an organization.

The decisional problem from which we start in our research approach is the answer to the question: what is the perception of Romanian managers in public institutions related to the implementation of the process elements of the human resources management system? Thus, the purpose of the article is to try to clarify the way in which managers in several public institutions in Romania perceive the human resources management system.

2. Problem Statement

The doctrine of public administration and the normative acts that refer to the management of human resources delimit two meanings that can be given to the notion of human resources policy in public administration: - *in a narrow sense*, it refers to the principles and rules governing the conclusion, modification or dissolution the employment contract, as well as the obligations of the personnel from the public administration; - *in a broad sense*, it also includes the principles and rules that refer to the achievement of the necessary conditions to be created within the public administration authorities for the development in good conditions of the activity of the salaried staff (Mathis & Jackson, 2015). From this point of view, the human resources policy considers the training, recruitment, promotion and improvement of civil servants and other employees, the relations within the public administration authorities and with the beneficiaries of the administration, the qualities, style and methods used by leaders specialized in public administration (Brown & Harvey, 2016).

Public management, from the perspective of human resources, is identified with the following elements:

1.*Training and development of human resources*: is the concern to improve the intellectual or emotional skills needed by an employee to perform their job better (Sims & Bias, 2019).

2.*Remuneration systems*: The remuneration strategy must determine the employees to get involved and make every effort to achieve the objectives included in the organization's strategy (Slater, 2019).

3.*Health and safety/staff well-being*: a healthy economy depends on a healthy population. Health promotion in the professional environment is an activity carried out through various programs, in order to help employees maintain optimal health, by being aware of the importance of the problem and adopting beneficial changes in style and work environment (Mariappanadar, 2019).

4.*Discipline or dissatisfaction*: coexist in close correlation with the rights and duties of employees. Any violation of the employees' obligations can generate acts of indiscipline (Dundon & Wilkinson, 2020).

The human resources in the public institutions represent certain particularities depending on the specificities of the activities carried out within the public institutions (Cole, 2018). A properly formulated human resources policy must take into account the importance of the staff within the organization, the responsibility of the management and the general objectives to be met (Buckingham, 2011). Achieving the objectives and tasks of public administration reform must be accompanied by a well-defined personnel policy (Covey, 2012).

The general goal of public human resource management is to contribute as effectively as possible to achieving the goal of the organization, through people. The public administration system involves the application of human resources policies that present certain specific aspects, determined by the activity carried out in public institutions (Eitington, 2011).

3. Aim of the Research

The purpose of the article is to determine how managers in several public institutions from Romania perceive the human resources management system. The public human resources management system is structured on several process elements:

P1. Training and development: the role of the human resources service in training and development differs considerably; in large institutions this is a separate function, but closely linked to the human resources service. In small institutions, it often does not even exist, and the training / development activities are carried out ad-hoc.

P2. Remuneration systems: the role of the human resources service differs; it may be involved in negotiations on pay / reward systems, but most often its role will be limited to routine issues, recording the correct level of pay or answering questions from employees on various topics.

P3. Health and safety / staff well-being: in most cases, the human resources service has the responsibility to implement the health and safety policy. This concerns the working environment, the safety of the equipment and its use.

P4. Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction: the role of the service in this area is similar to that assumed in performance management. The procedures must be applied strictly in accordance with the existing law / procedures and recorded precisely at each stage.

Based on the purpose of the scientific research, the following objectives have been drafted:

 1. Analysing the public human resources management system;
 2. Analysing the process elements that make up the public human resources management system;
 3. Identifying the connections between the process elements.

Based on studies and theories in the field of literature and personal observations, the following hypotheses have been formulated, which underlie the scientific research:

H 1: There is a strong correlation between *P1.Training and development* and *P2.Remuneration systems*;

H 2: There is a very significant positive relationship between *P1. Training and development* and *P3.Health and safety/welfare of staff*;

H 3: Between *P1.Training and development* and *P4.Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction* there is a very significant positive relationship;

H 4: There is a positive relationship between *P2.Remuneration systems* and *P3.Health and safety / welfare of staff*;

H 5: Between *P2.Remuneration systems* and *P4.Discipline-related procedures or dissatisfaction* there is a very significant positive relationship.

