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**CONSIDERATION ABOUT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION,
RETIREMENT AND RECONVERSION A CURRENT
STRATEGIC ISSUE FOR THE ARMED FORCES
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Captain commander R dulescu F nel – RO NAVY

*“Man is the measure of all things: of things which are,
that they are, and of things which are not, that they are
not”*

Pretoqoras (ca. 490 BC – 420 BC)

Navy Staff, Romania

Abstract:

The HRM consist in all activities focused on acquirement, development, motivate, and maintain human resources in the organization framework in order not only to rich the organization’s goals with maximum efficiency but also to satisfy the employees needs. HRM is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. As a result of evolution and organization’s development, the HRM managers have to realize a specific plan dedicated to recruit and retain those personnel which has the requested qualification by the organization. The program implementation consist in personnel recruitment, selection, integration, training, choosing and giving the proper benefits, rewards, and continuously performances evaluation in order to assure the organization’s goals fulfillment. The development of human resources consist in training of dedicate persons for dedicate job’s position regarding the organization needs. In order to choose the proper preparation of HRs, the HR manager must take in consideration the employee motivation and capabilities. Effective HRM enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall company direction and the accomplishment of the organization’s goals and objectives. In order to maintain a good relationship between organization administration and employees, a set of activities such as conflicts management, employee guidance, building-up a strong relationship with syndicates, must be developed at the level of organization. Depending of the organization evolution a set of measures have to be taken in order to employ, remove, or assure reconversion programs for personnel. All that activities is representing the Human Resources Management, and should by same in both civilian and military framework.

Key words: human resource, performance, strategy, sustainability, recruitment, retention, retirement reconversion, reintegration.

1. Introduction

The Human Resource Management begins around the end of the 19th century and was dominated by transactional work such as payroll and administration benefits. **At the beginning it was a product of the human relations but later it developed into a domain related to the work environment.**

Human resource management (**HRM**) or (**HR**) should be briefly defined as the management of an organization’s workforce or human resources.

As a result of the globalization process, company consolidation, technological growth, and further achievements, Human Resource Management focuses on **strategic initiatives like** top management and acquisitions, talent management, succession planning, industrial and labor relations, diversity and inclusion.

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In the framework of Human Resource Management the HR managers are not only responsible for the attraction, selection, training, assessment, and rewarding of employees, but also they have to oversee the organizational leadership and culture, and to ensure compliance with employment and labor laws.

In the civilian sector, human resources management is viewed as a sum of knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents, and aptitudes of the organization's members, as well as the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the individuals involved.

The success of human resources management is based on productive individuals, their inherent abilities, and their enrichment based on environmental factors such as education, training, and development.

Starting from this point of view, we have **to deal with** the roles of recruiting, retention, career development, evaluation, awards, morale and welfare, risks assessment in order to provide safety, retirement benefits, reconversion possibilities and compensations for personnel, everything being done within the framework of the armed forces HRM.

For a proper HRM in the military field starting at the strategic level, all human resources managers need to have multi-dimensional and well-integrated competencies to understand and excel in combined and joint environments.

For that, my intention is turn the attention to the major importance that should be given to personnel in the Defense Resources Management, making some analysis on recruitment, retention, retirement, reconversion or reintegration as current strategic issues regarding military HRM.

2. Economic, politic, and strategic environment as an affecting factor of military HRM.

Taking into consideration the actual unpredictable and complex security environment all over the world, it is obvious we must have, adapt, and maintain an up-to-date military force, able to carry out a varied spectrum of contingency operations, following the national interest and/or our in place or future agreements with EU and NATO.

Regarding our UE and NATO membership, due to the future possible changes of the environment and policies, we will have to continue the armed forces transformation process.

Due to that, all military HR managers, at all levels and branches, must possess the skills necessary to face the challenges of the 21st century. To acquire these skills people have to think "with progressive aspirations towards the future we all wish for, through the enhancement of certain concepts meant to project the modernisation of the Romanian Armed Forces of tomorrow!" [1]

That means, as I said before, **that before taking into consideration other things** it is important to have a very clear image in our mind of how valuable human being is in itself or as a resource part involved in Defense Resource Management.

