



**ULBS**

Universitatea "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ORGANISATION OF  
DOCTORAL AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES IN  
SIBIU

Doctoral field: MANAGEMENT

**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**CONTRIBUTIONS REGARDING HUMAN  
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

**SUMMARY**

PhD student:

Eng. CORINA NICOGLU (married CIURARU)

Scientific supervisor:

PhD Univ. Prof. Eng. DOINA BANCIU

SIBIU, 2020





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## KEYWORDS

Management of Human Resources, Public Libraries, Librarians, Informational Society, Digitalisation, Professional training, Labour Market

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	<b>American Libraries Association</b>
ANBPR	<b>Asociația Națională a Bibliotecarilor și Bibliotecilor Publice din România</b> <i>(National Association of Public Librarians and Libraries of Romania)</i>
BCS/BNaR	<b>Biblioteca Centrală de Stat / Biblioteca Națională României</b>
BCU	<b>Biblioteca Centrală Universitară Carol I</b> <i>(Carol I Central University Library)</i>
HRM	<b>Human Resource Management</b>
IA/AI	<b>Inteligență Artificială/Artificial Intelligence</b>
ICI	<b>Institutul Național de Cercetare-Dezvoltare în Informatică</b> <i>(National Institute for Research and Development in Informatics)</i>
IFLA	<b>International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions</b>
IHRM	<b>Intelligent Human Resource Management</b>
INCFC	<b>Institutul Național pentru Cercetare și Formare Culturală</b> <i>(National Institute for Cultural Research and Training)</i>
INS	<b>Institutul Național de Statistică</b> <i>(National Institute of Statistics)</i>
IoT	<b>Internet of Things</b>
GDPR	<b>General Data Protection Regulation</b>
LIS	<b>Library and Information Science</b>
MOOC	<b>Massive Open Online Course</b>
MRU	<b>Managementul Resurselor Umane</b> <i>(Human Resources Management)</i>
OCLC	<b>Online Computer Library Center</b>
STEAM	<b>Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics</b>
TIC/IT&C	<b>Tehnologia Informației și a Comunicațiilor/Information Technology and Communications</b>
UNIMARC	<b>Universal Machine Readable Cataloging</b>



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## **I. MOTIVATION AND IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH**

The society is evolving rapidly, information progress is sometimes difficult to anticipate, and libraries, millennial institutions, are constantly facing unprecedented challenges. The management of a library must be harmonized with the analysis of users' needs, with the tendencies of the knowledge society and strategic planning. How can we build a management strategy adapted to these times? But, especially, how can human resources in libraries can be managed in an era of digitalization, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, robotics, etc.? What new skills should a 21st century librarian develop? Is the library an attractive job for the younger generation? These are only a few questions this paper aims to answer.

The topic of this doctoral thesis was outlined by the author's interest to apply a human resources management as efficiently as possible in public libraries, on a scientific basis, in order to increase performance and obtain much better specific indicators. However, following the documentation carried out, it was observed that, although there is sufficient specialized literature, librarianship, in terms of human resources and their management in such institutions there are no in-depth references, but only some information. The researches of the authors included in the studied bibliography who made efforts in the study of library services management, library leadership or other management papers were useful and appreciated, but most of them don't deepen aspects regarding the employees of Romanian libraries, the importance of the team in obtaining special professional results and that a good management also refers to the efficient formation and organization of the human resources of the organization. Romanian public libraries, with of a great desire to prove their usefulness at a time when people are very easily attracted to other ways of information, make substantial efforts to redefine their role and mission so as to meet the needs of communities they serve. Sometimes, in this vital challenge for these institutions, is neglected the fact that changes are made with funds and facilities, but mostly with people.



Therefore, it becomes necessary a paper that presents aspects related to modern human resources management, future directions to which it is heading for, advanced techniques of professional training or various analyzes of the evolution of the librarian profession in the context of the digital society, considerations supported by an empirical research based on sufficient statistical data so as to obtain an ample “picture” regarding the activity of the professionals from the Romanian public libraries.

In addition to the data collected, the experience of over 20 years in the management structures of a Romanian public library, as chairman or member of dozens of employment and promotion commissions, but also as chairman of the Professional Training Commission of the National Association of Public Librarians and Libraries of Romania (ANBPR) also contributed. The information gathered proved useful in interpreting the data and drawing conclusions.

