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Article

The paradigm shift in Strategic Human Resources : research in the case of Romanian organizations

Management dynamics in the knowledge economy

Provided in Cooperation with:

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest

Reference: Novac, Carmen/Ciochină, Raluca Silvia (2016). The paradigm shift in Strategic Human Resources : research in the case of Romanian organizations. In: Management dynamics in the knowledge economy 4 (4), S. 535 - 551.

This Version is available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11159/1514>

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The Paradigm Shift in Strategic Human Resources. Research in the case of Romanian Organizations

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Abstract. *The paper presents the conditions and factors influencing the development of a strategic human capital plan, offering a framework for obtaining competitive advantage and for developing a business plan in which the Human Resources function can actually make a contribution. The authors also present the key elements of a Human Resources paradigm which will change the DNA of its function. The research was first implemented in 2009 with the purpose of identifying specific processes within Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM). Aiming to obtain further information on HR processes currently applied within Romanian organizations, the authors applied a semi-structured interview on Human Resources specialists working in domains such as supporting services, human resources outsourcing services, telecommunications, automotive and taxi services, call center services and trade marketing. The results indicated that within organizations following the development of human resources processes, the gain of new knowledge in the business area of the company can be observed. The effects are also evident within organizations' development plans.*

Keywords: *HR process, SHRM, development, mentoring, talent management.*

Introduction

The Human Resources function gained its importance throughout decades, recently being recognized as a strategic resource for business management, demonstrating a key contribution in this sense (Bratianu, 2016). However, the function of Human Resources is still facing challenges in regards to appropriately defining itself and the way it is currently perceived within organizations, which can be evidenced by the current use of phrases such as „strategic partner” or „business partner” for maintaining the affirmation that it adds value to the organization (Bratianu, 2015). The purpose of this paper is to treat all these aspects, as well as the way in which Human Resources can reach its pre-established objectives by developing a new

paradigm, which will change its DNA and, during this process, which will move its function to a higher level of its evolution (Daley, 2012). There is a wide specter of books, publications, and articles promoting the idea that HR is the „magic stick” able to resolve literally any organizational problem (Novac, 2013; Pânișoară & Pânișoară, 2005). In this sense, there is a constant danger in suggesting that all organizational problems have a solution in the Strategic Management of Human Resources (Bauer, 2010). Moreover, any perspective of the future (at least from a strategic point of view) needs to include an analysis of a complex set of factors and conditions influencing the business decisions and functioning of human capital.

This article reflects another level of thinking regarding the Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM). In 2015, after our article *The importance of HRM processes within the organizations from Romania* was published (Novac & Vidroiu, 2015), we had the opportunity to share our ideas regarding the human resources field with specialists in this area and to continue researching the role and impact of SHRM in the organizations where they carry out their human resources activities. Our interaction with current Human Resources leaders, with future leaders (Master students of the Human Resources Program of the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations-SNSPA) and specialists within the business area, has influenced our HR vision, determining us to evaluate and investigate the subject further. This research paper was developed starting from the original Human Resources model (Novac, 2011) which was reclassified into the current dynamic and global context, considering its evident impact on the competitive business environment.

Literature review

The concept of Human Resources Management first appeared in the USA at the beginning of the 80s, involving a more important role for supervisors (managers of a lower level), the transition from collective relationships to individual relationships, and the need for improving organizational performance (Novac, 2011).

According to Nicolescu, Lefter and Manolescu (2011), Human Resources Management represents the ensemble of processes of elaboration and implementation including strategies and policies allowing organizations to fulfill their objectives of anticipating, ensuring, training, developing, evaluating, protecting and utilizing human resources. HRM deals with fixing objectives according to organizational and employees` needs within a unitary and balanced vision from an economic and social perspective. HRM

evolved into a different position, gaining autonomy and an assigned position within the organizational management.

In the article, *The importance of HRM processes within the organizations from Romanian* (Novac & Vidroiu, 2015) the emphasis is on the concept of *human capital*. Human capital recognizes that individuals' talent and creativity represent the key for global competitiveness. Identifying and developing talent – first priority for every organization, will facilitate an exponential return on investment both in the near and long term future.

Human Resources Management (HRM) involves a global and complex approach, both interdisciplinary and professionally, of the personnel problem within the organization. It also reflects the increase of society's needs, as well as organizational's needs as far as individuals and employees are concerned (Nicolescu et al., 2011). Currently, due to globalization, the International Management of Human Resources is developing (Novac, 2011). Strategic Human Resources Management represents a field within the Human Resources Management sector, but including the international level with methods and instruments used strategically (Novac, 2011).