2.1 Economical crisis effects which affected Romanian Armed Forces development

Soon after the financial crisis appeared and hit Romania also, its defense budget for 2010 went down with 13% from 2.5% GDP in 2009. Due to this budget cutback almost 80% of the Romanian defence budget is spent on salaries and pensions, with only about 20% remaining for missions at home and abroad, and no funds have been allocated to the investment budget since 2009 so, no new procurement will be possible until 2014. Moreover, **after the** pay cuts of up to 25% in the public sector have hit the military and defense industry hard, and the seven strategic procurement programmes running since 2007 to complete achievement of NATO standards will also be suspended and we **cannot count on** their fulfillment before 2025. [2]

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In their turn, the EU policies and structures suffer a continuous transformation, and we have to be prepared to face it. For example, nowadays, an article in The Guardian, stresses on the fact that “five of the six biggest countries in the EU, excluding Britain, have called for a radical overhaul of European foreign and defense policies to create a powerful new pan-European foreign ministry [...] a possible European army, and a single market for EU defense industries” [3].

Having this overview, we have to take in consideration the fact that the means or assets should be managed or built-up if the system have proper to tasks, well motivated, skilled, and trained personnel. Without realize the undeniable value of the human resource, almost all decision making processes will vanish, and the mission goals should not be fulfilled, even if the force gain enough budget or top high-tech.

3. The role and place of the human resources at the management level.

Starting from the current approach to military human resources management, some aspects need an in-depth analysis, in order to adopt the scientific approach of human resource management also for armed forces framework. We have to implement concepts, policies, and efficient strategies for the effectiveness of the military personnel, strategies which should be well adapted to society, to the continuous evolution of the military and political environment.

The human resources represent one of the most important investments for any organization and they are the only ones capable to produce and to reproduce all the other resources, which are at their disposition. The human resources are important, few, difficult to copy and relative irreplaceable. [4]

When the HR transformation in the military field was initiated, a series of organizational objectives were established, as follows:

- To develop and implement a well balanced structure based on pyramidal model as well as in other armed forces, NATO members;
- To develop and use a recruiting and selection system able to assure withhold of the personnel with best abilities and potential for follow military career;
- To build-up and implement a flexible promotion and career evolution system, based on professionalism, motivation, performance on previous duties, abilities and potential for future professional development;
- To introduce a new job – “career manager”, at the level of each armed forces branches HQ;
- To reorganize the military educational systems, in order to assure a broad theoretical and practical preparation area, covering all requested aspects from the job description list;
- To prepare the legal basis and implement the system changes needed to replace the conscripts with professional enlisted personnel, allowing the women to work for all Armed Forces branches, and to establish direct and indirect career evolution for all ranks;
- To organize a reconversion system and implement the retirement procedures and compensation measures as a result of the necessity to reduce the number of military and civilian personnel from the armed forces due to the reorganization process of the forces structure.

It was a great effort for the Romanian Armed Forces to find and follow the proper ways to complete those goals. From time to time, being under the time and agreements pressure some steps and phases were skipped, or postponed. That had some secondary effects.

First, the massive retirement generated decay in the body of the remaining specialists. Then, due to the necessity to fill fast some gaps in the organization system and vacancies, a

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lack of motivation appeared among the members of both military and civilians. To this, the financial crisis effects were added. Unfortunately, the crisis affected all the fields of the Defense Resource Management. **Now is time to focus our thinking, not for today or for tomorrow, because both this time frames are becoming too quickly past and that habit will anchor us in a loop which will make us blind and unable to cross de boundary to the future.** For that, we have to learn how to project the present in the future to obtain the fulfillment of our goals timely updated by using controlled inputs which can occur inherently, and a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture related to any relative future environment.

4. Consideration on the current strategic issues for the armed forces Human Resources Management

Human Resources Management should be defined in a general sense as a series of integrated decisions about the employment relationship that influences the effectiveness of employees and organizations. In the military framework we can interpret that as changing the point of view about HRM which has no longer a supporting role, moreover we can say it is transformed in a strategic enabler for the armed forces. [5]

The success of human resources is based on productive individuals, their inherent abilities, and the extent to which those abilities are modified through environmental factors such as education, training, and development.

This is a reason to assign tasks as understanding the roles of recruiting, retention, career development, evaluations, safety, awards, retirement and reintegration, personnel management, morale and welfare, and compensation issues.

