

**SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
IN COMPANIES FROM WESTERN REGION OF ROMANIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper aims to bring into focus a concept extensively studied over the years in the international literature, but to a limited extent in the local.*

*Importance basis resulting from the need for awareness that is absolutely necessary to move to another level in companies in Romania, pointing to a strategic human resource management, to support the organization in achieving goals.*

*The original purpose of this paper is to present, by summarizing existing information in the literature, the meanings given to the concept of strategic human resource management, focusing only on those specific but the last decade.*

*The second part consists of an investigating effort on the existence of strategic human resource management in large or very large companies in the Western Region of the country (Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara, Timis) and which are not subsidiaries of multinational companies.*

*We started from the hypothesis that can identify a relationship between the extent of the existence of strategic human resource management in organizations and the characteristics of the human resources strategy, specific activities of the Human Resources Department and human resource practices that are used strategically, in order to contribute to the strategic objectives. The results confirmed the hypothesis established, demonstrating there is a direct, positive and statistically significant between the variables listed above. The research in this part represents a singular approach and representative for the Western Region of the country, providing important information to all stakeholders and could represent a starting point for further research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *human resource, management, objective, strategy.*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** *M00, M12, M51, M59.*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

According to literature, strategic human resource management can be considered one of the most remarkable discoveries in the field of management, with particular influences on business.

Although the current is a challenge for many large companies, the benefits of its implementation is undeniable, the first writings about strategic human resources management dates back to the early 1980s.

Human resource management which preceded the strategic human resource management, has focused mainly on activities of an administrative, operational (personnel records, payroll, holidays, meal vouchers granting etc.). Increased productivity and occasional study the factors, customs and

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practices that impeded its growth were issues that came later in its area of concern, but not a common practice among organizations.

Since the 80s there were new concepts and aspirations in the field of human resources management, many of the old ones being removed.

It realized that human resources and Human Resources Department of a firm can definitely contribute in a way to achieve organizational performance and competitive advantage must be given a more important role, the strategic partner organizations.

It is time the existence of human resources management in organizations remains a necessity, but it turns out not to be sufficient. It must shift to another level, the strategic management of human resources, through which employees are given their rightful place, and appreciated at their true value.

At the moment, strategic human resource management can be considered a proactive human resource management. He is to align human resources strategy to the overall strategy of the organization so as to support organizational objectives, improve performance and achieve competitive advantage.

So in the successful implementation of strategic human resource management should pursue a variety of complex issues, such as the existence of certain characteristics of the human resources strategy (should be aligned with the overall strategy of the organization to support, etc.), Human Resources Department involvement in strategic issues not only operational (to be consulted on major decisions, to participate actively in developing the company's objectives, the business strategy, formulate their vision of the human resources strategy, human resources, etc.) and certain human resource practices to be addressed strategically, ie long term, thus contributing to the strategic objectives (attracting the best candidates, employee participation in decision making, delegation of authority, rewarding performance-, retention in the organization of the best employees, loyalty programs, talent management, and more).

Generally, we can say that it wants to create an environment conducive to performance, the focus being human resources. Thus, it gives a deep interest in knowledge and meet the needs of employees so that they, in turn, be able to support meeting the needs of the company.

The overall objective of this paper is to present the theoretical concept of strategic human resource management, focusing on identifying specific activities then its businesses in the Western Region of the country. We focused on capturing the relationship between the extent of its existence firms in the Western Region of Romania and characteristics of the human resources strategy, the specific nature of the Human Resources Department and human resource practices used.

## **2. STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE LITERATURE OF THE PAST DECADE**

The literature can be found a variety of approaches to the concept of strategic human resource management. Although it is not new in the field, we can say that has not yet reached a consensus on its meaning. However, the benefits of implementing strategic human resource management in companies were recognized by all who have studied the concept, absolutely undeniable. Over the years the term has enriched perpetual content, placing more emphasis on the role it can play in increasing the performance of individual organizational those implicit in achieving strategic objectives and achieving competitive advantage.

