

THE INTEGRATED MODEL OF THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE RAIL TRANSPORT COMPANIES

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Abstract

As a result of the current economic environment instability, the railway companies are determined to organize themselves in a new fashion, by searching management methods in order to control a potential crisis context, which turns up the current existing theories. An important characteristic of all the modern approaches is the idea according to which all human resources, both natural and especially human must be directed towards achieving organizational objectives. The globalization and internationalization phenomenon related to exploitation and consumption imposes human resources management reconsideration, implicitly leading to competition intensification and internationalization on the rail transport market. Under these circumstances, the human resources management within the Romanian state-owned railroad companies is powerfully affected from the perspective of the adjusting of the labour force to the concrete conditions related to the global economic-financial crisis, which has also affected Romania. Paying the appropriate attention to each activity carried out by the human resources management has become necessary under the conditions of the current administration actions, while preparing the shaping of the transformation and adapting rail transport system to the particularities of the ever-changing environment. In this work, the research carried out followed the direction of the identifying the socio-economic demands which influence the human resources management activities within the Romanian railroad companies.

Key words: management, railroad transport, human resources

JEL Classification: M12, R41

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the railroad companies in our country as the majority of the Romanian organizations are confronted with the recession conveyed by the global economic-financial crisis. Under these circumstances, taking into account only the aspects related to technology and the economic recovery imperative, without taking into account the social consequences, the employees' individual and collective motivations, cannot lead to a rapid solution for the socio-economic issues at hand where the effects born by the economic-financial crisis overlap the necessity to align the Romanian railroad system to the E.U. imposed standards and exigencies due to Romania's membership. One of the E.U.'s action directions is the rail transport system globalization, which involves, at the European level, the harmonization of the human resources management systems in different countries. Experts consider that, beyond the extension of the rail companies' activities outside the national borders, their success within the European context is provided by the efficient use of the human capital. This means that investing in human capital in view of the ensuring, developing, motivating the human resources represents the main ground that the rail companies must capitalize in order to ensure a competitive advantage.

In accord with a renowned specialist in the field, we consider that the economy of a country is composed of 3 large activity sectors: the primary sector, determined by the agriculture and farm products manufacture; the secondary sector, represented by industry along with all its subcomponents and the tertiary sector, respectively services. Perceived as a whole, the transport activity is part of the tertiary economic sector and represents the

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transportation of the elements handed over from a departure point to an arrival point (Jaba, 2007, p.120). Transports, regardless of their type have as a main purpose the catering of the human needs related to circulation, serving the national and international economies, ensuring the economic exchange and the human and goods transferring. Roughly speaking, the transport demands coming from the economy and population are satisfied by various transport technical systems including rail, road, naval, air and pipe systems. In specialized literature in our country, the transport system is defined as the totality of the infrastructures represented by the transportation means and terminals, means of transportation and control systems allowing both people and items to be transported in space in due time in order to participate in a proper way in a required activity (Iancu, 2003, p.29).

For a long time the idea that the rail transport means the most exhaustive and best organized transportation system has been approved, yet through the explosive growth of the auto and air transport, things have been reconsidered without doubting the significance of the railways within the overall transport system. This significance imposes the present and future necessity to modernize the rail transport in order to handle the pressure of competition before the other transport means (Daneci-Patrau, 2013, p. 64).

The globalization of the markets and businesses has determined the extension of the human resources function role at the level of the rail organizations, which enforced a higher attention toward the development of the human resources strategies, integrated into the organization's overall strategy to allow the shaping of the human rail managers at a national level. Thus, a more and more important role was offered to the *human resources development* and *career management* activities. The frequent changes occurred in the rail companies' activity force a greater attention to be paid to the human resource field both at the level of the national company and its branches.