The processes within the Human Resources Management are work and position analysis, recruitment and selection process, integration process, organizational development process, performance management, compensation, and benefits process, and career management (Pânișoară & Pânișoară, 2005).

Based on research conducted since 2009 (Novac, 2011) a clear evolution of HR processes within organizations in Romania is observed, especially within multinational companies which implement globally established procedures. The HRM role within companies is becoming even more strategic and belongs to the critical departments of the developed companies. Even though HRM used to be considered as the main supporting pillar of the administrative function of personnel management, now its status has evolved with HR managers participating in establishing the organization's objectives and setting achievable goals. Human Resources Management also receives proper recognition from the organization's management when evaluating the company's results.

Moreover, aside from the involvement in maintaining and supporting the organization's managing vision, Human Resources managers need to be aware of potential arising problems, as "individuals will need extensive training and refresher training (to answer unforeseen questions that arise in response to implementation" (Daley, 2012, p.121). When uncertainty and

confusion appear, due to potential external forces or threats influencing the organization, strategic planning for handling these types of situations can be implemented. As strategic management is key for achieving competitive advantage, strategic thinking becomes highly important (Brătianu, 2015), implying a new way of making decisions and anticipating future problems the organization might be facing in the future. Human resources strategic thinking and management can include developing processes such as position management with clearly defined competencies, staffing, and compensation (and the required performance based evaluations) and also employee communication plans (Daley, 2012).

Each of the processes included in the HRM functions stated above need special attention and assigned resources. For instance, the integration process is particularly relevant as the accommodation period of the employee can influence his future actions within the group and attitudes towards the company. Coaching is currently being used as an *onboarding* program helping with spreading information and internalizing them accordingly by the employee. This method used in the integration process is efficient if it is implemented by a person within the organization, as well as by one outside the organization. For the execution positions, it is indicated that an external coach is used for a higher degree of neutrality (Bauer, 2010). As far as performance management is concerned, Pitariu (2006) remarks that this process is highly complex, involving defining performance, which includes organizational strategies and objectives, measuring the process and the communication between the manager and the employee, but without overlooking the expectations of the organization from the employee. Performance management is an important pillar of the HR department as it assists to the efficient educational system representing talent retention within the organization (Luecke, 2002).

For a better understanding of the recruitment and selection process, Nicolescu et al. (2011, pp.73-74) define it as „the activity of the Human Resource Management, which has the purpose to attract a large number of candidates for filling in vacant positions within an organizations, so that it can select the most appropriate persons”. The authors consider that attracting the right candidate from a number of submissions represents the selection part of the process. Novac (2013) stresses that this process is highly important, especially when considering the higher management positions within organizations. Recruitment can be internal, such as a promotion within the organization for covering a vacant position, or external, when the recruitment is made with communication channels such as local advertising papers or by using online communication channels such as social networks. The channel is used depending on the organizational

needs at that specific moment and its plans for the future. Attracting talent through online social networks, for example, can generate interest for multiple stakeholders, adding value from a reputational perspective as well.

In the current economic, political, social and cultural context, Human Resources Management acquires new meanings and becomes one of the factors that ensures the organization's success in a multicultural context (Novac, 2011). The author notes that the transfer of knowledge, procedures, and objectives from headquarters to subsidiaries requires special attention from the management of the organization in order to fulfill the criteria of efficiency requested at a global level and to demonstrate responsibility, flexibility, responsiveness and adaptability to local characteristics of the company. Romanians, like other European countries, borrowed organizational policies, procedures, methods and techniques specific to developed countries that have opened branches in the country.

In order to emphasize the importance of HRM processes existing within organizations from Romania, but also to understand the need to bring them in line at a global level, this research starts from a complex model of Human Resources. The model proposed by Garavan, Donnell, McGuire and Watson (2007) quoted in Novac (2011) is useful in understanding the links between these multiple levels, focusing on their interaction taking into account the global context.

The strategic approach of Human Resources development involves a Human Resources Management model with multiple levels, focused on its interactions with the global context, and also on the specific HRM processes, and on the satisfaction of those interested in the wellbeing of the organization. The model proposed by Garavan et al. (2007) is useful both to researchers keen on studying HRM processes, as well as for professionals looking to establish the most appropriate connections for obtaining efficiency and effectiveness of human capital within an organization.

