

## THE GENESIS, SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSPECTIVES OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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**Abstract:** The concept of resource management, specifically human resources, its goals and its main functions, their role, meaning, the evolution of human resource management from the first forms of origin to the modern paradigms of human resources are essential for companies as well as for all modern institutions in the era of digitalization and artificial intelligence. This content is inseparable from the nature of human resources management, i.e. strategic management. In this direction, the strategic planning of human resources is of great importance, namely the analysis of the internal and external environment, the selection of a strategy for human resources and its implementation, and finally the evaluation of the strategy for the resources of selected people. Contemporary trends in this domain show that the future in terms of human resource management faces numerous challenges. The term "human resource management" can be defined as a set of functions and measures aimed at gathering and developing personnel resources for greater effectiveness and efficiency and at the same time in favor of an organization's strategy. Human resource management is a department of the company that is responsible for manpower planning (including the current inventory of human resources or the future forecast of human resources that corresponds to the needs of the organization), employment (employer himself and his tasks, analysis and evaluation of jobs), remuneration (management of remuneration and social benefits), acquisition of human resources (recruitment and selection), evaluation of the performance of resources, , training and career management but also the psychological social and cultural dimension.

**Keywords:** Human resources management, Strategic management, Digitization, Artificial intelligence, HR policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management is a modern expression regardless of the fact that the organization of labor and strategies for its efficiency are as old as ancient civilizations. In every historical era, the phenomenon of human resource management has been known under various names and forms, but it has never lost its basic essence - the efficiency of operations. Since Taylorism and Fordism, human resource management has been continuously improved, and psychology, sociology, and social policy have entered its content, and today, digitalization and artificial intelligence. Among the main missions of human resources management in this matter are the qualitative and quantitative adequacy of human resources according to the needs of the current situation, as well as the future of the organization, then integration of the goals for profitability and development of the organization with full development of human resources, and finally, optimization of the performance of human resources in order to participate in the goals of the entire organization. All these missions are influenced by several objectives that must be well developed to contribute to the achievement of the final goal of human resource management in organizations and companies. The first objective of human resource management is to attract to the organization a sufficient number of people with skills and experience. Human resource acquisition is a major activity found in intelligent workforce planning. The other goal can be called the conservation goal because this goal is equivalent to finding adequate human staff. It presupposes the inclusion of tools for the preservation of qualified human resources, the development of succession programs, programs that promote internal promotion or career management support. The next, but no less important goal is development and perspectives. Executives and managers must realize that the amount of money spent by organizations on training always tends to increase. Awareness of the importance of training as a key variable in the "personnel mix" results in increased training efforts in organizations. Such an increase is accompanied by a renewal of the organization's approach. The last two goals that affect several areas are the goals of motivating and satisfying the human potential from his workplace. In the section on the working climate, we emphasize communication between the employer and employees, as well as more frequent meetings between employers and employee representatives. In terms of remuneration, the emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the work of the employees, on the analysis of the work and the deserved remuneration. In the field of health and safety at work, the main goal is to reduce the number of accidents, to develop training and prevention programs. and to pay attention to pre-occupational diseases. Moreover, all these human resources objectives must be oriented towards greater efficiency of the organization as well as of the employees. This efficiency persists especially in the acquisition and retention of qualified human resources. It is based on controlling labor costs, achieving a high level of performance, producing good quality goods, and human resource turnover and absenteeism rates. Other elements that influence the effectiveness of the organization are, for example: the quality of life at work

that gives employees the opportunity to feel satisfied, to respect the laws and regulations that make employment fair and the environment safe for a complete and healthy staff. Modern design in human resource management perceives staff as a resource that must be optimized to the maximum.

