



SYNERGY BETWEEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING IN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS IN ROMANIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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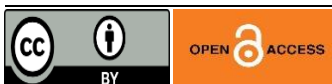
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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the synergy between performance management and vocational training in Romanian organizations, especially in the military and university context, highlighting the central role of the two dimensions in improving organizational efficiency and aligning them to modern labour market requirements. Problematising: (1) we summarized the current state of knowledge, (2) we explored the global trends and characteristics of the relationship between performance management and professional training, using the analysis of the results from the Cranet Reports (2017, 2023) covering the most relevant strategies related to performance appraisal and professional development, through continuous learning and (3) we reviewed possible perspectives for action to align the training process of military personnel in the context of military higher education institutions in Romania. Finally, we discussed the conclusions regarding the influence of the directions for cultivating the relationship between performance management and professional training on improving organizational and individual capabilities to respond to contemporary challenges, in flexible terms that reflect the limitations of this approach. The article stresses the importance of an integrated approach to performance management and training as determinants of long-term organizational success. At the same time, it recognizes the need to continuously adapt these practices to global trends.

KEYWORDS

performance management, training, military higher education, performance evaluation, CRANET report, continuous learning, continuous feedback, synergy, global trends, digital tools.



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1 INTRODUCTION

In a global context where the dynamics of socio-economic and technological changes are constantly redefining the demands and expectations from the workforce, performance management and staff training are at the heart of organizational strategies oriented towards

efficiency and adaptability. The justification for choosing this theme lies in our concerns about the need to understand how these two fields can be integrated and optimized to maximize human potential and respond to emerging challenges.

Although the literature recognizes the importance of performance management and personnel training, there are significant gaps in exploring the synergy between these two pillars of organizational success, especially in the specific context of military organizations, where performance and adaptability requirements are exceptional.

The article explores the synergy between performance management and training, focusing on how these two dimensions contribute to improving the effectiveness of organizations in Romania, especially in the military and academic context. The study is based on comparative data from the CRANET (Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management) reports for the periods 2014-2015 and 2021-2022, providing an insight into the evolution of these practices at global and national level. It highlights the importance of moving from traditional annual appraisals to more agile systems based on continuous feedback and 360-degree appraisals, and the integration of digital technologies in performance management. It also highlights how organizations in Romania, including the military, have begun to adopt modern training methods to support employee development.

Another key point addressed is how performance systems can be integrated with training strategies to ensure that organizational goals are aligned with employee needs, thereby contributing to increased job satisfaction and overall performance. In particular, the article discusses the challenges faced by Romanian military organizations in personnel training and provides recommendations for adapting academic training programs to the emerging needs of the global security environment and international training trends.

In addition to analyzing the synergy between performance management and training, the article highlights the need for strategic collaboration between military educational institutions and civilian organizations to improve the efficiency and relevance of training processes. It also provides recommendations for improving the training process in military higher education institutions by enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession, promoting strategic partnerships and the use of advanced technologies for training and assessment.

2 THE STAGE OF KNOWLEDGE

Performance management (PM) is a crucial component in organizational change by emphasizing the importance of goals setting, feedback and continuous learning. Carl Deschamps and Jan Mattijs explored organizational learning processes in a large Belgian public organization, using the 4Is framework - Intuition, Interpretation, Integration, Institutionalization - to identify challenges and facilitators in the learning and adaptation process. This research points out that although performance management systems are

essential for improving motivation and productivity, the relationship between PM and employees' performance remains complex (Deschamps & Jan, 2018).

One of the key aspects to overcome this barrier is the integrative approach of PM to strategically align organizational goals and processes with stakeholder expectations and societal needs. In their study on the concept of strategic alignment, Jung Wook Lee and Seok Eun Kim, suggest the importance of managerial factors in identifying strategic direction and mobilizing resources and personnel to achieve organizational goals consistent with the demands of the external environment (Jung Wook & Seok, 2012). To empower executives to make the best strategic alignment decisions, Lize Van Hoek et al. suggest that managers should develop strategies paying attention to PM, to vigor and employees training process, which are important predictors for increasing job satisfaction and, implicitly, increasing organizational performance (Van Hoek, Paull Dachapalli, Schultz, Maleka, & Ragadu, 2020). On the one hand, PM is considered to include activities that guarantee the achievement of objectives consistently and efficiently (Mathur & Prasad, 2014). On the other hand, organizational strategies regarding investment in planned training programs to acquire the capabilities of exercising the duties of a specific function in a certain organization and their development materialize in capable employees, a lower attrition rate, high levels of satisfaction (Salas, Burke, & Wilson, 2001) and enhancing organizational success.