Methodology

This paper aims to highlight and identify the importance of human resources processes, methods, and techniques used within organizations in Romania as well as the main changes and challenges encountered in the human resources processes of organizations in the current economic context. The semi-structured interview was chosen as the means to obtain further information about HR processes currently applied in Romanian organizations. Before applying the semi-structured interview, a quantitative

research was also conducted, but we will present only some of the results relevant for the research herein debated.

The research questions we proposed for the purposes of this research are the following:

1. What are the changes manifesting during the last 2 years within the Human Resources department of Romanian organizations?
2. What effort is currently being invested in identifying highly performing employees?
3. How is succession planning being addressed by Romanian organizations considering competition?

The questionnaire was conducted for the purposes of identifying the importance of HR processes within organizations in Romania. In this sense, we chose a sample 50 specialists part of the human resources department within organizations in Romania. The self-administered questionnaire was distributed online through Google Docs platform, and the group of participants was selected through the social media platform. We have built the base of persons currently working in human resources in small, medium and large organizations in Romania. The questionnaire consists of 28 items formulated using mainly Likert scales for measuring the intensity of the attitudes towards specific affirmations regarding Human Resources related processes and actions within the organization.

Within the research, we identified as participating industries: sales, training, telecommunications, shared services, retails, human resources, business consultancy, financial accounting, IT, commercial refrigeration and so on. The participating organizations are part of different market types such as regional, local, national or global. The participating organizations are located in areas like Afumați, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Iași, Otopeni, Ploiești, Timișoara. The majority (74 %) are based in Bucharest. The number of employees shows that size of participating organizations varies from a minimum of two employees, when we speak about a regional company, up to a maximum of 190,000 employees in case of a global company.

The interview consisted of ten questions that respond to the research questions, namely the respondents were asked: to describe the changes in Human Resources processes that were noticeable throughout the past 2 years, the channels they use for recruitment and selection purposes, the strategy they apply in this sense, especially for identifying potential talent, whether coaching is used for the integration process, how the succession planning is currently implemented and managed, and whether innovative

processes such as gamification are implemented. The research sample included 7 respondents, all working within the Human Resources department in organizations from various domains: human resources support services, human resources outsourcing services, telecommunications, automotive and taxi services, call center services or trade marketing. These organizations have their headquarters located in Bucharest, but some of them are active at a domestic level in cities like Galați, Timișoara, Cluj-Napoca, Ploiești, and Constanța.

The first two questions from the interview were applied for identifying the current positions held by the respondents and the number of employees from the organizations they were representing. Respondent 1 is a Human Resources Specialist part of an organization providing services and support to a global organization which has 107 employees. Respondent 2 is an HR Coordinator part of an organization providing outsourcing services of HR processes for different companies, compiling around 70 employees internally and externally. The organization provides personnel leasing services, having more than 500 outsourced employees. Respondent 3 is a Sourcing Specialist within an organization of about 2,800 employees working in telecommunications. Respondent 4 is a Human Resources Specialist and is part of an organization with Romanian capital in the automotive industry and taxi services, with a number of approximately 600 employees, some of which are not internal employees. Respondent 5 holds the position of Human Resources Specialist and is part of an organization with 550 employees providing services in the automotive service area. Respondent 6 is also an HR Specialist within an organization performing call center activities - a local branch of a French supplier. Currently, at a national level, the number of employees is 1,400 and by the end of 2016 the company aims to hire another 300 people. Respondent 7 is a Payroll Controller operating within an organization with 1,400 employees, acting in the trade marketing domain. The interviews were conducted within the organization where each of the respondents belongs.

Research results

Questionnaire results

For the purposes of this research, only some of the relevant aspects of the questionnaire will be herein presented. According to our quantitative research, the HR manager has the responsibility to take decisions regarding the recruitment and selection process (58%), but this is usually happening along with the support of a manager within the organization. The frequency

of using the online environment when recruiting and selecting is high, most of the respondents typically using this medium for recruitment (32% uses this method often, while 46% uses it all the time).

As far as professional development in relation to mentoring is concerned, this is used *sometimes* or *often* by most of the respondents, not showing consistency in this sense (Table 1). We note that mentoring is a present process in most of the participating organizations, but this method is not always used for professional development, but rather for efficiently in preparing the employees to be promoted to managerial positions.