Thus, the research started between 2017 - 2020 highlights some of the realities of the Romanian public library system as a first step towards identifying solutions, where appropriate.

The **purpose** of this paper is to present, based on documentation and research, considerations on human resource management in Romanian public libraries related to technological and digital evolution.

The main functions of human resources management constituted the criteria for ordering information and related to them it was identified, according to the results obtained, what is the situation of personnel in the Romanian public libraries. Also, by interpreting these data, information about the role that human resources management has in the development of a public library is obtained. The obtained results offer the possibility to formulate pertinent conclusions regarding personnel recruitment, motivation, professional training, etc. Although there is a relevant amount of information: 7 questionnaires, hundreds of respondents, dozens of correlated variables in 36 tables and 66 graphs, the research will continue after the publication of this thesis and will supplement the existing data, because the evolution over a longer period of time may lead to more precise conclusions. Some of the information obtained during the documentation and research of this paper has already been included in various presentations and articles, and their dissemination will continue.

The presented results are a useful working tool for human resources specialists from libraries, managers, librarians and various professional commissions within ANBPR.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The **overall objective** is to increase the performance of the management applied in the library system. Being in solidarity with the professionals from these institutions and with the mission assumed by the modern libraries in the information society, we want to contribute to the increasement of the quality of the services offered in the Romanian libraries, by offering efficient management solutions.

The **specific objectives** are the following:

### **O1 The importance of human resources management in public libraries**

*Hypothesis:* There is no human resources management in Romanian libraries.

Regarding the human resources management adapted to the requirements of the information society, in Romania there are no direct studies on this topic. There is a lot of specialized literature dedicated to organizational library management and overall human resources management, but insufficient about the one applied to the library system. Maybe this is the reason why some libraries use their personnel inefficiently, as they are demotivated, sometimes poorly prepared, there are all kinds of differences in approach from library to library, different interpretations, etc. Libraries still cannot afford specialized human resource managers to develop effective strategies. If, however, there are people who have in the job description some specific attributions of human resources, they do not integrate in the results of their work the concepts of the knowledge society towards modern libraries must head, because they are usually not part of the category of specialized personnel, they have only administrative skills. Ideally, the two types of training, librarianship and management, should be found in the professional skills of the one who develops the human resources strategy.

### **O2 Personnel recruitment: identifying the level of interest that the profession of librarian has among young people**

*Hypothesis:* Young people are not attracted to a career in the public library.

The dynamics of the labour market is beginning to be dictated by the new generations, called by sociologists: X, Y, Z etc. They have different needs and interests. It is very important for employers to know and offer to these young people what they want. For the library, as an organization, the task is twofold, and the way of solving it determines the very future of this institution: these young people can become employees of tomorrow or future

beneficiaries of library services. There is a fear justified by the fact that the book is being read less and less on traditional media and that young people are more attracted to activities involving technology and innovation. At the moment, the library is not an attractive option for young people, this emerging from the results of the questionnaires applied to high school students and which are detailed in the following chapters of this paper. For this reason, but also because the birth rate is declining, the labour mobility is increasing and specialized faculties are reduced, the libraries will face a lack of specialties. On the other hand, libraries benefit from some advantages that must be used: the diversity of activities, creativity and work in an environment that urges study, training, information. It is the responsibility of managers and human resources specialists to evaluate and develop appropriate strategies in this regard. These reasons were the basis for the desire to research and identify solutions to these problems.

### **O3 Identifying the training needs and the importance of implementing modern methods of continuous professional training. Evaluating the efficiency of professional training in establishing employee performance**

*Hypothesis:* In Romania, the professional training of library employees doesn't achieve its purpose.

The appropriate learning environment depends on three factors: *human resource management, information technology infrastructure and communication*. We select the right people in order to achieve the desired objectives, we use modern and fast training methods, but also databases with information that can be used later in the learning process and, last but not least, we create the possibility for employees to communicate professionally long enough with each other so as to ensure the exchange of important ideas and knowledge.

Thus, starting from the above sentences, it is understandable why it is so important to pay attention to continuous professional training and why it is necessary to ensure that the employees of a library are permanently included in more or less formal training programs which, in the end, will add value to the institution.