## **2. EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES THROUGH HISTORY**

Human resources (HR) represent an essential asset in modern business management. They are the result of a long history of evolution. Their genesis went from simple management of workers to strategic functions that influenced major decisions of companies. This evolution reflects the economic, social and technological transformations that marked each era. Early work management systems date back to the time of Ancient civilizations where the first forms of organization were found. The history of human resources can be traced back to ancient Egypt, where the management of workers on pyramid construction sites was a rudimentary form of human administration management. Similarly, in Mesopotamia, work organization systems were established to distribute tasks among various artisans and workers. In these societies, although workers were often slaves, the need for effective human resource management was necessary in order to increase productivity and ensure the success of large projects. In ancient Greece, especially in Sparta, leaders took care to organize the work of agricultural slaves (Helots) to maintain the prosperity of the city. For its part, the Roman Empire also showed great efficiency in the management of its workforce, especially with the organization of armies and public workplaces. (Peretti, J-M. 2019, 10.p) Even if these approaches were not yet humanized, they laid the foundations for managing people. In the Middle Ages, in the hierarchical labor relations of feudalism, a new form of relationship emerged between the employer and the worker. The feudal lord offered housing and protection to his serfs in exchange for their work on his land. This model, though rudimentary, he introduced the idea of a contractual relationship between the manager and his workers. The management of the serfs and the craftsmen of the estates and castles can be seen as the first form of human resource management, although a limited model of the distribution of work and the maintenance of discipline was manifested personnel management revolution affirmed the emergence of the first human resources. The real turning point in the history of human resources occurred with the industrial revolution in the late 18 and early 19th century This period, marked by the mechanization of production processes and the emergence of factories, led to a massive concentration of labor in cities. Factory owners faced unprecedented challenges such as managing large numbers of workers, increasing productivity and maintaining discipline in very difficult conditions. It was in that context that the first personnel management departments appeared. Their missions were mainly disciplinary, in order to avoid social conflicts and to ensure the compliance of the employees with the factory requirements. Attention to working conditions was still minimal, and a new dynamic of workforce management was established as a separate function in companies. At the same time, the trade union movement, which began to gain momentum at the end of the 19th century, was affirmed. Unions have played a key role in defending workers' rights, demanding improved working conditions, more reasonable working hours and protection from employer abuse. The emergence of trade unions forced employers to consider collective bargaining and contributed to the structuring of social dialogue, an essential dimension of human resource management. In the 20th century: the rise of scientific management was marked by the affirmation of Taylorism and the rationalization of work. This century marked a new stage in the evolution of human resources, particularly through the works of Frederick Taylor and the introduction of scientific management. Taylorism aimed to improve productivity by breaking down tasks into simple, standardized and measurable movements.(Taylor, F. W. 1911) This approach had a great influence on the management of workers, especially in mass production industries. The early 20th century also saw the first studies of worker motivation and workplace behavior. (Peretti, J-M. 2019, 5-32, pp.) Eclectic research in the second half of the twentieth century showed that social conditions and interpersonal relationships strongly influenced productivity. Such realization gave birth to a new conception of human resources, focused not only on the management of work, but also on taking into account human needs and social dynamics. Since the 1960s, the rise of service companies and the tertiary sector shifted attention from HR to talent management. Companies began to realize that their human capital was a key resource for their success. This period saw the emergence of the first talent management strategies, with an emphasis on training, motivation and retention of qualified employees and the nineties of the 20th century this approach was consolidated with the rise of the concepts of corporate culture, management by objectives and performance evaluation a central element of business strategy, participating in value creation through skills development and management. (Lakanal, M. 2024) The beginning of the XXI century marked a step towards strategic and technological management of human resources, digitization and automation of human resources processes. This century was marked by digital transformation, which profoundly changed the way companies manage their human resources. The advent of HR software, talent management systems (TMS) and automation tools have enabled more efficient and faster management of administrative processes such as: recruitment, payroll, training and performance monitoring. (Torrez, F. 2024)

## **2. ECONOMIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM)**

Human resource management (HRM) can be defined, as a first approach, as an activity that consists of aligning the goals of the organization and those of the members that make it up. Thus, HRM denotes both a function in the company and a process of analysis, decision-making and control. Thus, the very expression "human resource management", now generally accepted in organizational circles, immediately raises a series of questions. The association of the terms "management" and "human resources" is not only obvious: can we talk about human "resources" in the same way as technical, financial, material resources, etc.? Can these resources be "managed" in the same way as managing a portfolio of stocks, an information system, or a production tool? Without really questioning the very notion of HRM, these debates reflect the evolution of theoretical conceptions and practical concerns in the field: from the aggregate function responsible for the administration of personnel in organizations, HRM today it has become a complex, even strategic function. The evolution of HRM goes through several main stages, each of which corresponds to different visions and practices. The main stages of human resource management are those starting from personnel administration to human relations. The first half of the 20th century was marked by the productive models of Taylorism and then Fordism. Initially, in these models, there was no function assigned to staff. The entrepreneur, assuming responsibility for several rudimentary and essential administrative aspects of the mission such as payment of cash wages, layoffs and layoffs, on-the-job training, performed these work tasks. It was in the post-war period that the "personnel administration" function was organized and bureaucratized in the largest companies, under the pressure of the trade unions, on the one hand, and the all-important legislation, on the other hand. From the 1950s to the 1970s, and as a reaction to the social compromise established around the Fordist model, the lessons of work and the teachings of human relations, under the leadership of Elton Mayo, otherwise an Australian psychologist, gradually spread in companies. From numerous experiments Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) at the General Electric plant in Illinois General Electric - Illinois came to the realization that workplace behavior, which until then was mainly explained through monetary incentives, also depended on psychological factors. Psychological dimensions referred to the connection and relations of the employee with other members of the group to which they belonged, then to the management style of the manager, to the desire for recognition, etc. The function was then oriented, under the direct influence of this work, to "human relations" by developing training for executives and supervisors in all aspects of leadership, internal communication and interpersonal relations. This dimension was joined by social development. This orientation was caused in the 1970s by the socio-technical movement, initiated at the Tavistock Institute, in the study of human relations and the consulting organization created in 1947 in London. This current, which developed under the impetus of the work of psychosociologists Frederick Emery and Eric Trist, (Frederick Emery and Erick Trist) advocated "social development" that focused on the increased autonomy of organizations, the improvement of working conditions, and the empowerment of individuals. The implementation of these principles will be facilitated, at the end of the 1970s, by the development of information technologies in productive systems. (Torres, F. 2024)