4.1 Military Human Resources Management-(MHRM) area of responsibility and related functions

MHRM describes the process of managing people by performing the essential functions of planning, organizing, directing, and supervising effective procedures necessary in administration and operation of personnel management.

The MHRM functions should be as follows [6]:

- *Personnel structure.* This branch of MHRM should manage the part where personnel requirements and authorizations are determined and documented as a function which supports the armed force development.
- *Structure & career evolution.* This function ensures that the Armed Forces is staffed with the correct ranks and skills in numbers sufficient to satisfy force requirements, and has three components.
 - (1) *Manpower management.* The process of linking accession, retention, and promotion targets to Armed Forces requirements as measured against the military manning program in the PPBES.
 - (2) *Accession and retention management.* The process that converts manpower targets to missions and oversees execution.
 - (3) *Training and courses integration.* The establishment of a demand for training programs and a system to control input and tracking of trainees and students.
- *Distribution.* The function of assigning available military personnel to units based on Armed Forces requirements and priorities.
- *Development.* This function begins with accession training and continues throughout a military personnel's entire period of service. It includes institutional training, self-development, leader development and supporting programs such as the evaluation, promotion, and command selection systems.

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- *Deployment.* This function enables the Armed Forces to transition from the “preparation mode” to the “conduct of military operations” mode. Deployment includes mobilization, deployment, redeployment, demobilization, reconfiguration, noncombatant evacuation, and repatriating.
- *Compensation.* This function encompasses the management of all pay, allowances, benefits, and financial entitlements for military personnel and retirees.
- *Sustainment.* This function involves the management of programs to maintain and advance the well being of military personnel, civilians, retirees, and family members.
- *Transition.* As individuals leave the Active Component (AC) for either the Reserve Components (RC) or civilian life, this function provides assistance to military personnel, Armed Forces civilians, and family members.

Another approach based on generic function which should be carried out by HRM as it is presented in the figure below:



Fig.1 (MHRM functions design)

4.2 Human Resources Recruitment

Recruitment refers to the process of attracting, screening, and selecting a qualified person for a job. At the strategic level it may involve the development of an employer brand which includes an “employee offering” [7].

The stages of the recruitment process general speaking include:

- job analysis and developing the specifications;
- the sourcing of candidates by networking, advertising, or other search methods;
- matching candidates to job requirements and screening individuals using testing (skills or personality assessment);
- assessment of candidate’s motivations and their fit with organizational requirements by interviewing and other assessment techniques. The recruitment process also includes the making and finalizing of job offers and the induction and on-boarding of new employees.

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Depending on the size and culture of the organization recruitment may be undertaken in-house by managers, human resource generalists and / or recruitment specialists [8].

Alternatively parts of all of the process might be undertaken by either public sector employment agencies, or commercial recruitment agencies, or specialist search consultancies.

The armed forces recruitment process is under direct competency of the Human Resources Management Directorate, which according its areas of competence approve the rules and methodologies used in the process of recruitment and selection of candidates and delegates those duties to the information and recruitment offices, which are part of regional military centers.

I will not discuss here about the duties and responsibilities of different structures involved in the recruitment process. My intention is to stress a little on how new members should be attracted to join the Armed Forces, having in mind that civilian labor market is more attractive and can increase its attractiveness in the future. For that I will enumerate some steps, coming from the strategic recruitment process.

- Find out what the turn over rate is for the position and at least match it;
- Offer employee benefit programs like: health assurance, medical and dental coverage, insurance, and so on.
- Make lifestyle part of your employee recruitment offer like: free access in welfare and recreation basis;
- Emphasize the benefits in your offered job description, which is rising as unexpected benefit related to restricted specific of military life.
- Be creative with perks, in order to attract and make your employment recruitment efforts more successful.
- Offer to the recruits some way to move upwards, as the chance to develop new skills, or the certain possibility to gain upper jobs/ranks after receive a dedicated preparation, and gaining needed skills, but before you have to be sure that he/her will get the future possibilities on the table;
- Create a personnel incentive program not only reward their good performance but give them something to look forward, if they chose to work in the armed forces.
- Institute a profit sharing program, as making them to feel it proud of being part of the system, and important for its growth.
- Sweeten the pot in order to determine the recruit to prefer to enter in the armed forces than chose other business. Give them idea that should receive in time a bonus large enough to matter, but take care that signing bonus has to be contingent upon x amount of time of hiring.
- Widen the scope of your advertising. For that is better to place ads in places such as job Web sites and college/university campus boards, for example. Advertise in other towns or cities.^[7]

Other valuable steps to find recruits if the recruitment pool will shrink, should by:

- Connect with your local college or training school.
- Get involved with your local college or university's cooperative training program.
- Hire through a government program.
- Use employment agencies.
- Use the web.
- Put the word out on the street.