Another key aspect is understanding the maximization and satisfaction tendencies regarding PM, as it can provide essential details for designing and implementing strategies (Liang, 2014). For example, promoting competency-based self-assessment of performance can help to raise awareness of individual training needs, capitalize on employee strengths and implement measures to minimize deficiencies in training, collaboration, socialization, etc., through appropriate feedback and guidance, which are often associated with better outcomes in the public domain (Yovav & Itzhak, 2021).

At the level of higher education institutions, the diversity in the application of PM reflects a variable focus between teaching and research, suggesting a need to adapt PM to specific institutional goals (Taylor, 2014). In the context of British universities, Aboubichr and Conway highlight how performance management systems can be manipulated, highlighting the discrepancy between the stated objectives of these systems and the behaviors induced among teaching staff (Aboubichr & Conway, 2021). This research reveals the need to reconsider the application and effects of performance management systems in academia in order to avoid undesirable outcomes and to encourage an authentic and productive organizational culture. In the United States, Jacobsen and Saultz (2016) explore the impact of performance management on citizen trust in public education. The authors analyze whether the implementation of performance management strategies in schools can contribute to restoring and improving the public perception of the quality of education. Their study suggests that although performance management has the potential to improve transparency and accountability in the education sector, there are significant challenges to its effective

implementation. One of the findings indicates that the public acceptance and support of these initiatives depend to a large extent on the clear communication of goals, processes and results, as well as the involvement of stakeholders in the process of performance evaluation and improvement (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2016).

In addition, PM can significantly predict knowledge management capabilities and learning in higher education institutions. In their study of innovation performance in Ghanaian higher education institutions, Mercy Asaa Asiedu et al. show that management factors capable of projecting the university's vision through challenging, motivating and inspirational strategies encourage teaching staff, but also non-teaching staff to engage in educational programs and innovative activities, which can enhance institutional performance (Asaa Asiedu & Anyigba, 2020).

In Romania, aligning the educational offer with the requirements of the external environment is an important perspective in terms of improving the quality and development of higher education (Pavelescu, 2023). For example, studies show that employees' perceptions of the fairness and adequacy of rewards are essential in shaping their work behaviors and level of professional engagement (Tiron Tudor, Nistor, Fekete, & Alexandru, 2022).

In this context, this paper reviews the recent specialized literature on performance management and the training process being complemented by a comparative analysis of key trends in the field aimed at highlighting the characteristics of organizations in Romania in order to highlight possible perspectives for institutions of higher education.

As such, addressing current trends in performance management and professional training globally and in organizations can help identify the development directions needed to improve performance, and possible emerging perspectives for higher education institutions in general and the military in particular.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The general approach of the present scientific approach is governed by the fundamental research question: what is the essence of performance management and the training process at the level of organizations in Romania, related to global trends?

Naturally, the approach is an interpretive one with phenomenological and hermeneutic valences (David, 2015), in which the method of comparative analysis of performance management practices and staff training in Romanian organizations is used, based on data extracted from the related CRANET reports, periods 2014-2015 (CRANET, 2017) and 2021-2022 (CRANET, 2023), in order to identify significant developments and changes in these fields globally and in Romania.

The CRANET network is recognized worldwide for its human resource management (HRM) expertise. It is coordinated by the UK's prestigious Cranfield School of Management

and is a collaboration between over 40 universities and business schools on six continents that aims to provide relevant data on HRM practices and performance in employing organizations around the world.

The objective of this article is to identify major trends and significant changes regarding performance management and professional training, considered to be critical areas for organizational success. More precisely, the aim is to provide a portrait of the evolution of the Romanian organizational landscape from the perspective of performance management and human resources training, in the broader context of global dynamics. In particular, we want to use the major trends and significant changes in performance management and professional training identified to formulate perspectives for aligning military education with emerging global and national recommendations.

The process of thematic analysis will be used to extract and synthesize relevant information. This multidimensional approach allows an in-depth exploration of current and future dynamics in performance management and professional training, highlighting the particularities of the Romanian context compared to global trends, and implicitly possible action perspectives for the strategic alignment of higher military education institutions with international and national trends.