The following will present some of the meanings given to the concept of strategic human resource management in the last ten years of scientific work.

Martin-Alcazar, Romero-Fernandez and Sanchez-Gardey (2005) define strategic human resource management as "an integrated set of practices, policies and strategies that organizations manage human capital that influences and is influenced by business strategy, organizational context and socio-economic context".

A year later, the Articles of Mello (2006), strategic human resource management is addressed as "a collection of practices, programs and policies that facilitate the strategic objectives of the organization".

Wei (2006) proposed a definition of the strategic human resource management similar to that of Mello, saying that it "involves thinking and implementing a set of policies and practices consistent to ensure that an organization human capital contributes to achieving strategic business objectives". In the same vein, Armstrong (2006) believes that essentially strategic human resource management is an integrated process that aims to achieve "strategic fit" producing human resource strategies that are vertically integrated with business strategy, being part of it and contributing to business planning.

Boxall, Purcell and Wright (2007) have defined strategic human resource management as a management approach that includes those human resources strategy designed to improve organizational performance and measuring their impact on organizational performance.

Along Boxall, Macky (2008) underlines once again the attention the strategic human resource management must grant impact that human resource strategies can have on organizational performance, focusing on the factors that determined that such management practices human resources to contribute to financial results.

Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade and Drake (2009) again addresses the strategic human resource management in terms of the influence it has on the individual results and on the organizational default.

A year later, Jackson and Seo (2010) confirms that a networking of human resource management practices support their alignment with the strategic objectives of human resources.

Armstrong (2011) suggests that strategic human resource management refers to the relationship between human resource management and strategic management of an organization, setting the overall direction that the organization wants to address with regard to the involvement of human resources in achieving objectives. According to him, the importance of human resources in formulating and implementing the organization's strategy is fundamental because:

- intellectual capital is a major source for obtaining competitive advantages;
- people are those who implement the strategic plan.

Kramar (2014) identifies a new perspective among researchers in the field, which is to study how strategic human resource management can help organizations in support of environmental sustainability.

Jackson, Schuler and Jiang (2014) believes that strategic human resource management involves long-term approach to business by creating a match between future human resources in an organization, external conditions and strategy.

In the same year, and Uysal and Mayis (2014) addressed the strategic human resource management through the relationship of employer and business performance, considering that it affects firm performance through employee performance. The two mentioned binder in strategic human resource management and firm performance is even employee performance. Strategic human resource management aims to increase both employee performance and business performance. They believe that if human resource management aims to have an impact on firm performance, we can say that it is a strategic human resource management.

In a recent article, Cristiani and Peiró (2015) mentioned that strategic human resource management focuses on aligning the organization with the human resources strategy and the impact this has in achieving organizational performance.

According to the authors mentioned above, the theory of strategic human resource management is considered that individual performance increases the performance of departments in an organization (purchasing, inventory, logistics, marketing, production, accounting, finance and others) as they work for them and performance their default will lead to increased company performance as a

whole. So, it is estimated that individual performance has an impact on firm performance through processes involving the departments they belong.

### 3. STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN COMPANIES FROM WESTERN REGION OF ROMANIA

#### 3.1. Research methodology

This research aimed to identify whether it can establish a relationship and that would be it between the extent of the existence of strategic human resource management and characteristics of the human resources strategy, the nature of activities undertaken by the Department of Human Resources and human resource practices dealt with strategic, ie long-term, in order to contribute to the strategic objectives.

In obtaining the information necessary to achieve the objective, they used both quantitative methods and qualitative research. I appeal simultaneously to carry out a survey based on a questionnaire and interview-based one. The research instruments were questionnaire and interview both.

Universe investigation was represented by companies large or very large (over 250 employees), regardless of the nature of capital (Romanian, foreign, mixed) or sector (public or private), but which are not subsidiaries of companies multinational with independent position, being independent decision. They were targeted organizations that have the above features, belonging to the Western Region of Romania (Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara and Timis).