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4.3 Human Resources Retention and Development

“Look to the future and identify the components of a military compensation system that will attract, retain, and motivate the diverse work force of the 21st century” [8], (US President Bill Clinton, 1995).

It doesn't matter if we face now the financial crises effects, nobody stop us to figure out the future and to try to be prepared for it. In order to identify how we will stimulate capable personnel to attend and remain in our armed forces we have to analyze and understand what we have to do, when, what it means, and how. First we have to elaborate a HRM planning, in order to make a parallel or link between recruitment necessity and retention of capable personnel.

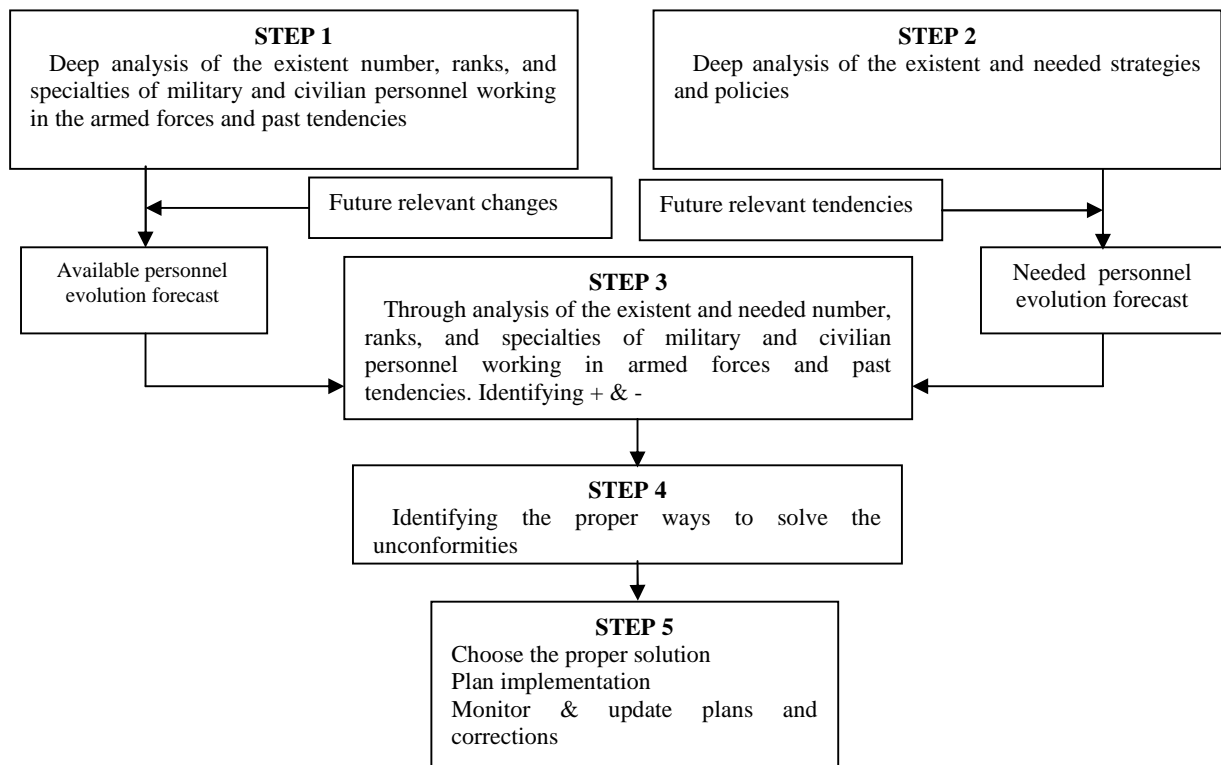


Fig.2 (MHRM Planning)