2. Analysis in Specialized Literature

As a result of the nowadays economic environment instability, the rail companies are forced to organize themselves in a new fashion, while searching for management methods in order to control a potential crisis context, which turns up current existing theories. An important characteristic of all the modern approaches is the idea according to which all the resources, both natural and especially human must be directed towards the achievement of the organizational objectives. According to the data provided by the UIC (International Union of Railways), in 2010 the European rail network was 238600 km long and in Romania, the 10820 km long rail network expressed 4.53% and was the eighth in Europe (UIC, 2017). Paying the right importance to each activity of the human resources management, particularly to the digitalized personnel administration has become necessary under the conditions of the current management actions preparing the adjustment of the changes and rail transport system adapted to the ever-changing environmental particularities.

The Romanian labor market has suffered significant transformations exhibited through the decline of the active and busy population, as a consequence of the demographic drop generated by the negative natural increment corroborated with an unfavorable migrating balance resulted from the unemployment rate oscillations and the long-term unemployment increase, being affected in particular by the limited capacity to create new jobs. The shifts in the professional status are a direct consequence of the property nature change in the direction of the private property extension to the detriment of the public one (Patache, 2010, p.147). The rail transportation effects are salient as it is a relevant component of the economic and social development of each country, frequently absorbing an enormous proportion from the national budgets. From this standpoint, there is a strong correlation between the distance recorded on the railway and the gross domestic product of a country (Simut, 2001, p. 65).

This helps its development by easing out the trade both national and international by improving the population's access to employment, education, health and other services.

In a modern organization, through an appropriate human resources management the recruiting, selection, training, transfer, promotion and dismissal situations are solved in view of achieving strategic objectives. Each attribute of the human resources functions has implications in the implementation of the planned strategies. Therefore, the company restructuring strategy involves dismissal, reorganization strategy, without going bankrupt, imposes measures of professional reconversion and personnel transfer from one subunit to another while the development strategy involves all the attributes of the human resources function.

3. The Presentation of the Company - A Case Study

The “CREIR CF” Constanta branch, which is the object of the present research, is one of the eight regional subunits of CFR SA national company and has as activity the rail infrastructure management and train traffic organization under the safety conditions in the south-eastern area, on the eighth railway Bucharest – Constanta of the railway network. The eighth railway network along with the circulation units which represent the traffic distances between two important stations called final stations, are schematically illustrated in figure 1.

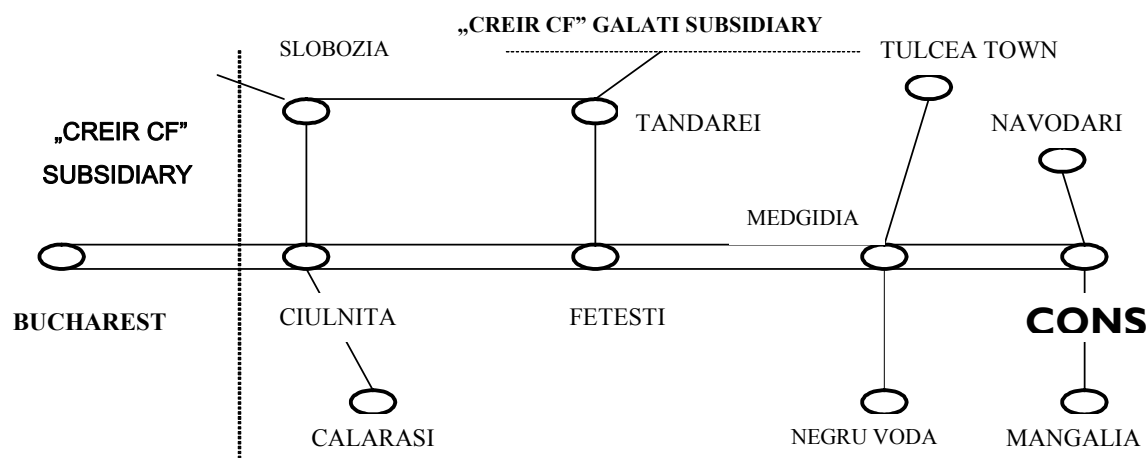


Figure 1. Circulation Sections within “CREIR CF” Constanta Subsidiary

The total number of the employees within the CFR Constanta branch, at the end of 2017 was 1995 people out of which 195 were employees working in management and execution within the main unit and 1800 were employees in the subunits in the area. The CFR Constanta subsidiary staff rises up to 7.4% of the total number of the employees of the CFR national company.