Creating a professional training program in a public library adapted to the information society is a complex mission. There are multiple studies that present the new valences of the librarian profession, such a professional must have more skills than a few decades ago and those responsible for the professional training of employees must take into account not only

these, but also the trends towards libraries are heading so as to prepare training programs that are appropriate and truly effective. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to analyze the providers and the training programs compared to the need for professional training expressed by the library personnel with execution and leadership role.

#### **O4 Identifying the right job for each employee according to training and work style**

*Hypothesis:* The professional satisfaction of an employee in a public library is not directly proportional to work performance.

The specialty literature shows that professional performance, sometimes in a certain organizational context, is not directly related to the professional satisfaction of the employee. Moreover, there are researches that claim that “extreme aspects (very low and very high) of professional performance lead to low professional satisfaction, while average professional performance gives employees the predisposition to feel professional satisfaction.” (Balaş Timar Rad & Lile, 2016) This research highlights the reasons why library employees are dissatisfied and what are the factors on which the solution of this problem depends. This is of interest to human resources practitioners, because the principle according to which a "happy employee is a productive employee" is not fully supported by researchers. For this reason, we have to go deeper and study each organization in all aspects related to management, leadership and organizational culture.

#### **O5 Motivating and strengthening team spirit**

*Hypothesis:* In Romanian libraries, employee motivation and teamwork techniques are not applied.

This objective is related to the above. Professional satisfaction can also be obtained by applying appropriate motivational techniques, either by material reward or by various other practices related to indirect motivation. The research has shown that, in addition to direct compensation, other methods such as flexible working hours, supporting the career of employees, feedbacks obtained at balanced time intervals, etc. can be used. (Zaharia, 2009)

The questionnaire for public librarians (Q2) aims to collect information about what motivates or demotivates library employees in their workplace. Also, some information will be taken from the questionnaire dedicated to non-specific library services (Q6).

## **O6 Diversification of services for the public**

*Hypothesis:* The libraries that focus only on traditional services don't have motivated and involved personnel and neither special results.

In the last decade, in the Romanian libraries have appeared various and new, non-specific, services based on real needs identified among the communities. Their creation had several causes: they were taken from the successful models of libraries outside Romania, which have an incomparably higher degree of use, the libraries changed their mission and added the role of relationship to the role of book trading, through which the librarian places more emphasis on the user and his desires. These transformations implicitly had an effect on the library employee and the work environment. Whether the changes were beneficial or not is demonstrated by the responses to the questionnaire dedicated to the analysis of these non-specific library services (Q6). The data included also the statistical information that libraries report to the National Institute of Statistics, these being indirect sources of research.

## **O7 Involvement of personnel in the managerial/decision-making process, division of responsibility - leadership analysis**

*Hypothesis:* Library managers don't share responsibilities with their employees.

Alka Bhatnagar, U.S. Diplomat, Former Regional Public Engagement Specialist at U.S. The Department of State presents what skills a 21st century librarian should have:

- a **visionary** leader with a strong commitment to the public service he supports;
- skills to work with people, to build **partnerships** and communicate with users;
- **management** skills to deliver optimal results with limited resources (Bhatnagar, 2013)

From the above it can be seen how important leadership skills are for a librarian and, moreover, for a library manager. Every librarian, at work, must demonstrate leadership qualities, because he relates to people, colleagues or the public, he has to organize activities of the most diverse and to implement various projects, alone or in partnership.

On the other hand, many of the good results of a library are directly related to the way the manager leads his team. One thing is very important and must be validated through this research: **leadership is not an attribute intended solely for the managers, each employee can become an informal leader** if he is involved in various professional initiatives, has

permanent contributions in the field, makes time for new projects, is open to innovation, thinks holistically, has an overview, shares everything he does, etc.

### **O8 Identifying ways and *good practices* that can be implemented to achieve a performant human resources management in libraries**

The carried out questionnaires approach very diverse fields from the activity of public libraries employees. They collect data from people of very different environments, with different professional training and that answer questions from across the spectrum of a library's specific activity. Therefore, the results are generating multiple conclusions, which concern all the functions of human resources management. We want to fully exploit this and to provide an overview as complete as possible by identifying practices, working models that should be promoted or avoided in the activity of libraries.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research with a view to achieving the doctoral thesis is conceived on two levels: theoretical and practical. The theoretical research is presented in detail in the first part of the doctoral thesis and consists in the documentation necessary to scientific substantiation and familiarization of the reader with the chosen subject. This is based on the study of the specialized bibliography consisting of books, periodicals, studies, articles in printed and electronic format. It was also used the possibility offered by the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu to search for useful information on the national electronic access platform to the scientific literature ANELIS PLUS. The platforms for researchers ResearchGate and Academia.edu were used for the same purpose, respectively to access as many scientific articles as possible. The organization and systematization of useful information was done through the Mendeley computer application.