4 COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN ROMANIAN ORGANIZATIONS ACCORDING TO CRANET REPORTS 2017 AND 2023

Over the past decade, the landscape of performance management and professional training has been profoundly influenced by the acceleration of digital transformation, the globalization of the labor market and demographic changes. Global trends indicate a transition from traditional approaches centered on annual assessments and formal training to more agile strategies that are customized and integrated into the daily workflow.

The results of the partial analysis of the data provided in the CRANET reports published in 2017 and 2023 highlight the fact that, globally, an increase in the use of continuous feedback is observed. If in the period 2014-2015 (CRANET, 2017), the emphasis was on traditional performance evaluations, mentioned by approximately 95% of the responding employees, the data collected in the period 2021-2022, show an increase in the use of continuous evaluations based on objectives and 360-degree feedback of 10% percentage (from 50% in the 2017 report to 60% in the 2023 report). In addition, a greater degree of performance management orientation is associated with the frequency of trust given to remote work (CRANET, 2023, p.47) based on the use of computerized tools such as Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams (CRANET, 2023, p. 20).

We attribute this shift to the fact that digital tools and platforms facilitate this process, allowing organizations to collect and analyze data in real time, which supports evidence-based

decision-making and personalized employees' development. Furthermore, in contemporary times, increased investment in educational technologies and flexible instructional methods such as micro-learning, social learning and online learning platforms is indispensable to winning the "competitiveness" game. This orientation reflects the recognition of the need to support continuous learning and rapid adaptation to technological changes and labor market developments.

Moreover, it is observed globally that organizations are looking for ways to link rewards to results through performance-based reward schemes (CRANET, 2023, p.48), such as bonuses, profit sharing, stock awards and so on. Although the use of assessment results for awarding rewards is similar in both reports, in 2021-2022 respondents report a slight decrease in the share of fixed salary (from 80% in the pre-2017 period to 75%), while bonuses and sharing profit or the granting of shares remain important (70%, respectively 45%).

Regarding the performance management within the organizations in Romania, according to the analysis of data from CRANET reports, our findings indicate a progressive orientation towards more complex and development-centered performance systems.

The transition from traditional annual reviews to 360-degree evaluation and the emphasis on goal setting reflect a partial alignment with the global trends of personalization and continuous improvement of employee performance. Specifically, this change suggests a recognition of the importance of multidimensional feedback and the establishment of clear, measurable goals in the process of staff evaluation and development. However, the limited use of advanced evaluation techniques, such as return on investment (ROI) analysis in staff training (10%) and pre-post training comparison (20%), indicates a potential area for improvement in terms of training programs. We believe that this aspect underlines the need for the adoption of more sophisticated analysis and reporting tools that contribute to a better strategic management of the performance of training programs.

Taking into account these global trends, the portrait of organizations in Romania, outlined by the comparative analysis of CRANET data from 2017 and 2023, is defined by several essential characteristics that reflect trends, challenges and development directions in the field of performance management and human resources training. Considering that the CRANET data research methodology for the 2021-2022 period is based on the structured analysis by region, where the availability of the data allowed us, we included in the comparison with Romania the following categories:

- EU-13: the region of which Romania is a part, together with Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia;
- North America: represents a global pole of power, including the USA and Canada;
- China: also a global power pole, with significant economic influence;
- Germany and Belgium: western states with a higher level of development in Europe.

This approach offers a broader perspective on Romania's performance in a global, European and regional context.

Next, we detail these characteristics which highlight an evolution of organizational practices in line with the changes at the global level, as well as the contextual particularities that influence the way in which organizations in Romania respond to these trends.

