KNOWLEDGE BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE ROMANIAN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

VLĂSCEANU Cristina [1], DRĂGHICI Mircea [2]

[1] *The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania*
[2] *The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania*

Abstract:

This paper analyses the concepts and elements related to the knowledge-based management, in the military organizations. The purpose of the article is to present certain characteristics of the knowledge based organization and management, and to observe how (and to what extent) does knowledge based management relate to military organizations; and in what, achievable and beneficial ways, did they influence each other, and what are the properties and features that easily transferable from one concept to the other. For a better analysis, I believed that an observation of a particular case study – Romanian military organizations pre and post 1989 was necessary, to better highlight certain aspects. Also, it is interesting to see how knowledge management can increase military capabilities and performance, and nonetheless which are the factors which influence this correlation. And lastly, the most essential observed element is the one that relates knowledge management to military organizations, and "what they are learning from each other".

---

[1] *PhD Student The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, crysthina2003@yahoo.com*

[2] *PhD Student The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, dr_mircea@yahoo.com*

1. **Introduction**

Each organization has its own way of development, based on a conduct that could hardly replicated by another organization. This behavior combines organizational, functional and technological skills and capabilities, perfected in time, through the accumulation and application of new knowledge. This is included in the organizational culture of any company. The same can be said about military organizations.

2. **The specific characteristics of knowledge based management and knowledge based organization**

The organization generally refers to a particular social framework which consists of members of a society which have common preset goals. The main purpose of the organization is to achieve its goals by satisfying its own group interests. All of the members' resources are used for the making of goods specific to the business of the organization. Nowadays organizations focus on deep knowledge of the organizational staff. This includes a better understanding of the behaviors of each group, separate and whole. This knowledge ensures the performance of the organization, through the achievement of objectives. In this way, the organization stimulates values, performance and the creativity of its individuals. Knowledge-based organization helps expand, deepen explicit and implicit knowledge, by also using knowledge management. At its base are several levels of knowledge: codified knowledge - information, common knowledge - standard social skills - interpersonal, cultural embed tacit knowledge, individual skills.

Knowledge based organization brings forward the collective competence and the action of efficiency and performance, confirmed by time and sustainable. For this to be viable, it must be based on priority activities to create new knowledge, making them more easily assimilated by its members and last but not least to know how to share information and knowledge (managerial know-how transfer). As a golden rule for the knowledge-based organization are: innovation, learning and interactivity.

Compared to a control, rigor and authority-based organization - where activities are predictable, programmed, have organizational form and content, with routine and reactive behaviours in case of failure, the knowledge based organization is also producing intangible assets, stimulating the skills that lead

to performance, engaged in projects, open to change management, stimulating a creative, customized, strategic environment, and ultimately is characterized by active behaviours.

In a knowledge-based organization the dominant type of organizational relationship multi-relational collaboration. Internal coordination of the organization is given by professional communities, which due to the stimulatory effects of the working environment, it self-organizes itself through learning. In this way the autonomy of organizational actors is high, with a proactive behavior towards development.

3. Knowledge management, changes and military organizations – case study: Romania pre and post 1989

Changes may occur in terms of knowledge, attitude, individual or group behaviour. Usually when the environment changes people in organizations change to. This is because the environment seeps into the organization, marking it. In situations where rapid unexpected changes occur, both in the external environment and in the environment of the organization, some persons can not manage the situation and they "crash". On the other hand, information technology can upset the role of the organization, the role of management is to plan and implement change strategies. For a change to be approved, people should be informed, trained, motivated and encouraged, as imposed change is felt as unpleasant. The approaches to change are two: planned and unplanned change.

The management of change is a complex, dynamic and challenging process rather than a set of recipes. In most examples of successful change management, those responsible have developed clear and shared visions of where they are going and have linked these to implementation strategies designed to produce the desired results [1].

An organization is required to match their structure according to its environment and strategy. In doing so it may have its own constraints and may choose to adopt incremental internal change [2]. This can also be the case of military institutions, where, in order to be knowledge-based, change has to happen, and it has to be managed properly.