To smoothly carry out the activities related to the rail infrastructure administration and train traffic organization aligned with the conditions of the applying new restructuring and reorganization measures, the “CREIR CF” Constanta Subsidiary management must ensure the appropriate human resources requisite from both quantity and quality points of view. This implies, on the one hand, the assurance with the required number of the human resources by categories of staff with level of training and professional expertise in accordance with the activity type, and on the other hand, the assurance of an efficient management of these resources.

The most part of the human resources management research in the rail transport field has been focused on the Traffic Division activities within Constanta “CREIR CF” Subsidiary

because it is the largest organization structure in terms of personnel and has different positions, duties and responsibilities in the rail production activity that allow the development of the human resources analysis and synthesis, having a high degree of generalization at the unit and company level and at the national level, as well.

The company's personnel in charge with the traffic safety and licensed rail transport operators have a special status as they work in a specialized work climate, complying with the provisions under the work instructions and regulations specific to the rail field. Due to this the human resources assessment, diagnosis and analysis in the rail sector are more difficult to apprehend, all having as output a series of exigencies and perspectives specific to this sector, that we'd like to identify and gauge in this paper.

The activity of a railway station is complex and in on-run progress in some work divisions that, although differentiated through their functions concur together for the achievement of the cargo and passengers rail transport development. These divisions are divided by three *operation activities* in terms of traffic, goods and passengers and by *personnel and administrative activities* being joint when taken as a whole or separate according to each type of activity. As a result of the rail transport system restructuring and reorganization the rail transport activity was divided into sectors, subunits, branches, with major consequences over the management act at the railway station level, which is the fundamental subunit at the local rail company level.

4. The Influential Factors for the Human Resources Management Activities in the Rail Transportation

The company's staff in charge with the traffic safety and licensed rail transport operators have a special status as they work in a specialized work climate, complying with the provisions under the work instructions and regulations specific to rail field. Due to this the human resources assessment, the diagnosis and analysis in the rail sector are more difficult to apprehend, all having as an output a series of exigencies and perspectives specific to this sector, that we have identified and gauged in this work.

This work contains the research conducted to follow the direction of the identification of the socio-economic exigencies which influence the human resources management activities within the Romanian rail companies. The integrated model of the influential factors at the basis of the socio-economic exigencies for the HRM within the rail companies is explained in figure 2.