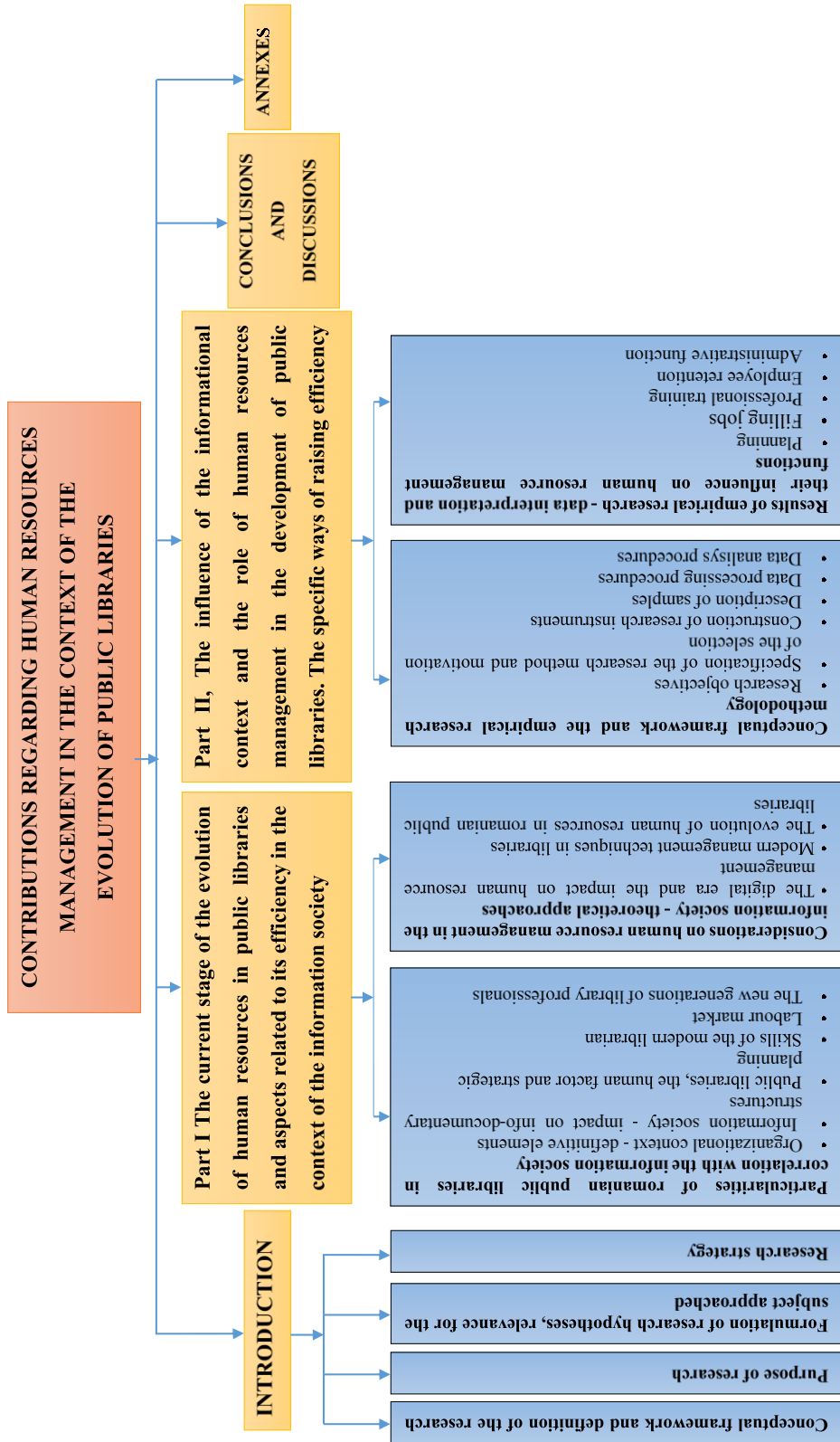
The second part of the doctoral thesis is dedicated to empirical research undertaken to confirm or disprove, as appropriate, the research hypotheses formulated above as specific research objectives.