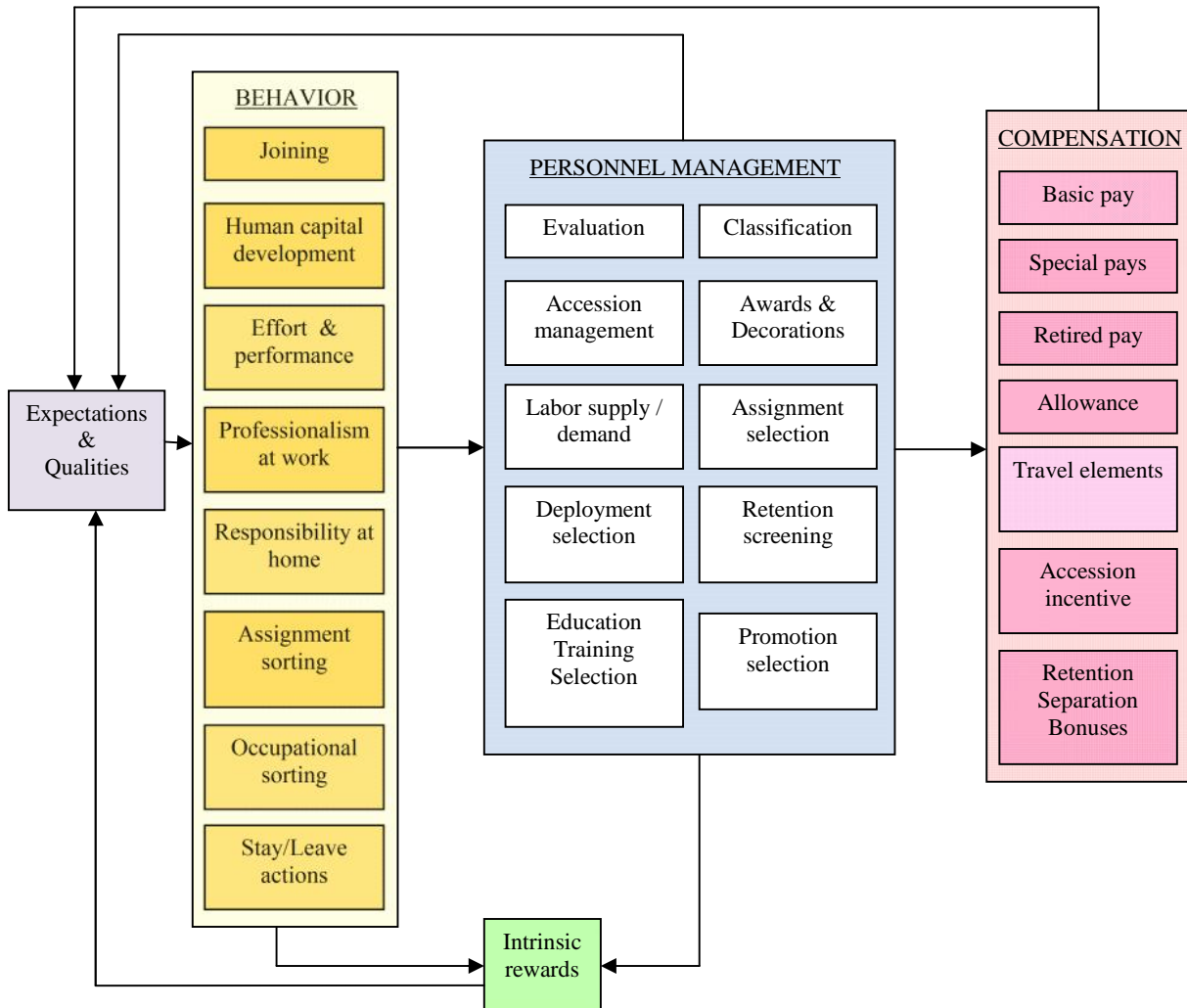
As we can see in figure 2, a possible approach of MHRM planning should help us to: identify the personnel suited for a specific function; identify the vacancies/job places which have to be staffed with personnel or will be revised; elaborate lists of jobs description based on the level of knowledge, abilities and the level of expertise needed; establish the steps and timings, and also to evaluate the entire activities costs.