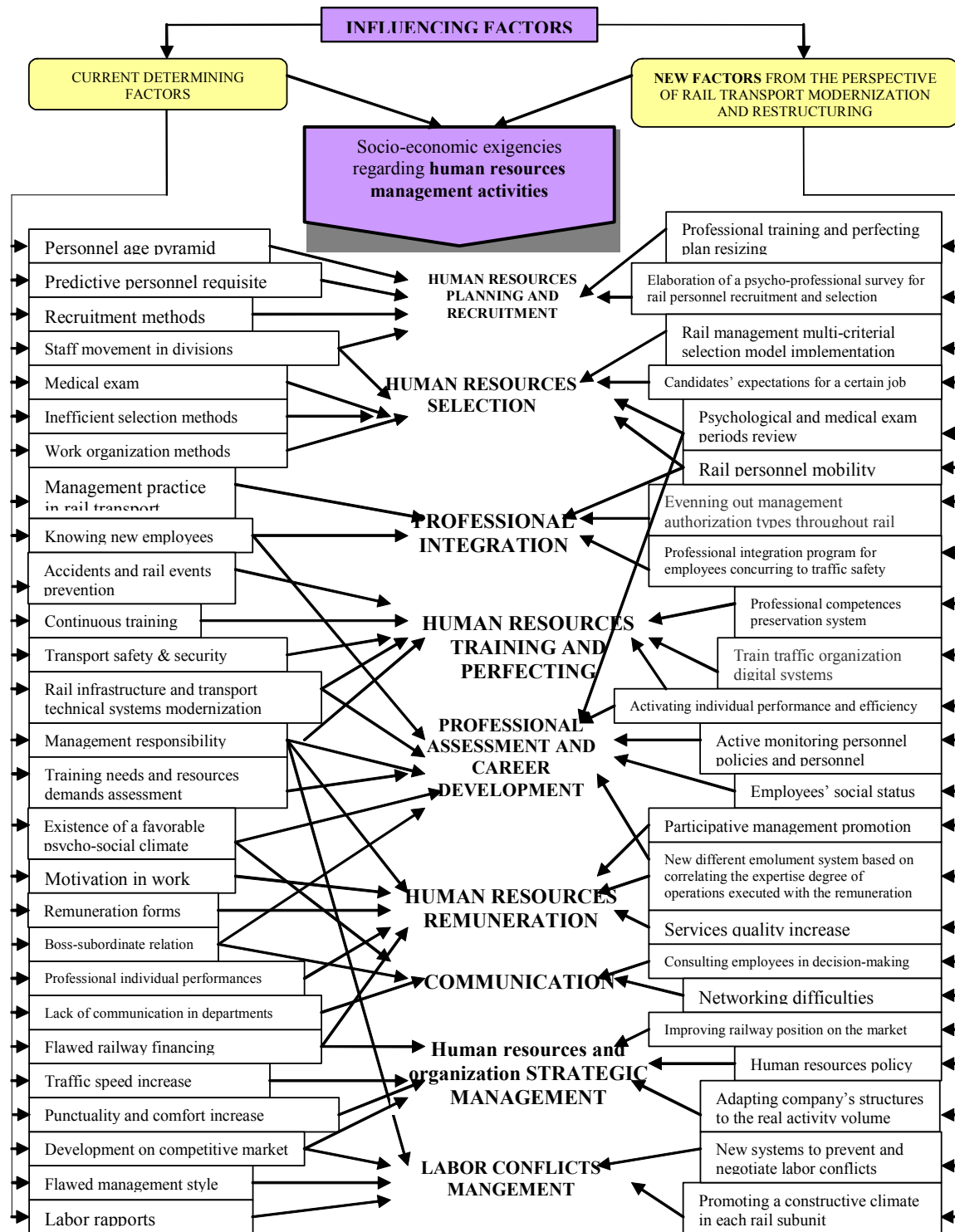


Figure 2. The integrated model of the factors influencing the socio-economic exigencies of the human resources management in the rail transport companies

Source: Author

An efficient rail transport decreases the input prices and based on this idea, it leads to higher economic prosperity. The enhancing of the transport services quality gives rise to the personnel mobility and enables economic growth. In exchange, these contribute to the *social*

development, and consequently the railways quantity and quality have effects over all the aspects of life. Following the same order of ideas, balancing the maintenance costs related to infrastructure and the rail transport operation may result in major economic benefits.

The rail transport is considered to be a special type of service rendering in the sense that it cannot be stored up, preserved, it must deal with peak moments, is performed under special conditions, implies the existence of a vast and complex business, which should exclude any unpredicted situation. The human resources management necessary for such a service is extremely important due to the dimension and importance of the effort required.

The benefits resulted from the rail transport are not problem free, there being sometimes, rail events or material damage because of the defective exploitation and employees' insufficient training. Thus, a determining current factor of the HRM activities is managers' responsibility in permanently training the rail personnel, the training being assured by the specialized practical professional trainings and duties which entirely regulate the rail operation norms. Other factors which contribute to the rail traffic safety are: technology, education and constraint.

The rail sector openness toward a competitive market economy compliant with the E.U. requirements coerces the Romanian rail companies into rising standards concerning the quality of the services provided, which in our opinion could be accomplished by hiring "the right person at the right time." Under these conditions, the human resources training must be a priority being considered the basis for the strategy regarding the human resources development at all the hierarchical levels. The implementing policies to improve competences and a solid professional training is vital, considering that this is an extra chance for any modern organization to ensure competitiveness and a base on which to build practical experience, *communication* and collaboration within a group.

Another determining factor of the socio-economic exigencies influencing the HRM activities with reference to the rail transport is the rail staff *motivation policy*. The research carried out in the rail transport subsidiary has proved that this very important side of the human resources management is not an essential preoccupation of the rail managers in our country.