Table 1. Is mentoring often used within your organization considering the current professional developing plans?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	4	8,0	8,0	8,0
	Seldom	9	18,0	18,0	26,0
	Sometimes	13	26,0	26,0	52,0
	Often	13	26,0	26,0	78,0
	Always	11	22,0	22,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

Regarding Talent Management and succession planning, frequently organizations are aware of the need for a substitute mainly for the critical positions within the organization, but most often because there are no specific procedures regarding the succession plan, they appear within the objectives of those positions or individuals are selected according to their potential and performance, these criteria being evaluated in certain companies every six months or annually (Table 2).

Table 2. Identifying „talents” within your organization is a positive aspect in order to develop a succession plan for the critical positions of the organization?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	3	6,0	6,0	6,0
	Seldom	7	14,0	14,0	20,0
	Sometimes	11	22,0	22,0	42,0
	Often	16	32,0	32,0	74,0
	Always	13	26,0	26,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

As a conclusion, at this stage it can be suggested that within organizations, the online environment is present as a recruitment method regardless its field of activities, while the professional development of employees does

not always include mentoring programs and the size of the organization does not necessarily determine the usability of the coaching programs especially within the integration processes where these are typically implemented. Also, the succession plan is based on the use of talent management programs within the company, sometimes even starting with the recruitment and selection process.

Following the data extracted from the questionnaire, it was observed that 42% of respondents belong to organizations in which SHRM has multiple objectives (Table 3).

Table 3. Strategic Human Resources Management within the organization you represent is comprised of multiple targets?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	3	6,0	6,0	6,0
	Seldom	2	4,0	4,0	10,0
	Sometimes	5	10,0	10,0	20,0
	Often	21	42,0	42,0	62,0
	Always	19	38,0	38,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

Considering this extremely important issue, it was found that, in time, SHRM obtained a higher and real status in companies in Romania, but also that the existence of these multiple targets leads to the emergence of numerous human resources strategies. Besides the active participation in their objectives, HRM has achieved the ability to demonstrate the required competency to provide support in fulfilling organizational goals. In the case that strategic Human Resources plans exist, many organizations lack the global vision of managing the human capital and, thus, demonstrating the incapacity to admit the way in which other factors besides the costs of working force influence these plans. From a certain perspective, this perspective can be influenced by the professionals' education from the Human Resources domain, which prepares such plans. However, considering the purpose of understanding the way in which HR can be synchronized better with management, as well as aligning HR planning with the overall business' planning, there is the need to examine some of the potential factors determining the way in which human capital can be used for gaining competitive advantage.

Interview results

When asked about the noticeable changes from the Human Resources department from the past 2 years, the answers varied. There are new procedures and consistent efforts in implementing them, as R1 suggested: *„We do not have many procedures, but gradually increasing in number, ... are made efforts currently to implement them”*. R1 also mentioned that the HR functions have recently started to develop quantitatively and qualitatively as well. According to R2, R6 and R7 the recruitment and selection process has been optimized and new recruitment environments were selected based on vacancies. R2 specifically mentions that optimizing processes refer to developing flows which allow for better results. R3 states that well-being programs for employees were multiplied: *„...a well-being program was introduced because until two years ago it did not exist at the company level. Initially, it was a pilot project, but the results were extraordinarily good, was made permanent ... and is dedicated to all employees.”* In this process, discussions were held at the management level particularly, for decision making, whereas Team Leaders were involved in identifying talents. R5 claims that training programs have been multiplied, in particular, those directly related to the quality of provided services and at the level of certain areas some of the human resources department activities were outsourced such as the payroll for a faster and more efficient activity in this area. As far as R6 suggests, several changes also included the recruitment and selection processes and the methods being used in this sense. Contracts and payrolls have also been evaluated and benefits have been included. R7 emphasized a different approach to how the organization is handling knowledge dynamics: *„The main changes in the human resources department processes refer primarily to the organization and information processing, understanding that some processes such as for example the calculation of payroll, have been outsourced to a specialized company.”* Additionally, an aspect consistent with performance management has been included, as efficient planning was set into place for evaluating the activity of the personnel for more relevant rewarding.

The fourth question relates to online recruitment in organizations. This type of recruitment is found within all the organizations where we had an opportunity to conduct the interview, but print media, recommendations or radio channel are still used, particularly in the retail area. The main online recruitment techniques include online social networks (such as LinkedIn), websites specially developed for these purposes (such as ejobs), and so on. R7 stated that: *„...particularly within the retail chains in Romania, the online environment proved to be ineffective and in this case we mainly recruit through print media, where we post job ads and individuals or, whatever,*

potential candidates, contact us by phone and schedule interviews". R6 rightfully states that the recruitment process differs according to the position – for roles involving client consultancy and account management, the online medium is used, but for higher positions, they are looking to recruit internally. Recommendations are also being used by most of the respondents.