Now having all that answers, and the identified valuable resource, we can discuss about the HRM personnel retaining process. In that process three main elements are involved and show the interaction between the actions of the individuals in response to the environment (behaviors), personal management processes, and compensation. Figure 3 presents a basic analysis of relations between those three elements as ensemble, without define all component parts and show the interaction among them.

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Fig.3 (Model of circular framework – motivation related to characteristics of rewards) [8]

My intention when I started to elaborate this paperwork was to bring up some ideas, letting the floor for a deeper analysis for whom will be interested, as a result I will present



only the basic principles. Compensation is equivalent with extrinsic rewards; on the one hand it influences the personnel expectations and quality of work, and on the other hand it can be seen as a result of a decision making process and analysis developed at the level of personal management, affected or influenced by the behavioral inputs.

Now, having a broad overview of the interaction of those three elements it is better to figure out the linkages between all sub-elements which represent them.

That is represented in figure 4, above, where continuous lines represent the relationship between behavioral aspects and compensation sub-elements, a relationship related to the part of personnel management referring to promotion, selection in very close linkage with the retention chain elements. All other linkage lines have different effects. The following scheme is very crowded, and should be analyzed, taking in consideration all cumulative aspects and processes generating cape stones for capable personnel retention, in order to be optimized and make it functional for a future MHRM approach.

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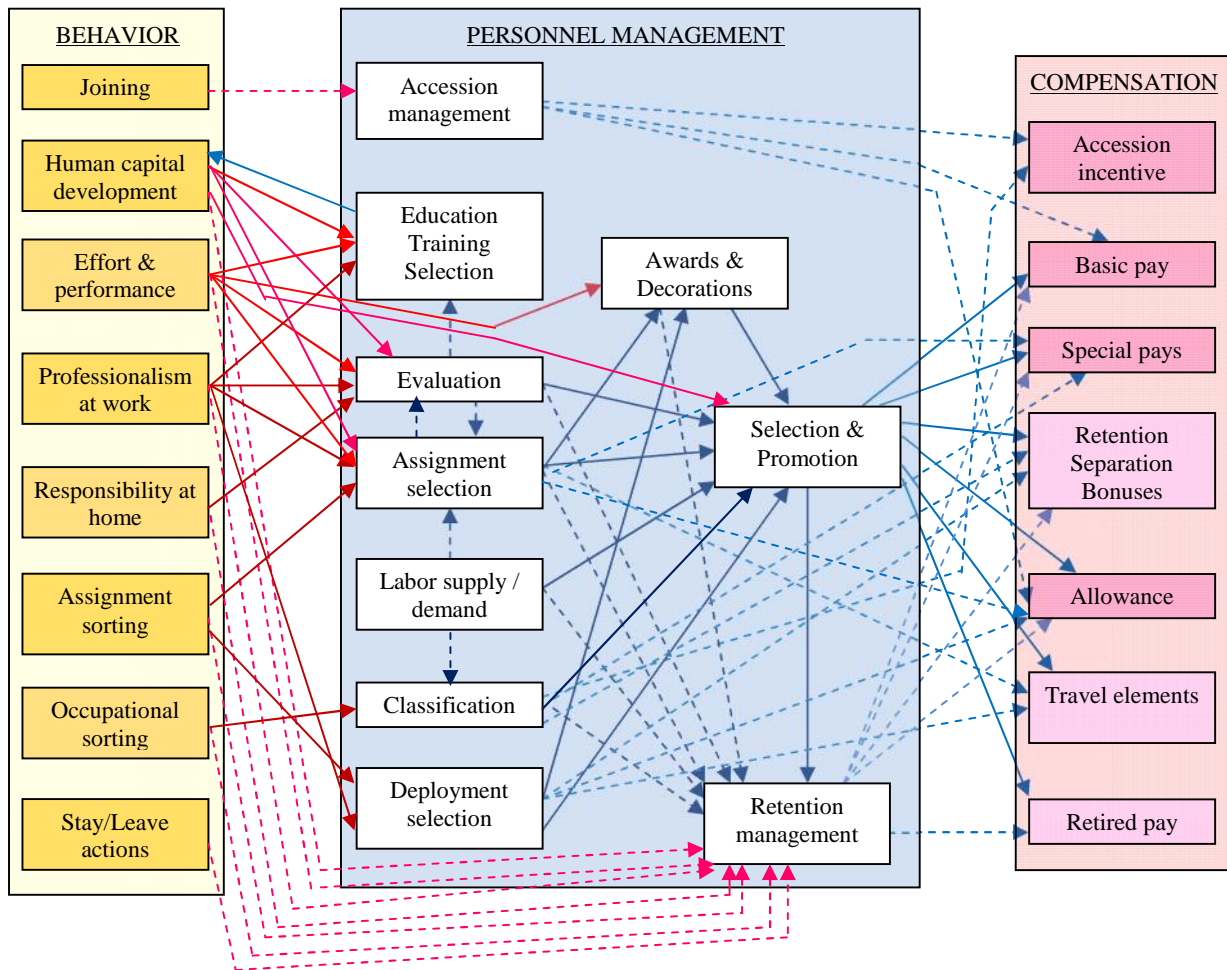