For the empirical research, the following methodology was applied:

- **Sampling:** the following categories of respondents were taken into account

- **Specialized personnel from the Romanian public libraries:** from urban or rural environment, from several age categories or professional training
  - **Public library managers**
  - **Young people (pupils and students)** who follow social and human specializations in high schools and faculties and are likely to pursue a career in a library
  - **Librarians from the County Library “Panait Istrati” Brăila,** extremely useful especially for the preliminary testing phase of the questionnaires
- **Questioning:** were used quantitative methods based on the survey in which the main tool was the questionnaire built on multiple choice questions. Thus, a number of seven questionnaires (Q1-Q7) were carried out, which were distributed to respondents in person or online (via the Google Drive platform). They were used sporadically, in order to support and confirm the information obtained by quantitative and qualitative methods, respectively the interview and the case study. The questionnaires are explained in detail in the subchapter dedicated to the description of the structure of these questionnaires and are annexed to the doctoral thesis.
- The **interpretation** is based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results derived from the processing of the questionnaires. Computer tools and applications were used to process the data: IBM-SPSS and, if applicable, Microsoft Excel. To these data were added a series of qualitative information obtained through interviews made with various colleagues in libraries, observations collected from professional experience gained over time, etc. The interpretation has the role to validate or not the initial research hypotheses and to provide information on the proposed objectives.
- **Conclusions and future research directions:** this stage constitutes the last part of the doctoral thesis and represents the author's personal contribution to the study of human resources management in the context of the evolution of the library system. Also, because the subject is far from being exhausted, the ways in which the research is disseminated and continued have been specified.

# IV. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER





## V. SYNTHETIC PRESENTATION OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

The presentation of the results of the empirical research cannot be complete, if there is no prior documentation to present the current state of human resources evolution in public libraries correlated with aspects related to HRM efficiency in the context of the information society and the digital age. For this reason, the paper is divided into two parts, the documentation of the subject and the research itself.

**Part I The current stage of the evolution of human resources in public libraries and aspects related to its efficiency in the context of the information society** is divided, in turn, into two main sections dedicated to the overall presentation of public libraries and human resources management in libraries, both in relation to information society and the unprecedented development of digitization.

The organizational context in which public libraries operate is presented. This is equally necessary for library professionals, even if they are informed about the activity of these institutions, but also for those who want to get acquainted and understand the peculiarities of the Romanian public library system. The term system is sometimes used throughout the paper because Romanian public libraries (2261 in number, according to INS, 2018), don't work independently, they relate in a network structured horizontally, but also vertically, develop common projects, identifies problems, constantly interacting.

The legislative framework is covered, the main documents that regulate the activity of the personnel from the public libraries, laws, decisions, regulations, procedures. Regarding the external context, are analysed the factors that influence from the outside, the trends identified globally by IFLA, useful because they provide information about the directions in which Romanian libraries should develop. The description of the organizational context cannot be concluded without scoring the decision makers and their role on public libraries: ministry, public administration, professional associations, communities, etc.

The information society needs a dedicated section to explain the way in which libraries, info-documentary structures by excellence, have adapted to its requirements. One of the conclusions that resulted from this subchapter is that non-adaptation means disappearance for public libraries as long as the transfer of public interest to the digital area is increasingly

observed. In this context, depending on how quickly libraries will identify new ways of operating, new types of collections and services, they will continue to retain their public. The same information society that implements and uses modern state-of-the-art technologies forces libraries to move from the **trading** to the **relational** stage, in order to satisfy the increasingly precise and particular users' needs in terms of **information, training, socialization or spending free time**. In order to achieve these objectives, the library professionals must use strategic planning and continuous research of users' needs.

As well as identifying the needs of the public, it must be developed a human resources strategy with which all the other projects that the library proposes will be carried out. Such a strategy is based on a SWOT analysis of human resources in Romanian public libraries, which are the elements that define this category of professionals. The conclusions of such an analysis are also presented in this section and make the transition to a chapter with important implications: the skills of a modern librarian.