To achieve the optimum economic correlation between the turnover increase index with the salary fund increase index and the employees number increase index, is necessary for you to organize a social control and watch the way of achievement of the set objectives in the human resources management.

In view of the exact knowing of the organizational objectives and the strengthening public rail transport companies' management it is necessary for you to apply administrative corrections of which major significance has the management training on different decision-making levels. Within the new organizational structures, by decentralizing decisions, the managers are encouraged to assume responsibilities and have initiative using as most efficient as possible the resources at hand. These resources may become some kind of a power source or of a constraint force, as well.

The main resources at the disposal of a rail manager are: people, installations, equipment, rail material, train traffic administration processes and telecommunications. From an organizational point of view, within the rail companies, most of these resources make the object of some specialized directorates where the information is organized according to the coordination and decision-making levels, the manager using resources that he needs to his advantage. Apart from profit making, as in most of the other jobs, the management offers satisfactions such as: creating visible changes in real life, work through others, overcoming obstacles, career and consideration in different social groups. Yet, sometimes these advantages also bring frustrations caused by the nature of the involvement in the rail process: ever-changing priorities, clashes of personalities, affecting health or neglecting family with

the inherent consequences. Referring to the *recruiting and selection* of the types of the successful managers there is no talking of a certain characteristic. There are more roads to achieve success in management as there are more types of personality. What we have achieved as a result of the research conducted has been a delimitation of a multi-criteria rail manager selection model revealing some traits and useful professional competencies in the decision-making regarding the rail personnel recruitment, selection, promotion, remuneration and dismissal.

As a follow-up of the qualification, authorization and perfection activities, the *professional performances assessment* takes place, in our eyes being highly significant for both the company's management interested in the maintenance of a certain quality standard of the human resource and also each individual employee, the assessment being a basic criterion for career development. The method used to determine the individual professional performance level for the contracted personnel in the rail transport system is envisaged and achieved according to the information listed in the job description corroborated with the criteria enlisted in the individual performance assessment sheet.

The rail personnel's refreshing courses and training are necessary for the maintenance of an adequate safety degree for the rail transport safety and especially for the increasing of the rail units competitiveness and productivity. This last aspect is crucial: investing in the human resources is the most lucrative long-term investment for both the employers and the employees. The objectives of the continuous training in the rail field converge towards the building of a joint reference framework for the personnel in charge with the traffic safety and are expressed through professional competences. The system preserving the rail transport human resources professional abilities is a key element of the goods and passengers traffic safety management system.

A major challenge for the rail management in an ever-changing world is not only that of minimizing the effects on the environment and identifying the best way to use the railway but especially to ensure and use certain appropriate human resources with high degree of expertise in order to enable the rail transport system operation as a mechanism to support the economic and social development. The research conducted aligned with this action axis and aimed at the identification and assessment of the human resources management activities and requirements which influence the rail transport management in view of the expanding and directing the benefits resulted for the final consumers.

5. Conclusions

Of all the management system inputs categories, the human resource is the one that expresses and synthesizes the best the specificity of the management as a human activity type. That is why one of the important characteristics of the organization's management is to turn the human factor into the main preoccupation, with all its complexity as the managers' subject and object in tight interdependence with the system means and resources in which it is integrated through the objectives falling under their responsibility.

Seen as having an interdisciplinary character as knowledge from different fields was used (human resources management, rail management, economic and financial analysis, strategic management), this article presents a diversified content conveyed by the increase in the complexity of the actions unfolded by the rail transport companies in the context of the new human resources management instruments.

Starting from the two fundamental elements that define the existence of the rail system, that is the strategic role that the national economy has, namely by the developing the public cargo and passengers transport operation activities, respectively the shareholders structure in the rail sector, the authors consider this company of a strategic interest for the Romanian state. To improve the global performance, the authors would like to consider that any company

must react to the evolution of all the aspects related to the human resources and be aware of their significance. The research conducted aligns with this logic and contributes to the enrichment of the information referring to the human resources strategies in the rail transport in the region.

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