The inquiry was addressed only to the human resources managers, any other categories of employees.

To identify companies with the desired characteristics, using the existing database on the website profile, doingbusiness.ro was subsequently verified on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

If initially identified 137 organizations large or very large in the Western Region of Romania (37 in Arad, 9 in Caras-Severin, 24 in Hunedoara County and 67 in Timis county) by removing multinationals based analysis for our study was more than halved, reduced to 65 companies.

With the exception of five companies in Timis, who refused participation in the study, we obtained responses from all other organizations in the four counties of Western Region of the country. Finally, the response rate was 92% of firms identified 100% in Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara and 80% in Timis County (Table 1.).

**Table 1. Sample representativeness**

County \ Sample	Initial sample	Sample after removal of multinationals	The relative frequency of the companies surveyed and interviewed	The absolute frequency of the companies surveyed and interviewed
Arad	37	18	18	100%
Caras -Severin	9	5	5	100%
Hunedoara	24	16	16	100%
Timiș	67	26	21	80%
Total company four counties (Western Region of Romania)	137	65	60	92%

*Source:* own adaptation based on information sources

The questionnaire was divided into five parts, modules as being tailored to the specific questions of each theme and interest pursued.

The idea to obtain concrete answers as the subjects, we opted for the formulation of predominantly closed questions, possible variations are unique and predetermined response. A Likert rating scale was used, with five-speed response (none = 0, a lesser extent = 1, a medium extent = 2, a large extent = 3, total = 4).

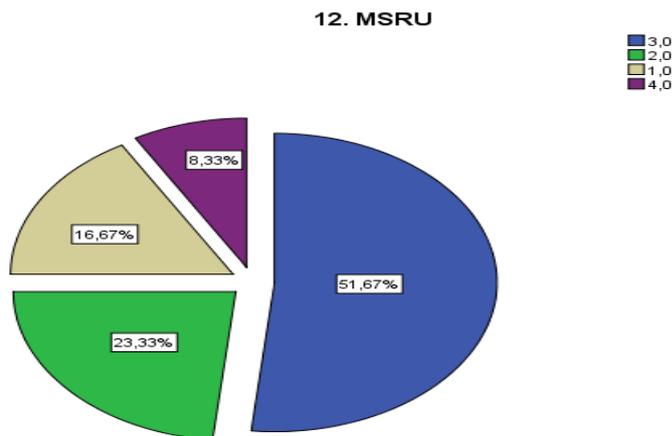
The research was conducted through field trips to absolutely all companies that have been identified at an earlier stage, taking their entire action during May to September 2015.

Regarding the processing, analysis and interpretation of data, we should mention that in a first phase to keep track of summary data, distribution of responses in Microsoft Excel 2010 and later we resorted to the use of one of the most commonly used, relevant and complex statistical analysis programs, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). As the program has seen improvements over time, I used a recent version of it, working in SPSS 23.

To test the hypothesis veracity established and to identify the nature of the relationship between the elements of the case, we applied Somers'd Test, considering it the most representative in the case of ordinal variables.

### 3.2. Research results

Before testing the veracity of the hypothesis determined implicitly and the three sub- hypotheses, we consider it necessary to present the results obtained in research on variables analyzed: strategic human resource management, characteristics of the human resources strategy, the activities of Human Resources Department and human resource practices strategically addressed.