Sometimes, these attributes necessary for a modern-day librarian are almost unknown to those outside the library system and partially known even by the professionals inside it. The reasons are diverse, but they are largely related to the professional training of library employees and the human resources management that may or may not exist in these institutions. However, the acquisition of new skills, we emphasize this, is the most important solution for modernizing a public library and maintaining it in the attention of those it serves.

Libraries are not outside the movements generated by the national or international labour market. They are affected, the profession being threatened or safeguarded depending on the strategies adopted at national or European level. Regarding the statistics and trends of the labour market, there are some question marks related to the future of this profession, the attractiveness it represents. The data included in European and national strategies and various studies that show the challenges faced by the labour market today are presented. These are compared with the realities and statistical data existing in the Romanian public libraries.

The future of the librarian profession in relation to the trends adopted by the new generations is a subject that is too little approached but important, that is why it is presented objectively, based on documentation, but also on indirect data provided by various official reports. What is the mentality of the new generations towards work and how can young people be motivated, but especially how can they be attracted to a career in a public library

are topics of interest that deserve a more careful analysis, therefore benefit from space and separate approach in the structure of the paper.

The thesis documentation continues with the management of human resources in libraries in the context of the digital society, the relatedness and the effects of their interaction.

The digital age fully contributes to changing the vision we have on many areas of activity. Artificial intelligence, digitalization, high speed connectivity, Internet of Things, Big Data are concepts that massively transform the people's lives, but also of companies. They are the basis of new ways of working, based on which sectors and procedures are redesigned. There is no way HRM won't be influenced by these profound changes and there are many voices claiming that, at some point, in this area, people's contribution will be diminished or even will disappear. Library specialists know these theories because there are some opinions that say that the library in its traditional form has no future and that the librarian, as we all know, is the representative of a profession that will disappear.

The presented studies prove that HRM will experience important changes, a part of the specialists' work will be replaced by Artificial Intelligence, was established the Intelligent Human Resource Management (IHRM) and the first digital platforms that recruit, doing this in very attractive and efficient ways for the companies that use this type of robots. The advantages are enough, such as the fact that the interview can be held at any time the candidate wants, it can be interrupted and resumed, upon request, and the areas in which recruitment is made are very diverse.

However, studies also show that for now, meaning a long time, man won't be replaced by intelligent machines, in HRM there are still sectors in which, despite digitalization, the human presence is indispensable. However, in order to make the activity more efficient, it is possible and even necessary a combination of artificial intelligence with the decisional aspects in which human thinking is needed.

As stated above, the libraries are forced to adapt under the pressure of the information society. This means, first of all, massive changes in the mentality of library professionals, starting with managers and reaching every employee. It is important for the manager to outline his management plan taking into account the "new wave", that of digitalization and to make sure, through specific means, that employees understand how the institution's mission

adapts to new requirements from the direct beneficiary, the community. The manager must take into account the economic, social and sociological factors and, together with the human resources management specialist, recruit and train personnel so that they can find those personal and psychological motivations that bring a right attitude towards work. The Mercer Institute suggests a dynamic alignment model necessary to be implemented in modern organizations, in order to obtain the best possible results. This is based on Strategic Clarity, Performance Activation, Agility and Innovation and these elements must also exist in libraries, in the constant attention of their leaders.

If library managers intend to become true leaders in their organizations, they must take into account a few elements, explained in detail within the paper:

- Good knowledge of the literature in the field of leadership.
- Be a good communicator
- Skillfully manage risks
- To have vision and strategic planning
- To develop the organizational culture
- Satisfaction of the projects carried out
- To rely on marketing and outreach
- To evaluate and analyze statistics
- To provide mentoring and professional support to employees

The results of quality leadership in a library are reflected in:

- Quality and development of collections and services for the public;
- Work efficiency;
- User loyalty;
- Introducing innovation and creativity;
- Empowering employees by involvement in the decision-making act;
- Intensity of professional development;
- Performance of work teams;
- Implementing changes;
- Increasing the number of users.

The organizational culture has a subchapter in which demonstrates its importance and that an efficient and modern management must take into account this aspect and include elements of culture, climate and organizational transformation in its own strategy.