- the transition to continuous performance management and the integration of computerized tools are reflected by the overall available data showing the more frequent use of dynamic and development-focused approaches, such as 360-degree feedback and goals setting, against traditional appraisals, as well as by the use of technologies for the accuracy and relevance of these practices. Also, the general data indicate that Romanian organizations are beginning to recognize the importance of competence-based assessment, which, along with multidimensional feedback, are key tools in performance management;
- the potential regarding the recognition of employees' efforts based on performance is reflected by the average positioning of Romania in the EU-13 context, with notable variabilities between states. By comparison, organizations in Romania use schemes related to financial participation in a percentage of 23.3%, similar to the average of the EU-13 states, such as Poland (25.0%) and Hungary (10.2%), but lower than that of countries such as Germany (66.2%), China (76.5%) and Israel (37.1%). Also, the Romanian organizations are around the average of the states in the region in which it is included in terms of granting performance-based bonuses (61.0%). A similar rate is reported by organizations in North America (64.7%) and Belgium (68.2%), while Chinese employees state a higher value (93.3%). This finding suggests the need to promote the practices of recognizing the efforts of employees based on performance to improve the valorization of human capital and achieve organizational success;
- the variable recognition of the importance of professional training programs for the fulfillment of organizational objectives is revealed by the decrease in the percentage of the budget allocated to it from 5.8% in 2017 to 4.5% in 2022, placing Romania below the global average. In comparison, Germany allocates over 15% of wage costs to training programs. This trend suggests challenges in prioritizing training investments, possibly influenced by budget constraints or a mismatch between the recognition of the value of Training and Development (T&D) and the actual allocation of resources. Moreover, similar to global trends, on-the-job training and coaching are the most common methods of professional development of human resources;
- the trend towards the adoption of modern methods of professional development is reflected by the higher overall percentages regarding the use of on-the-job training practices, coaching and mentoring. This reflects an awareness of the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to the individual development needs of employees, in line with global trends to personalize learning paths.

As a result, the defining characteristics of organizations in Romania reflect a landscape in transition, oriented towards the modernization of performance management practices and professional training, but faced with specific challenges in fully aligning with international standards and practices. This analysis underlines the importance of continuing adaptation and innovation efforts to respond effectively to the demands of the global market and to ensure the sustainable development of human capital in Romanian organizations.

However, the findings and foreshadowing in the following section are marked by limitations that derive from the methodology used in this analysis. First, the data from the CRANET reports, although extensive, come from a limited spectrum of organizations, predominantly from developed economies. This raises questions about the generalizability of the results to the entire global corpus of organizations. Second, the different methodology for analyzing the data at the state level (CRANET, 2017) compared to grouping the data at the region level (CRANET, 2023) limits the consistency of the findings in the Romanian context. Additionally, due to the available data format, we predominantly used traditional analysis methods, and less advanced techniques.

Taking these aspects into account, in the following, we will address the implications of these global trends and national characteristics in order to foreshadow, with the assumed limitations, prospects for improving the training processes carried out in military higher education institutions, which will become the subject of future approaches related to the integration of performance management in the training of military personnel, on a nationally representative sample and with a complex research methodology.

5 EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Professional training and development of military personnel is considered a strategic objective at the level of the Romanian Ministry of National Defence, with implications on the ability of aligning the armed forces organizations to the challenges of the security environment. Thus, the need for "high quality" human resources of the Romanian Armed Forces reinforces the mechanisms of searching for best practices in training, continuous development and retention of military personnel, which implies the development of new perspectives on the military profession. In terms of personnel categories, the professionalization of the officer corps in the academic environment is the fundamental process. Complex in nature, it must provide the armed forces with the necessary human capabilities (leaders, experts, decision-makers) to meet the challenges associated with the higher-ranking tasks specific to the changing security environment.

Considering these aspects, we set out to identify some perspectives for development in military higher education institutions and to outline some emerging recommendations

leading to the improvement of the professional training of military personnel in a university context, based on the trends identified in the previous section.

Perspective no. 1: increasing teacher satisfaction, the attractiveness of the profession and individual and organizational performance, through a strategic vision that aims to:

- using the dimensions associated with performance management, such as frequent evaluations of established objectives and the 360-degree feedback, to provide appropriate guidance to teachers, administrative staff and students or trainees enrolled in various university training programs;
- recognizing the efforts of teachers and administrative staff based on performance, developing bonus schemes for increasing the quality of the teaching act, the availability of providing administrative support and the successful fulfillment of organizational missions.

Perspective no. 2: improving the alignment of programs to the needs of the beneficiaries:

- University training programs for military personnel: as mentioned above, the professional training of officers in a university environment has an effective and immediate influence on the acts of command-control, expertise and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. These programs must be built by professionals who understand the need for congruence of the leadership profile sought at the level of military organizations with the strategic, operational and tactical objectives of the Romanian Armed Forces. Naturally, complex studies for the identification of the profile of the leader/expert in a specific field of activity should be the basis for the reconfiguration processes of the university training programs. Although these studies involve considerable financial, human and time resources, the proliferation of information technology tools provides opportunities for dissemination of research tools and data collection, leading to process optimization. In the absence of such rational approaches, there is a risk that training programmes will remain forms without substance and organizational relevance;
- providing training programs based on the combination of conventional learning methods with modern ones, through the use of technological, digital tools and those containing artificial intelligence; project-based learning and simulations to create a richer and more interactive learning experience;
- developing interdisciplinary training programs by integrating knowledge from various fields, such as military sciences, social sciences, technical sciences and economics, or different specializations such as: stewardship, financial management and informatics, preparing military personnel to face the complex challenges of the current security environment;
- promoting a culture of continuous learning by providing opportunities and recognition to motivate personnel to continuously improve their skills in order to adapt to the rapid changes in the military field.