## **3. THE INFLUENCE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND GLOBALIZATION**

Since the 1990s, the advent of new technologies and the acceleration of globalization have radically transformed human resource practices. This twin phenomenon has forced companies to rethink the way they manage talent, organize work and integrate technological advances into their HR processes. The human resources department was entrusted with increasingly complex missions, which required rapid adaptation to new tools and new global challenges. One of the first major breakthroughs was the introduction of human resource management software (or HRIS, for human resources information systems). These tools have made it possible to automate much of the traditional administrative tasks, such as payroll management, absence tracking, and even performance appraisals. This digitization of HR functions freed up both space and time to focus on higher value-added activities such as skills development and talent management. Pioneering companies, such as SAP or Oracle, offer integrated solutions that facilitate workforce management at scale. At the same time, globalization is changing the structure of companies, which are becoming more and more international. HR now has to deal with geographically dispersed teams, different cultures and different local regulations. Managing international mobility has become a key issue, as has the ability of companies to attract and retain talent in a globalized and highly competitive environment. This complexity has forced HR to adopt more flexible strategies and use remote management tools to guarantee team cohesion and optimize productivity. New technologies have also enabled HR to closely monitor employee performance through key performance indicators (KPI) and HR data analysis. This evolution towards managing more data is transforming the way decisions are made. Artificial intelligence is starting to play a key role in the automation of certain tasks, especially in recruitment processes. Algorithms could now sort through thousands of applications in seconds, uncover promising profiles and analyze specific skills, making recruiters' jobs easier.

However, this digital transformation also posed a serious challenge to companies. Employee well-being and quality of work life have become central concerns. Human resources have had to take care of digitalization so that it does not disturb the balance between work and life, especially with the rise of remote work and online communication tools. Companies are trying to adopt more inclusive policies and develop work environments where technologies promote collaboration and employee development. Finally, in a globalized and interconnected world, companies face growing challenges regarding diversity and inclusion. Human resources play a key role in the implementation of policies aimed at promoting equal opportunities, combating discrimination and creating work environments that respect all differences. (Hassani Idrissi, R. 2023)

#### **4. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

At the beginning of the 21st century, the field of human resources faces new challenges that essentially redefine its role in companies. These contemporary issues, which go beyond simply administrative management, touch on various dimensions such as employee well-being, work-life balance and corporate social responsibility. The changing expectations of employees and organizations are pushing HR to adopt a more human-centered approach while remaining a lever for performance. One of the top priorities for HR today is managing employee well-being. Numerous studies have shown that satisfied and fulfilled employees with relaxation, empathy are more productive and creative. Therefore, companies strive to create work environments that promote this balance. For example, initiatives that promote quality of work life (QVT) include flexible working hours, pleasant workspaces and more flexible telecommuting policies. These measures aim to respond to the new aspirations of employees, especially the younger generations, who attach increasing importance to their personal balance. At the same time, diversity and inclusion have emerged as strategic issues for companies. (Chollet, M. 2007/8) Globalization and societal transformations have made team diversity essential for the success of companies in a global environment. Therefore, HR must ensure that every employee, regardless of their background, gender or beliefs, feels respected and integrated into the organization. The fight against discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities are now at the heart of the HR policies of large companies. Wage policies are another modern issue. Faced with an increasingly skilled and informed workforce, companies must implement fair and transparent compensation systems. Equal pay between men and women, for example, is a particularly sensitive issue. Human resources play a key role here to guarantee the implementation of fair and attractive structures, in line with the company's performance objectives. Finally, the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has established itself as an essential axis of human resource strategies. Companies today are judged not only by their economic performance, but also by their environmental and social impact. Therefore, HR must ensure that HR management practices support the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes establishing continuing education programs focused on ethics, the environment and responsible cooperation. Companies that manage to align their HR policies with their social responsibilities strengthen their appeal to talent and customers. These contemporary issues underscore the importance of HR being more than ever a strategic partner in a company's overall success. Human resources are no longer limited to the day-to-day management of personnel, they actively participate in building a sustainable and efficient vision for the future of organizations.