4. Research Methods

We resorted to the approach of a statistical-mathematical analysis of quantitative type, for data collection using the questionnaire as a research tool. We chose this type of analysis because it is primarily aimed at verifying the theories and hypotheses issued, regarding the subject, using structured techniques, quantitatively measurable (by using indicators of dispersion, central tendency and correlation) having an evaluative, predictive and causal character. Data collection took place between November 2020 and February 2021, using the questionnaire. A number of 423 valid questionnaires were obtained. In the processing and analysis of the collected data, the special statistical research software S.P.S.S. (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used, by means of which the Spearman rho Correlation Coefficient was calculated.

5. Findings

To validate the hypotheses, we used the most common and by far the most useful, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient, with the help of the special statistical research software S.P.S.S. (Table 1).

Table 1. Spearman rho correlation coefficient values

Correlations				
Spearman's rho	P1.Training and development	P2.Remuneration systems	P3. Health and safety/welfare of staff	P4.Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction
P1.Training and development	correlation coefficient **1.000**	correlation coefficient **.921**[**]	correlation coefficient **.837**[**]	correlation coefficient **.823**[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed) **-**	Sig. (2-tailed) **.000**	Sig. (2-tailed) **.000**	Sig. (2-tailed) **.000**
P2.Remuneration systems	correlation coefficient **.921**[**]	correlation coefficient **1.000**	correlation coefficient **.800**[**]	correlation coefficient **.784**[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**	Sig.(2-tailed) **-**	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**
P3. Health and safety/welfare of staff	correlation coefficient .837[**]	correlation coefficient .800[**]	correlation coefficient 1.000	correlation coefficient .895[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed) .000	Sig.(2-tailed) .000	Sig.(2-tailed)	Sig.(2-tailed) .000
P4.Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction	correlation coefficient **.823**[**]	correlation coefficient **.784**[**]	correlation coefficient **.895**[**]	correlation coefficient **1.000**
	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**	Sig.(2-tailed) **.000**	Sig.(2-tailed) **-**

Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

Following the analysis of the Spearman rho correlation coefficient, we can observe the following correlations between the different process elements that make up the public management system:

1. There is a very high significant positive relationship between *P1.Training and development* and *P2. Remuneration systems* (rho = 0.92, df = 423, p < 0.001). From the scatter plot (Figure 1) it can be seen that the point spread is relatively limited, which indicates a strong correlation ($R^2 = 0.81$). The slope of the scattering of the results is relatively straight, indicating a linear rather than a curvilinear relationship. It can be stated that ***Hypothesis 1 has been validated.***
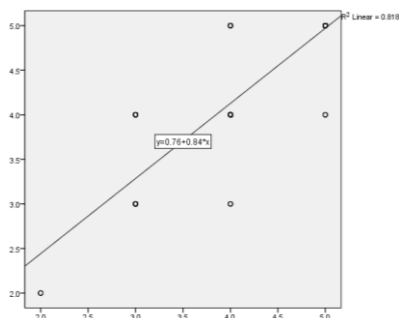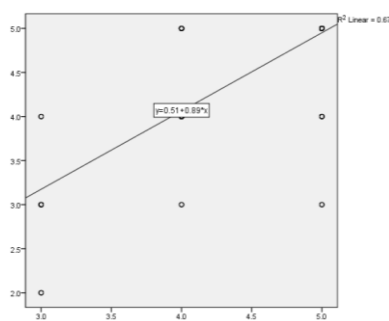

Figure 1. Dispersion diagram - correlation between P1. Training and development and P2. Remuneration systems
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

Following the validation of Hypothesis 1, we can conclude that there is a correlation between *P1. Training and development* and *P2. Remuneration systems,* which aims at actions that will not lead to direct expenses and will be found in the comfort state of employees by ensuring the following elements: building a climate of valorisation of well done work; recognition from the superior; creating competitive work situations between individuals and groups based on the diversification of tasks, clearly defining the criteria and objectives to request the entire productive potential of employees; diminishing the organizational barriers and those related to the working conditions.