A very important element in human resource management refers to the professional training of employees. For the Romanian public libraries, professional training is a highly topical subject and, for this reason, the paper offers a generous enough space for its presentation.

The Romanian legislative framework is the point from which begins the approach of professional training of the specialized personnel in the Romanian public libraries. After that, the types of professional training appropriate to the category of employees we are referring to are reviewed:

- academic training and its precarious situation regarding librarianship and information science. Reducing university centers with such a specialization, but also the number and declining interest of high school graduates for this type of higher education.
- professional training provided by various accredited providers to offer qualification or skills upgrade courses or simple trainings for library employees. It is important that these courses are recognized and certified by the National Qualifications Authority (ANC), the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research as well as by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly.
- professional training at work, under the conditions provided by the Labour Code.
- self-upgrade, a way in which each employee can improve their skills and abilities by studying according to their own professional needs.
- In the framework of the doctoral thesis, were presented in detail all the forms of professional training that the specialized personnel benefits from and their weak points and more efficient ways were also specified.

Currently, in Romania, there are no online platforms dedicated to the professional training of employees, and this is a disadvantage which can generate a handicap for Romanian professionals, compared to those from other countries. Online education has a great impact on employment, culture and communication from all over the world, says an IFLA report. Although Romania knows, from a computer point of view, an appreciable leap in the field of librarianship training, there is no initiative applied to the librarianship field. In support of the

usefulness of creating such normal training methods in these times, but also as a model to follow, was presented the wide range of courses and training offered by ALA to its professionals.

Also related to continuing professional education, there are a number of courses that offer those modern and necessary skills that a librarian should have and that should be offered by the providers of such services and that aren't found in the current offer. A refresher of the course offer would be very necessary and would raise the level of services offered by libraries to their public. The coronavirus pandemic that started at the beginning of 2020 led to a rethinking of the training of public library employees, thus, in ANBPR, have started courses using the ZOOM dialogue platform. But the problem is not solved, because long-term and more efficient solutions, following the model of those presented in the paper, must be found.

The repeated references found throughout the thesis regarding the way in which the profession of librarian has evolved over time, what stages had to follow in Romania, also require an exemplification in a case study. For this purpose, was investigated the personnel archive of the "Panait Istrati" County Library in Braila, one of the oldest public libraries in Romania, with almost 140 years of existence, but also other sources, in order to identify, from the point of view of human resources, which transformations it has undergone. Thus, three large periods of time can be defined, each of them influencing the way in which librarians have carried out their mission.

Thus, based on the archive documents, it can be seen that, initially, the librarian was a simple custodian concerned with increasing the book fund and preserving it. Later, as the collections began to grow and the first readers appeared, also emerged the need to organize and keep records of the book fund. After this initial interval (1881-1945), followed the socialist period (1946-1989), in which the employment of the personnel diversified, but ideological barriers were imposed and these had the corresponding effects on the way in which the collections were constituted and offered to the public. The stage after 1989 and until now is characterized by major and very rapid changes, this fast pace causing library personnel to keep the pace or lose users and the support of the community. It is a real competition to identify the real needs of the public, to convince credit officers and local governments to invest in the modernization of libraries, and the management is pressured to identify modern solutions, adapted to the realities of the moment. The specialized personnel has various specializations and skills that are not directly related to the traditional profession

of librarian, but are useful to implementing the new services to the public, to maintain and use state-of-the-art IT&C equipment, and so we can find in Braila library (and not only here) employees in the following fields: computer scientists, editors, sociologists, engineers, restorers, project managers, etc. The purpose of this diversification is precisely to expand the type of services offered and the use of new technologies in all sectors of the public library in order to make the activities more effective and to achieve increased performance. Of course the human resources management had an important contribution and still has a special role, being an integral part of the general management of the institution in Braila.

In the conclusion of the first part of the paper, the one dedicated to the documentation of the chosen subject, were presented a series of statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics regarding the specialized personnel of Romanian public libraries, data collected between 2015 and 2018. Based on these data we can define an **overall** profile of the Romanian librarian: **woman, with higher education and age between 25 and 49 years**. The information contained in this statistic is useful throughout the empirical research.