Fig.4. (MHRM system, usual linkages between specific elements) [8].

Within personnel management we will identify a set of elements as Manpower management, Accession management, Training integration, Selection & Promotion and others connected to organizational and individual development, all together, part of the development function of MHRM.

From all that specific activities of development function of MHRM, I will present only two which have a particular importance and should support HR managers in their efforts to form and retain the capable personnel in the armed forces. One of them is forming and increasing personal performance of human resources and the second one is selection and promotion which you can find in figure 4 named selections and promotion or career development in other publications.

Forming and increasing personal performance of human resource activity has as goals: to identify and evaluate the level of professional and personal preparation and capabilities of the armed forces personnel in order to develop for individuals the main competences, which related with their behavioral, mental and physical aptitudes make him or her well fitted for a specific duty or job place. What is missing in our structures at all levels of HRM is the career manager who has to do this job. Without that position in the chain of HRM, career evolution hasn't a scientific approach; it is generally quite a form of foreseeing and follows an individual interest, and is done by the person itself. That should negatively affect the level of motivation and the interest to increase the individual performances. In addition it allows for

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retirement or separation or to not put the right personnel in the right positions, in other words it will affect the career development process.

In one optimized MHRM system training and educational programs will be efficient and effective, only if are integrated in MoD related policies, based on a previous analysis of jobs description for vacancies, evaluation of available personnel to assign those duties, types of training/education needed and armed forces needs. A form of systemic approach is presented in figure 5 in which curriculum & didactics/training planning is orientated towards fulfilling the system needs.