As far as identifying high-performance potential individuals and professional development are concerned, this appears to be an important aspect for most respondents, but, still, the approach varied according to the specific contexts they are in at the moment. In the case of R1, identifying high-performance individuals, but also potential for professional development is an important issue for the organization: *„Yes, there are specific methods for this. It is the stage where we need to align globally because we are part of a global company, we have developed processes passing through internal discussions...”*. The talent level desired by the organization could be a particular sector as the technical one for telecommunications. R3, on the other hand, emphasizes that only specific sectors within the company are interested in this: *„There are certain sectors within the company seeking only a certain level of talent, i.e. the technical expertise...”* and it is different from business management-oriented positions as in the case of R2, R6 or R7. For Romanian capital companies, such as R4 and R5, there is no specific method, but it seeks to match the employees to the vacancy requirements by criteria such as education, previous experience or knowledge of the candidate. For organizations in the consultancy area such as R2, there are well-established procedures regarding the selection of talents as regards to the new employees of the company: *„For local businesses, due to the nature of the activity that we have, we focus more on the human resources side, candidates having the potential to develop in this area...”*. Whereas R5 recognizes that there is no well-developed plan for identifying highly performant employees or talents, R6 suggests that the motivation for their people to join the company is different, affecting their potential to evolve. For the same type of employees (entry-level), R7 says the organization has a different approach – they focus on selecting individuals that have potential, especially when they are in the training process when they demonstrate their intention to grow within the company and seek further involvement and engagement.

Our questionnaire results showed that the coaching program is not aligned with the number of employees of the companies, but the most of the interviewees did mention that coaching is used according to company resources, and most of them use it during the integration process for the new employees. R6 even signals the imperative requirement for

implementing coaching: *“Part of the included processes in our projects includes coaching. Practically it is highly necessary to do this, so we somewhat adapted all the processes from within the Human Resources department according to this necessity.”* This approach is also consistent with R6’s organization, as they are investing a 3 or even 4 week training period for their new employees who have the benefit of being coached by highly prepared and trained people for doing this activity. R3, however, stressed that *coaching* is referred to as *induction* within their organization and, in this sense, the new employee is assigned a colleague who will assist in the integration process, providing him information regarding operations, presenting the company, the team, the organizational culture, acting as a *fellow*.

Regarding succession planning, this is seen as an important element in organizations in Romania. R1, R3, R6 and R7 consider the succession plan as a very important element especially considering the evolution of a company, control over human resources and especially for their key positions. R2 even considers this process as part of organizational development *„Actually, for the succession plan we also understand a plan for professional development of employees, because this is what it actually means. When someone develops or promotes to a higher position, in return, this will attract a new growth opportunity for someone else within the company. So the succession plan has a very important role...”*. Whereas R4 and R5 are not implementing such a plan, R6 said that certain anticipations and plans are made regarding the personnel needed in the future according to the clients’ needs, also taking into account employees potentially leaving the company in the near future. R7 is specifically thorough in this selection process, as he considers that *“this successor is a person identified within the team he coordinates, having the relevant skills, talent, dedication to undertake the tasks that will become his in the near future”*. In the case R4 and R5, there was no need for a succession plan at the organizational level so far as the organization does not particularly focus on training the new manager, but rather focusing on his own qualities brought in the job, either selected from the internal or external environment of the company.

In order to identify some of the new processes within participating organizations, the interviewees were asked if the „Gamification” „Buddy” processes are being implemented, as they are some of the most applied and successful HR processes within Romanian organizations. In this sense, in the telecommunications area, beside different programs such as „Fellow” or those based on the concept of gamification stimulating the employees of the organization, a great emphasis is on the use of the the Assessment Centre especially for checking candidates’ technical knowledge: *„Yes, gamification*

is also used in our company, otherwise, as far as recruitment is concerned the Assessment Centre is also used besides the classic manner of recruiting, namely the interview or test on the technical side of certain skills". For other respondents, these programs are not used due to lack of resources or because they are not effective in some areas. In R6's case, employees receive through the job offer the access to various bonuses and a gamification program is not needed in the rewarding area. For R7, the company does not develop this type of programs, but in collaboration with customers offering trade marketing services, organizes various rewarding programs for the employees who are talented through their results and their potential to demonstrate fulfilling daily tasks. R7 admits that these methods are not used within their company, but they do apply competitions which they organize with their clients and, in this sense, the budget comes from the client: "Obviously we do get involved – more than required – in organizing in detail the way in which evaluation occurs, to make sure that this gamification process is objective, and no one is underestimated, (...) as it can turn into a stress factor."