The knowledge-based organization must be able to apply substantial knowledge, when and where is needed, to effect organizational goals. However, knowledge is not evenly distributed through the organization, so

rapid and efficient knowledge flow is critical to enterprise performance. The larger, more geographically dispersed, and time-critical an enterprise, the more important knowledge flow becomes in terms of efficacy [3]. Military organizations are included in this category.

With the evolution of social life, the military organization appeared. Like the organization from the civil environment, it consists of members that develop activities common to their goals. Depending on the specific requirements, it is based on a series of subdivisions, which multiply from top to base. The statutes and roles of each individual are well defined, seeking to ensure order, security and national defense.

The relationship underlying a military organization is generally a formal one. Each member of the military organization must follow strict military regulation, and interior law and order – which differ from one organization to another. The military uniform, military ranks, insignia and conduct, authority, power and influence harden, the official/formal aspect gaining great importance.

In the military organization, the subordination is made vertically (top to down). The underlying principle that sits at the base of management is command, which has the purpose of increasing internal order and discipline, and by default organizational cohesion. It is founded on criteria that take into account abilities, personality, capacities and the level of devotion of its militaries. To fulfill military missions, military organizations have to be seen as an open, rational and natural system. Thus, a proper management must take into account: the influence of institutional forces that intervene both in the informational and energetic exchange with the military organization's external environment, as well as with its internal players; their individual effects upon the processes specific to the military organization.

The institutional external environment can influence the military organization in various ways. The army includes many actors with internal institutional roles. Also, the social environment shapes the specific traits of the military institutions.

In order to better highlight the above mentioned, following there will be a small case study of Romania, where, before 1989, the politic regime was dictatorial, centralized, without the separation of powers. Institutions and organization (and here, the military organization, made no exception) were state controlled, being socially conformed. Also, personal connections of organization leaders with influential people from the state apparatus were a

complementary institutional method of ensuring the external legitimacy of their organizations. Poor functional autonomy and reduced ability to influence their own environment did not allow staff to claim their own interests and goals.

The military organization had a pretty stable organizational structure and staffing, especially in terms of the body frame. In the center of its hierarchical structure was placed the authority of the commander. At least formally, all the members of the organization were unconditionally subordinated to him. The ways in which decisions were made was stipulated in the internal regulations, it was basically an institution of the commander. Besides the main task of political control, the party structure from the military units also had responsibilities to manage social problems of the staff. Internally, the behavior of militaries was supported by the existence of a fairly stable organizational culture, in which the basic ideas were: military hierarchy, military training, the superiority of the officers and the idea that the army was the guarder of national interests [4].

After the revolution of 1989, the political regime was starting to be democracy, which also attracted a large process of social change (reforms, market economy, etc.). This led to the empowerment of key areas of social life from the central administration. After the diversification of institutional influence s in the beginning, both policy and civil society began to gradually move their focus nationwide. Although immediately after the revolution, the military institution was facing with an identity crisis, gradually the leadership of the military organization reacted in the sense of restoring an optimal level of legitimacy.

Changes in the military organization also had at their foundation, issues of redefining military missions, in the context of political changes at regional level; redefining the role and place of the army in society; reorientation of management within the military organization. The measures that were taken implied the establishment of the current military organization, of its management structures, of its internal relationships between subordinates, and of its relationship with society. Although at a slow pace, the Romanian military organization was able to become more isomorphic with the armies of the NATO states, to which it oriented with predilection. From this point of view, the army (military organizations) can be considered to have registered a step towards a knowledge based renewal.

The main characteristics of the military organization are centered on

national values, the people's best interest being the most important, in relation to other elements.

As shown before, the military organization has direct influence upon the external institutional agents. After the institutional post revolution crisis, it was observed that an authoritarian managerial system is inferior to one that has as principles: negotiation, objectivity, coherence, continuance. Therefore, the quality of managerial act is of great importance.