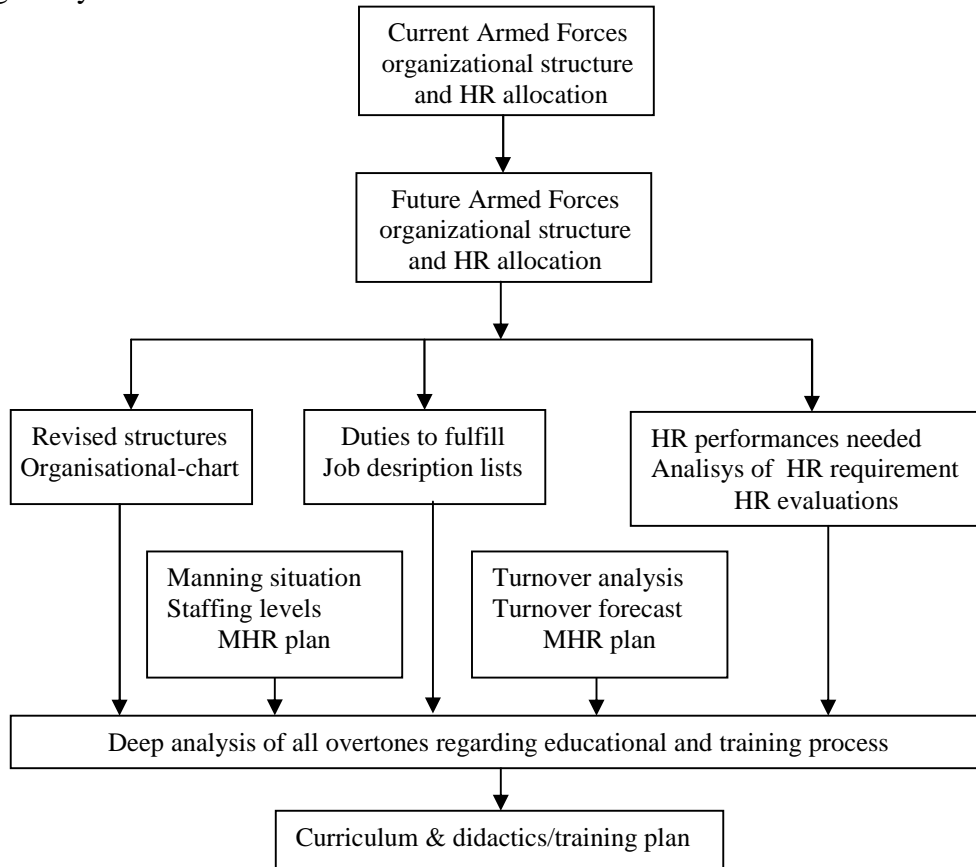


Fig.5. (Curriculum & didactics/training planning)

4.4 HR Retirement and Reconversion

When we discuss about human resources retirement or separation we have to understand the need to develop a MHRM specific function, dedicated to manage this changing of personnel status.

In the US Army, for example, that MHRM function is named – “**The transition function**”, and includes a broad range of activities focused on ensuring soldiers and their families are treated with dignity and respect and assisted in every way possible as they transition from the active service to a reserve/retirement and/or civilian status [8].

To support that MHRM function inside the HRM system a dedicated structure is needed and this structure has to manage some activities like:

- elaborate a broad spectrum of programs and services designed to assist soldiers in making critical career and transition decisions.
- develop some programs in linkages between military structures, structures responsible for labor market management, local and regional military centers, private or under the state control, business or/and contractor provided services.

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- assure the free access to a large number and spectrum of reference materials and a wealth of information about benefits, civilian employment opportunities, career planning and services available through many, state and local government agencies.

- assure all above also for civilians who leave because of force alignments, reductions in force or base closures.

- establish a strong partnership between the Armed Forces and the private sector, creates a recruiting multiplier, improves employment prospects for transitioning personnel, reduces unemployment compensation costs to the Armed Forces

- elaborate programs dedicated to preparing the soldiers and family members for retirement by providing assistance and information on their benefits and entitlements

- assist personnel who use "Separation" for different motives the form of retirement, form which includes voluntary and involuntary release from active duty, discharge, non-disability retirement, and physical disability retirement.

Obviously, nowadays due to the crisis effects if we are not prepared properly for this lifestyle change, retirement can be extremely difficult. Having that HRM structure in place able to execute the **transition function** requests in support of military and civil personnel working in the Armed Forces, the system will have only to benefit. Why? Because all people from the military system will be motivated, focused on solving the allocated tasks, or fulfilling the missions goals, having the feeling that the Armed Forces through MHRM system take care of them not only when are on active duty but also at the end of the military career.

5. Conclusion

In order to meet the demands of the 21st century, at the level of the MHRM system probable is needed an organizational review or an adaptation of its structure as well as possible in order to indentify and implement HRM function and processes that currently exist within the civilian community, and could be fitted well in the HRM military framework. The key personnel to handle this work its no other than the military human resources manager. Very important also is to bear in mind the value of a well prepared HR manager at any level especially at the strategic level. Also the career manager has in his turn a key position in MHRM system, because he/she is the "watch keeper" of personnel competency improvement, of them career evolution, and a mail in the personnel motivational chain. If the career manager has done a good job, the armed forces personnel managed by him/her for sure will gain the needed knowledge, skills, and/or abilities needed to successfully perform a dedicated job function. Never forget the value of people as a sum in the meaning of terms HR. For that reason the HR Managers must have good knowledge of HR concepts, principles, and practices related to major armed forces programs, such as: training, assignments, separations, relocation, reserve programs, retirements, records management, customer service, strength accounting, casualty affairs, promotions, family support, humanitarian, senior leader management, manpower, evaluations, awards and decorations, special programs, benefits and entitlements, readiness, and protocol, in order to give confidence in MHRM, increase the level of moral, and determination to be part of the armed forces and stay instead of leaving.

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