The last question of the interviews refers to the visible effects of the human resources processes development within organizations in Romania. These effects could be either qualitative or quantitative. As far as the qualitative effects are concerned, within organizations following the development of human resources processes, we can observe the gain of new knowledge in the area of activity. R1 suggests that both qualitatively and quantitatively speaking, the results are evident: *„We cannot measure (the effects) accurately. Qualitatively, yes, because clearly we are gaining know-how and we are moving in the proposed direction and we are attracting more clients, we are becoming more aware and certain of the way we need to approach stuff; and quantitatively, yes, by the growth of client numbers."* In the area of quality of services offered by the company to the external environment, R2 is consistent with R1's answer, agreeing that from a qualitative perspective, the company's performance and the services delivered to clients and better, whereas the clients' numbers are also rising. R3 refers specifically to the results of one of the processes they apply when selecting candidates *„...when using Assessment Centre, the results are visible because Assessment implies several assessors who assess one candidate. Therefore the rate of "failing" is very small and yes, the results are visible, and finally the individual in question, well ... in a certain period of time, confirms 100% that the results obtained in Assessment are even so in reality, meaning that it aligns with the results from the Assessment Centre"*. R5 emphasizes that investing in qualification classes helped in providing better, more qualitative work on behalf of the employees which, in return, adds to the company's profit as

there are clients choosing the company especially because the employees are trained and client oriented.

The effects are also evident in the development plans of the organization, R6: *„Yes, of course, they have a very good impact on company performance ...especially as far as our customers are concerned and for our development plans as well.”*

In areas where staff turnover can sometimes be overwhelming such as in trade marketing, the efficiency of these processes reflects in turnover percentage, returning the safety of employees that will have access to higher positions, as the focus is on promoting talent within the organization. R7 states, in this sense, that: *„...the employee is more interested in working in good conditions and on delivering results based on benefits and rewards. So, given the circumstances that talent promotion is applied, the influence manifests on the turnover aspect (...) New individuals being hired and not having the time required to comply with the expectations of the project which was demanding (...) affects the quantitative aspect highly”*. In the case of R4, because HR processes are slowly developing, there is no major difference either qualitatively or quantitatively within the evolution of the company from one year to another.

Quantitatively speaking, clearly, the differences are annually noticeable, demonstrated by increasing number of customers within organizations, by the profit obtained and by the low percentage of turnover within the participating organizations.

Conclusions and implications

Following the interpretation of the results obtained based on the two methods of research used, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, it can be concluded that organizations from Romania are still facing challenges with respect to implementing Strategic Human Resources Management. Even though digital means for recruitment and selection processes are being implemented by most organizations and mentoring tactics are being applied with the purpose of integrating new employees, there is still more work and strategic thinking needed for implementing objective-based tactics and measurement within Human Resources Management.

As far as the changes in the Human Resources department of companies in Romania in the past two years received multiple responses, the changes

appearing most often at the internal level of the organizations. Regarding professional development potential, Human Resources specialists admit that it is an important aspect of the organization, but actual procedures are rarely present. Even though succession planning is considered important, the approaches to this are different: either the implementation does not occur, or its applications are variable depending on the organizational context.

When considering the great global context, the number of factors influencing Strategic Human Resources Management is difficult to be observed even by applying academic investigation methods. Sociologist James Canton (2010) stressed that in the last 50 years more changes than in the past 500 years have occurred and that in the next 50 years we will see changes that are even more radical in our world. The impact of the advanced technology and globalization will continue to influence developments in the HR field generating changes both at the organizational level and at the individual level. Regardless of our vision for the future, following the study presented, one thing is clear: human capital, skills, and individual experience represent the center of interest for global competition. For the continuation of this research, a new question can be outlined: „*Which are HR specialists' specific competencies in order to develop human capital managing strategies for organizations to the future?*”

Limitations of the research

This research also has limitations such as the use of sociological inquiry, self-administrating questionnaires that could lead to a lack of consistency between the given answers and the real situation. Considering that this research refers to human resources processes within organizations over the past two years, future research could include investigating other trends in Human Resources or to introduce variables such as the type of leadership or organizational culture of the organization.

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John Wiley and Sons Inc.

Received October 17, 2016
Accepted December 2, 2016