Perspective no. 3: promoting partnerships and increasing visibility by:

- developing strategic partnerships with universities and other educational institutions to benefit from their expertise in the field of professional training;
- facilitating access to quality educational resources;
- increasing resources for professional training programs for military personnel;
- ensuring the necessary financial resources for the implementation of modern and efficient programs.

6 CONCLUSIONS – APPROACH IN CORRELATION WITH THE REST OF THE ARTICLE

Considering the evidence from the literature on the positive influence of performance management and staff professional development strategies on organizational success, and the findings on trends in the field, at the level of organizations (including military) in Romania, we can draw the following conclusions. According to the literature review, the quintessence of the connection between performance management and continuous professional training lies in the contributions to beneficiary-centered learning by the mechanisms of goal setting, progress monitoring, specific feedback and evaluation, which lead to the achievement of the proposed learning outcomes. Overall, the comparative analysis of the 2017 and 2023 CRANET reports provides a valuable insight into the evolution of financial participation and performance-based pay practices globally.

The analyzed data reflect a complex evolution in the fields of performance management and professional training in Romania, highlighting both adaptations to new organizational paradigms and specific challenges in maintaining optimal levels of investment in human capital development. This analysis underlines the need for an integrated approach to performance management and professional development, which ensures alignment with global trends and supports the competitive sustainability of Romanian organizations.

This change suggests an orientation towards participative methods, centered on the continuous development of employees, highlighting an adaptation to the emerging paradigms in performance evaluation.

The presented study can contribute to the existing literature by clarifying the current trends regarding performance management and human resources training processes, providing a solid basis for further research aimed at understanding the determinants of the alignment of strategic objectives with the requirements of the external environment.

The results of the study can provide organizations with valuable insights for developing or optimizing performance management programs by aligning objectives, providing feedback, continuous or 360-degree evaluations, performance-based compensation, and active learning in line with societal changes. They can also guide policy decisions in promoting effective

human resource management practices, thereby aligning employee interests with organizational goals.

The perspectives proposed as courses of action for improving the professional training of military personnel at university level are intended to highlight how a change based on knowledge and management of training objectives could contribute to meeting the needs of qualitative human resources and fulfilling organizational missions in a globalized world.

From the point of view of using the mechanisms associated with performance management as a fundamental tool to support policies for attracting, training and retaining teaching staff at the level of military higher education institutions, we aimed to emphasize the importance of the teacher-institution partnership in providing opportunities for continuous devolution on the job, with immediate effects on the successful teaching-learning-assessment process. In this regard, we believe that placing teaching at the center of the multiple activities that military university teachers have to perform, and recognizing efforts based on the performance of the educational process (the teaching-learning-assessment process) can be key factors in expressing intellectual and creative potential.

With regard to the rethinking of training programs, we believe that it is necessary to have a perspective on the orientation of the training mode centered on organizational and individual needs identified by scientific methods. Probably the simplest start is to identify the profile of the Romanian Armed Forces and synchronize it with modern civilian and military organizations, in a Western-inspired approach that promotes the "flexible military" typology. In this sense, our option for the performance management of the training process may lead to more functional military organizations by avoiding the waste of resources (human, material, financial, and informational) and of the potential of the personnel.

Finally we note again the inherent limitations of the paper in the data source and methodology used. The interpretation of the results must be seen within the limits of the data sources (CRANET Reports) and the methodological approach based on traditional analysis with phenomenological and hermeneutical valences.

Although Romania has started to adopt some of the global trends, there is still significant potential for improvement in the use of modern technologies and integrated approaches to human resources development. The above conclusions, perspectives and proposals will hopefully trigger interest in applying and conducting further research, by a research team, with improved methodologies and more representative samples, to increase the reliability and applicability of the results.

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