2. It can be seen from Table 1 that there is a very significant positive relationship between *P1.Training and development* and *P3.Health and safety / welfare of staff* (rho = 0.83, df = 423, p <0.001). The scatter plot (Figure 2) reveals that the point spread is relatively limited, indicating a strong correlation ($R^2 = 0.67$). The slope of the scattering of the results is relatively straight, indicating a linear rather than a curvilinear relationship. In conclusion, ***Hypothesis 2 is validated.***
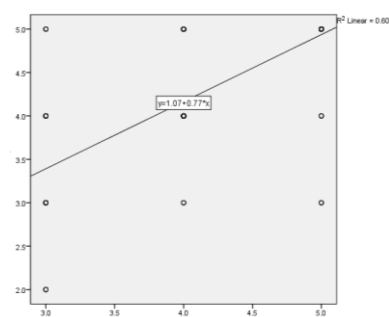
Figure 2. Dispersion diagram - correlation between P1. Training and development and P3. Health and safety / welfare of staff
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

Demonstrating the correlation between *P1.Training and development* and *P3. Health and safety/staff,* it means that well-being can bring many benefits to any public institution, such as: increase productivity by reducing absenteeism due to illness; reduction of healthcare costs; maintenance of older workers; stimulating more efficient working methods and technologies.

3. Between *P1.Training and development* and *P4.Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction* there is a very significant positive relationship (rho = 0.82, df = 423, p < 0.001). In Figure 3, the scatter plot reveals that the point spread is relatively limited, indicating a strong correlation. The slope of the scattering of the results is a relatively straight line, indicating a linear rather than a curvilinear relationship. It can be stated that ***Hypothesis 3 is fully validated.***
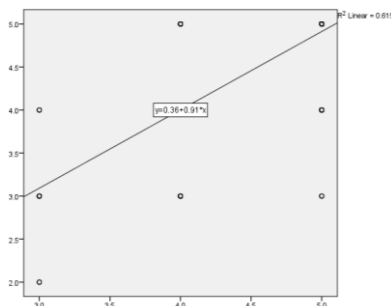

Figure 3. Dispersion diagram – between P1. Training and development and P4. Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

It can be stated that Hypothesis 3 is fully validated. The correlation between *P1. Training and development* and *P4.Procedures related to discipline* or dissatisfaction is ensured in any institution by ensuring economic, legal, social and organizational conditions necessary for the performance of work, by forming conscious attitudes

towards work, by applying incentives and rewards as well as sanctions in case of committing disciplinary offenses.

4. Analysing *P2.Remuneration systems* and *P3.Health and safety/well-being of staff* results in a very significant positive relationship (rho = 0.80, df = 423, $p < 0.001$). The scatter plot (Figure 4) reveals that the point spread is relatively limited, which indicates a strong correlation ($R^2 = 0.61$). The slope of the scattering of the results is relatively straight, indicating a linear rather than a curvilinear relationship. It can be stated that **Hypothesis 4 is validated**.
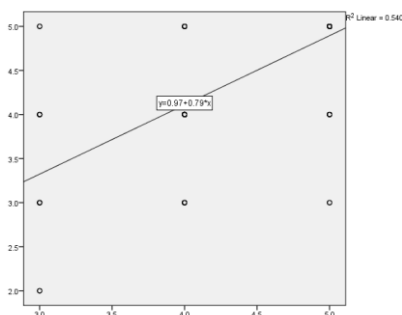
Figure 4. Dispersion diagram - correlation between P2. Remuneration systems and P3. Health and safety / welfare of staff
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

Maintaining the correlation between *P2.Remuneration systems* and *P3.Health and safety/welfare of staff* among the priorities of management makes any institution more productive, more attractive and more responsible for the condition of its employees. Therefore, the results of the investigations allow us to find that occupational health has direct implications on the activity of employees, especially on their performance.