**Figure 1. The extent of strategic human resource management - the perspective of respondents from companies**

*Source: own adaptation based on information sources*

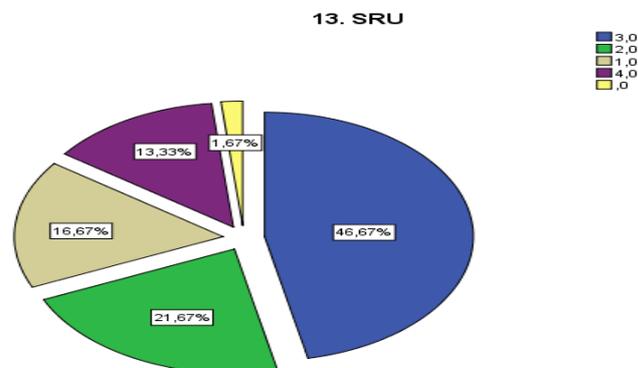
From the figure above shows that the largest share of 51.67% is corresponding to a large measure to the existence of strategic human resource management, followed by 23.33%, represented by the number of those who appreciated the existence of a its average extent.

The percentage of those who felt that it existed only to a limited extent in organizations is much lower, 16.67%.

We should mention that the last three variables mentioned in the study were using multiple items representative.

Thus, in the category human resources strategy characteristics were included following items: whether is made up of elements such as vision, mission, values, goals and resources; if materialized

into policies, plans, objectives; if derived from the overall strategy; is aligned with the overall strategy; if it supports the achievement of the overall strategy by initiating human resource activities that are aligned with business goals; it aims to create a match between human resource activities so as to be mutually supportive; human resource practices fit with the other systems in the organization (production, marketing, financial accounting, technological, informational, etc.).

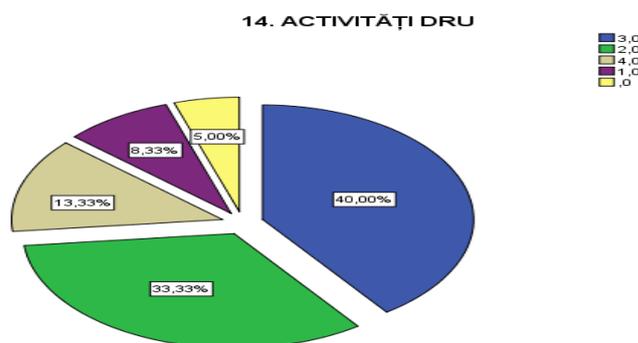


**Figure 2. Central distribution of responses on the characteristics of the human resources strategy - the perspective of respondents from companies**

*Source: own adaptation based on information sources*

Finally, by centralizing frequency response for each variant was found in general, the characteristics of the human resources strategy, most respondents (46.67%) considered a largely matching the characteristics of the human resources strategy to reality in their organizations, 21.67% chose to adopt a neutral position relative to matters analyzed, 16.67% have chosen the answer to a limited extent, and only 13.33% 1.67% full at all.

Regarding the activities of the Human Resources Department, we wanted to see given its role in organizations analyzed whether it supports the implementation of strategic human resource management, as would be natural to happen. Among the most relevant items used for this purpose they have included: whether dealing predominantly administrative, operational (personnel records, payroll, holidays, food stamps, etc.); if it is involved in all decisions of major strategic if it attach importance comparable to that of other departments; if it makes / vision for human resources; if involved in developing business strategies; if you develop human resources strategy and more.

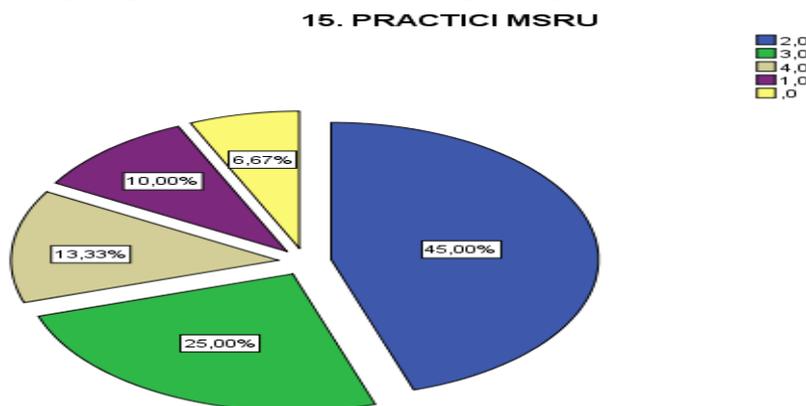


**Figure 3. General distribution of answers on the activities of the Human Resources Department - the perspective of respondents from companies**

*Source: own adaptation based on information source*

As mentioned in the above aspects, it was considered, in general, largely specificity Department of Human Resources activities with the reality of the companies surveyed (40%), an average weight of 33.33%, 13.33% of the total, 8.33% and 5% to a small extent at all.