To know is to innovate, and in a knowledge based organization, the formalism and strict hierarchical control must be diminished. In comparison to the Romanian military organization, which, until not so long ago used to be rigid and not too open to innovation, but along with its integration in NATO it oriented towards a change, beneficial both to itself and to the society; A civil organization finds it much easier to transform into a knowledge based organization and towards a knowledge based management. But the managerial act – in both cases – must be based on the elaboration of a strategic vision and of facilitation of actions coordinated by competent and co operant actors, who take self responsibility, including in terms of decisional aspects. Thus the separation between management and execution become irrelevant.

Once the military institutions will try to know this style of management, managers of these organizations will become more carriers of conceptual responsibility, i.e. better said, they will design the structure of systems, they will validate proposed solutions, and they will ratify proposals instead of being carriers of the administrative power.

The military should adapt its model of management to that of the knowledge management style. The commander must be more flexible, combining from case to case, the ability of moderator, mentor, facilitator, and promoter of military discipline and regulation, from which he can not depart. The role of a good knowledge based manager is: knowing how to encourage his subordinates to seek knowledge, to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge in their specific environment. To knowing how to transmit these managerial ideas, he himself must have a behavior centered on learning, innovation and dissemination. Also, of great importance is the responsibility of the manager/commander to act in the interest of organizational knowledge, pursuing the skills of the staff and sharing knowledge. A manager, whether he is formal (military institutions) or informal, should be encouraged and rewarded for behavior centered on knowledge, and especially for there to be a feedback, a recognition of its tactical behavior from its members.

Military institutions should begin pilot projects, of transformation of their organizations in knowledge based ones. They should consider training, strategic plans that include different stages of transformation, more or less visible. Therefore, managers which will be involved in these types of projects must understand that proactive engagement of the actors in this process can be obtained only by creating a permissive and transparent organization framework, the use of incentives and appropriate value systems, fostering innovation, learning, and active sharing of knowledge [5].

A knowledge based military organization implies the existence of military professionals.

The strategies to promote military professionalism are as follows: recruiting talents with different backgrounds; valuing professional technology; perfecting professional education; implementing efficient specialized training; executing the division of specialties; creating a thorough continuing learning system; and establishing a license system [6].

The military is a competencies-based, mission-oriented organization, which is operational in nature. Hence, operational knowledge is the very essence of the military [7].

A different opinion was that of David K. Banner and T. Élaine Gagné, who in their book from 1995, "Designing Effective Organizations. Traditional and Transformational Views", said that: "In the military, unquestioning obedience is an essential attribute; given that the hierarchical, bureaucratic organization that has dominated the industrial age was modeled after the military organization, it had seemed to follow that positional power was the route to achieve compliance. However, the more knowledge based a society becomes, the more impotent a power system based on mere position becomes" [8].

4. Conclusions

From the above presented it results that to determine the adoption by all members of an organization - more difficult for the military subordinated to the military institutions – of that knowledge centered behavior that is a difficult process to put into practice, even impossible in some military organizations where prioritization and execution orders from superiors are rigorous. But, there where the process starts, all the factors, which might be disruptive in terms of future steps, must be taken into account. Issues as

budget plans, technology, strategy, evaluation, rewards, etc. are some that can unbalance the smooth running, if not closely correlated to the reality of the organization, even in the case of a military one.

5. References

[1] Paton, R., McCalman, J., Change Management: A Guide to Effective Implementation, Sage Publishing, 2000, p. 3.

[2] Sharma, Radha R., Change Management: Concepts and Applications, McGraw-Hill Education, 2006, p.

[3] Gupta, Jatinder (ed.), Creating knowledge based organizations, Hershey, USA, Idea Group Inc., 2004, p. 186.

[4] Nicolae, C., Schimbarea organizatiei militare, Bucuresti, Editura Tritonic, 2004.

[5] Vlasceanu, M., Psihologia organizatiilor si conducerii, Bucharest, Paideia, 1993, p.

[6] Global Investment and Business Center, Taiwan Foreign Policy and Government Guide, Washington DC, International Business Publications, 2011, p. 250.

[7] Schwartz, D.G., Encyclopedia of Knowledge Management, UK, Idea Group Inc., 2006, p. 714.

[8] Banner, David K., Gagné, T. Élaine, Designing Effective Organizations. Traditional and Transformational Views, London, UK, Sage Publications Ltd., 1995, p. 312.