#### **5. TOWARDS THE MODERN ERA OF DIGITALIZATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

As we enter a new era marked by rapid technological advances, human resources are on the verge of even deeper transformations. The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), big data and increasingly sophisticated digital tools are redefining the contours of the HR role, which is evolving towards more predictable, automated and personalized management. Artificial intelligence has already begun to disrupt certain aspects of human resource management, particularly in recruitment processes. (Geuze, F. 2022, 22, p.) Thanks to powerful algorithms, companies can now sort through hundreds of CVs in seconds, identify the most promising profiles and analyze behavioral data to predict compatibility of candidates with company culture. These innovations save considerable time and improve recruitment efficiency. However, they also raise ethical questions regarding the transparency and fairness of decisions made by automated systems. At the same time, big data enables departments for HR to make more informed decisions based on tangible data. By collecting and analyzing information about employee performance, satisfaction levels or even work dynamics within teams, HR can predict skills needs, identify risks from turnover and adjust their strategies in time. This shift towards predictive management strengthens the ability of human resources to anticipate future challenges and propose proactive solutions, aligned with the company's strategic goals. The future of HR also looks set to be marked by increased personalization of career paths. Today's employees, and even more tomorrow's, want customized work experiences, tailored to their aspirations and their lifestyles. Therefore, human resources must develop flexible policies, able to meet individual expectations, while at the same time guaranteeing consistency within the organization. (De Santis M.2020) This includes adapted continuous

training offers, personalized career paths and more fluid management of internal mobility. The other growing area is digital HR, with the integration of remote technologies for communication and collaboration. Remote work, which has become widespread with the COVID-19 pandemic, has shown the need to rethink the organization of work and adopt appropriate digital tools. Human resources play a key role here in supporting this transition, ensuring that team cohesion and productivity remain optimal despite physical distance. Finally, this new era of HR is part of a context increasingly focused on ethics and transparency. Companies today must be held accountable not only for their financial results, but also for their commitment to promoting a work environment that respects employee rights, is inclusive and responsible. Human resources are therefore at the crossroads between technological innovation and social responsibility, an essential balance to ensure the sustainability of companies in a changing world. Thus, the human resources of tomorrow will be more technological, more personalized, but also more human, with an even more central role in the strategy and success of companies. (Etico Coseil 2023)

## 6. CONCLUSION

The history of human resources is a history of continuous adaptation to economic, social and technological change. From work management in ancient civilizations to the modern challenges of digital technology, talent and diversity, HR has become an essential strategic lever for companies. In 2024 and beyond, they will continue to evolve by integrating new technologies while maintaining their primary mission: to improve and support human capital. Digitalization has also paved the way for more flexible working practices, such as telecommuting. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this transition. Companies around the world have had to adapt to new remote work arrangements, profoundly transforming human resource management practices. The development of collaborative and remote management tools made it possible to maintain activity while guaranteeing some continuity of human resources missions. Current and future challenges with human resources also impose several imperatives. In 2024, HR continued to play a key role in organizations, but they also had to face new challenges. Among these challenges, we can mention: • AI and automation: artificial intelligence technologies make it possible to automate many human resources tasks, such as sorting applications or analyzing performance. However, this raises the question of preserving the human dimension in employee management. • Managing diversity and inclusion: companies are increasingly aware of the importance of promoting diversity in their teams. HR must ensure it creates inclusive environments where everyone can thrive. • Employee well-being: with mental health and burnout issues on the rise, HR needs to play a major role in managing well-being at work, by implementing policies to support psychological and preventive psychosocial risks. • Changing work arrangements: Remote and hybrid models are here to stay. Companies must adapt their HR policies to effectively manage remote teams while maintaining strong team cohesion and employee engagement.

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