Some human resource practices addressed strategically, ie long-term, so as to contribute to the strategic objectives were listed: techniques, procedures, tests for recruitment and selection of formal and selective, so be correctly identified candidates whose skills folds perfect business needs; programs to attract the best candidates in the firm; programs retention of the best employees in the company; talent management; providing opportunities to develop professional skills in the workplace; loyalty programs; performance management system; providing opportunity for promotion; involving employees in decision making; delegation of authority; teamwork.



**Figure 4. General distribution of answers on the extent of human resource practices address the strategic, long-term, in order to contribute to the strategic objectives - the perspective of respondents from companies**

*Source: own adaptation based on information sources*

The general trend was that of assessing respondents in an average measure of human resource practices approach strategically in order to contribute to the strategic objectives (45%).

Once the results obtained from the research, we can move to the next step, the identification of a relationship, matches between the analyzed variables and specifying its nature.

The character far too general hypothesis subject to the inquiry, "H1: The extent to which there is a strategic human resource management is linked to the characteristics of the human resources strategy, the activities of the Human Resources Department and human resource practices that support the achievement of organizational goals" it imposed its division into three sub-hypotheses:

- H1.1: The extent to which there is a strategic human resource management is linked to the characteristics of the human resources strategy;

Premises establish H1.1 hypothesis: according to the literature, the strategic human resource management involves an alignment of human resource strategy to the overall strategy of the business (vertical combination), a match between human resource activities so as to support each other (horizontal Association), creating consistency between human resource practices with other systems in the organization (organizational association). All the above listed fall into the category characteristics of the human resources strategy. So it is absolutely necessary to measure the existence of a relationship between strategic human resource management and human resources strategy features.

- H1.2: The extent to which there is a strategic human resource management is in relation to the activities of Human Resources;

Premises establish H1.2 hypothesis: the existence alongside some features of the human resources strategy, the activities they carry out different human resources department if there is strategic management of human resources in the companies analyzed. With consideration of the Human Resources Department as a strategic partner, its specific activities moves from the predominantly administrative area, which is necessary but not sufficient, to strategically area. It may be noted its involvement in major decision making in the development objectives of the company, the human resources development strategy in initiating actions that human resource strategy to support the overall strategy and more. An absence thereof, where a measure mentioned affirmative strategic management of human resources in organizations, dramatically would put into question the veracity of statements.

- H1.3: The extent to which there is a strategic human resource management is linked with the strategic use of human resources practices;

Premises establish H1.3 hypothesis: as in the case of sub-earlier assumptions in literature find the idea that to identify the presence of strategic human resource management, besides certain characteristics that must meet the human resources strategy and specific activities Human Resources Department, there must be a strategic use of human resources practices that should be taken long term in order to contribute to the strategic objectives.

Basically, the results from testing three hypotheses H1.1-H1.3 generate conclusions for the general hypothesis H1.