5. Between *P2.Remuneration systems* and *P4.Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction* there is a very significant positive relationship (rho = 0.84, df = 423, $p < 0.001$). The scatter plot shows that the point spread is relatively limited, indicating a moderate to strong correlation ($R^2 = 0.54$) - Figure 5. The slope of the scattering of the results is relatively straight, indicating a linear rather than curvilinear relationship - **Hypothesis 5 is validated**.
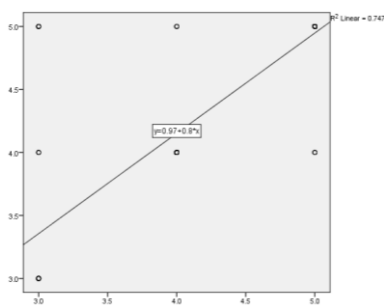
**Figure 5 - Dispersion diagram - correlation between P2. Remuneration systems
and P4. Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction**
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

We can say that the procedures can be included in the training of managers, because in most institutions such problems do not occur frequently, fortunately. Mainly, the service has the responsibility to ensure the correctness at each stage, the access of the respective employee to all available support, to the staff representatives and to the protection of the law.

6. There is a very large positive positive relationship (rho = 0.89, df = 423, $p < 0.001$) and between *P3. Health and safety/welfare of staff* and *P4. Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction* (Table 1). The scatter plot (Figure 6) reveals that the point spread is relatively limited, which indicates a moderate to strong correlation ($R^2 = 0.74$). The slope of the scattering of the results is relatively straight, indicating a linear rather than a curvilinear relationship.

**Figure 6 - Dispersion diagram - correlation between P3. Sanitary and safety/welfare
of staff and P4. Procedures related to discipline or dissatisfaction**
Source: Processing data obtained through SPSS program.

Taking into account the specificity and characteristics of the staff in public institutions, it can be said that the role of human resources is fundamental for the efficient functioning of any organization.

6. Conclusions

Following this study we can conclude that the efficiency of public services in the administration is determined not so much by the material and financial resources at its disposal, but especially by the human potential. Within public institutions, a quality human resources management is of great importance, because depending on the efficiency of human resources management depends directly on the success of all activities to be carried out throughout the community. The objectives most pursued by human resources management activities, in order to help public institutions become more efficient, include the following: to help the public administration achieve its goals, to use the staff's skills in the most efficient way, to provide well-trained and motivated staff, to maintain a high level of professional ethics, to help increase the level of employee satisfaction in relation to professional activity and to help make easier changes for the institution in general and for community representatives.

From the point of view of novelty elements, the results obtained in this article can provide real support in managerial decision making, thus bringing a number of contributions to the activity of public human resources management as a result of which we can say that the main challenges of modern public management have the following roles: to make institutions more accountable, transparent and accessible, to establish a performance-based approach in the public sector, to change the perception of performance in the public sector, to facilitate relocation and restructuring, to better organize and motivate civil servants.

We consider that the contribution brought by this research study, compared to the specialized literature, has the following merits: 1) to clarify the concept of public management system from the point of view of human resources; 2) to analyse each process elements that make up the public human resources management system; 3) to identify the links between the process elements of the public human resources management system.

Regarding future research directions, an identification of the moderating factors of the relationship between the process elements of public human resources management and the different marketing variables could be an important research.

The limits of the study undertaken are diverse, from which we point out: the time horizon chosen by us is quite narrow, because research topics often generate studies of 50-100 years; the scientific approach was channelled on the interpretation of the studies, and not on the explanation of the use of the obtained findings; the inductive research methodology was easily realized.

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