**Table 2. Somers' d Test –hypothesis H1.1-H1.3 testing**

			Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers'd	Symmetric	,624	,000	7,132	,000
		12. MSRU Dependent	,604	,000	7,132	,000
		13. SRU Dependent	,646	,000	7,132	,000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers'd	Symmetric	5,449	,000	5,449	,000
		12. MSRU Dependent	5,449	,000	5,449	,000
		14. ACTIVITĂȚI DRU Dependent	5,449	,000	5,449	,000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers'd	Symmetric	,476	,067	6,455	,000
		12. MSRU Dependent	,456	,070	6,455	,000
		15. PRACTICI MSRU Dependent	,498	,071	6,455	,000

Source: own adaptation based on information sources

With the Test Somers' d, yielded useful information consistency checking between variables analyzed:

- strategic human resource management and characteristics of the human resources strategy;
- strategic human resource management and the activities of Human Resources Department;
- strategic human resource management and human resource practices addressed strategically, contributing to the strategic objectives of the firm.

When testing the hypothesis H1.1, the value obtained by Somers' d, equal to 0.624, demonstrates a strong and direct relationship between the two variables and significance value Sig.=0.000 indicates that it is statistically significant.

Value of Somers' d, 5.449, resulting hypothesis H1.2 analysis demonstrates a perfect combination this time, direct and statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) between the analyzed variables.

Calculations with the test results Somers' d if H1.3 hypothesis have demonstrated a combination of average (0.476), direct and statistically significant (Sig.=0.000) between the extent of the existence of strategic human resource management and the human resource practices, approached in a strategic way.

So, as expected, the three sub-hypotheses H1.1, H1.3 confirmed. It has been shown that so far there choosing strategic human resource management in companies analyzed to determine whether the characteristics of the human resources strategy fit the reality of those organizations. Thus, it appeared that elements of strategic human resource management are reflected in practice, not just in theory.

It was also confirmed that there is a match between the measures presented strategic human resource management in companies and the characteristics of the human resources strategy.

By validating and last sub-hypotheses H1.3, it appears that the existence of strategic human resource management in companies analyzed led to the adoption of human resource practices that contribute to their strategic objectives.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Analyzing interest different approaches to the concept of "strategic human resource management" in the literature, we can mention, unequivocally, that has not yet reached a consensus on its definition, but certainly reached an agreement on the basic function. This requires thinking and implementing a set of consistent policies and practices to ensure that human capital in an organization contributes to achieving business objectives.

Over the last decade, the concept of strategic human resource management has been addressed mostly in terms of the role that it would have in achieving organizational performance and competitive advantage by aligning human resources strategy to the overall strategy of the business by proper use of the Human Resources Department and the adoption of appropriate human resources practices.

In these years, the authors write in the field more and more about the human resources strategy and the importance of its alignment with the overall strategy of the organization. It considers that it should be determined taking into account the company's objectives continuously, so as to facilitate their achievement.

However, an important role in the implementation of strategic human resource management plays and human resource practices that must be addressed strategically in the long term, so as to contribute to achieving the overarching goal, achievement of strategic objectives.

So far the strategic human resource management is considered one of the most important and influential ideas emerging in business and management. The idea that human resource is the most crucial factors one among the multitude of variables competitiveness has become a universally accepted at this time. Employees no longer considered some elements of "costs", but are seen in a different way, as "assets" of the organizations to which they belong.

Regarding the strategic human resource management in companies in the Western Region of the country, the research conducted has shown that its specific activities are found in large firms or very large in this area. It was found that investigated representatives appreciated the presence of a large measure of characteristics of human resources strategy and activities of the Human Resources Department. Only in tackling long-term human resource practices could see a change in the perception of respondents opting for an average measure of their presence in the companies they belong. This last information can certainly raise some questions. It seems that when they are in a position to respond to general questions, there is a tendency of respondents to appreciate the existence of a positive measure of the aspects investigated, but when you have to show specifically how were they implemented in practice in this case to show the extent to which human resource practices have contributed to the strategic objectives resort to adopting a neutral position, probably in order not to expose the reality that however should not be so favorable.

Regarding the hypothesis under research, it was shown that the existing measure the strategic human resource management in companies analyzed determined the choice by respondents to the same measures to value the human resources strategy and activities of the Human Resources Department and practices addressed within long. Therefore, there is a relationship between the variables analyzed, the information is positive and statistically significant.

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