**Part II, The influence of the informational context and the role of human resources management in the development of public libraries. The specific ways of raising efficiency** is dedicated to the study of the influence of the informational context and the role of HRM in the development of public libraries by presenting specific ways of raising efficiency obtained from the empirical research undertaken. This part aims to achieve the research objectives, structuring the content according to the specific functions of HRM. This highlights the way in which the research results subscribe to the chosen research topic and the conclusions are organized more efficiently.

The human resources planning process is the milestone for the human resources manager. With this stage he must start his work, establishing a strategy, a coherent plan in accordance with the management plan and the performance indicators that the leader of an organization, respectively public libraries, has set.

The county public library managers were surveyed to identify the extent to which HRM is important in the institution they lead and if there is an adequate human resources strategy. County libraries are public libraries where the number of employees is large enough to require their own strategy. However, the stage of human resources planning in a library doesn't solely depend on the managerial strategy or the needs of the institution. For a county library, any change in the list of positions or organizational chart must be approved in a meeting by the

county councilors. In the case of municipal or communal libraries, the town halls and local councils are the ones that decide in such situations.

The planning part also involves a component aimed at attracting the workforce, also because there are enough signals that young people are not tempted to pursue a career in a public library. Two questionnaires are designed for this purpose, one for high school students with social and human specialization and one for students in bachelor's and master's programs in librarianship, philology, etc. The conclusions were as follows:



**Figure 1 Is there a human resources strategy in a library?**

Only 20% claim to have a strategy dedicated to human resources, 55% consider that it is included in other strategies, and 25% don't have something like this (Fig. 10).

The hypothesis according to which young people don't want to work in a library is confirmed. Data resulted from questionnaires corroborated with INS statistics on library personnel show that, in a few years, libraries will face a personnel crisis.

It is necessary to develop long-term strategies to attract young graduates. Emphasis must be placed on the creative side, adapted to digital society which some of the libraries have adopted. Young people must find an attractive job in which they can implement innovative projects. Library managers, human resources specialists, but also ANBPR must unite their efforts in order to attract young people. For this, programs to promote the profession of librarian must be designed, mentioning the way in which it has evolved and the opportunities



it offers. From the multitude of answers received below is extracted one considered relevant, offered by students enrolled in bachelor studies at the specialization of Librarianship and Information Science:

**Table 1 Students' opinion on choosing the profession of librarian**

Age	Would you like to become a librarian?				
	they didn't answer/they are employed at the library	yes, I want	maybe	never	I don't know, I haven't thought
18-25 years	2.3%	6.8%	31.8%	13.6%	22.7%
26-40 years	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41-60 years	15.9%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>

The occupation of jobs involves the analysis, recruitment and selection of candidates in order to achieve the proposed performances. In Romanian libraries, the hiring of personnel is regulated by the legislation in force and it was showed in what it consists of and what effects it has on the personnel selection. This has some advantages, but it has been observed that the rigidity imposed by the legislation doesn't help in selecting the most appropriate people for a series of dynamic and creative activities which don't involve office work. Thus, there are many cases in which libraries employ people who only want a job and don't identify with the mission that the institution proposes, and this can be one of the factors that influence the quality of services provided to the public, the final beneficiary. Where the legislation allows, it would be useful to take over practices that are used for recruitment in the private sector. These are much more efficient and the selection of the right candidates is done with much more attention.

Personnel training and development by professional training programs has a special subchapter, because, as stated during this thesis, it is an activity that carried out continuously and efficiently can substantially increase the performance of an organization, in this case, of a public library.

In order to identify the training needs of the specialized personnel in the libraries, but also to find out the opinion of the library managers, were used two questionnaires which have been filled by the ANBPR members (one for managers and the other for librarians), the association being one of the main providers of qualification and upgrading training courses in the Romanian librarian profession. Out of a number of 41 libraries answered 32 managers, and for the questionnaire that took into account the librarians were collected over 400 answers. Subjects which provided answers related to almost all aspects of professional training were addressed, this thing being appreciated by respondents and, therefore, must be repeated periodically to identify the best solutions in terms of professional training needs. This must be done, as much as possible, even by the professional associations which undertake in their mission the professional training of the members. Course providers for librarians should modernize their offer by introducing online and distance learning courses. The benefits are multiple for all the factors involved: trainers, managers and employees. It is very useful to identify the preferences of librarians in order to create an effective training program:

**Table 3 Distribution of interest for the thematic training offered by ANBPR**

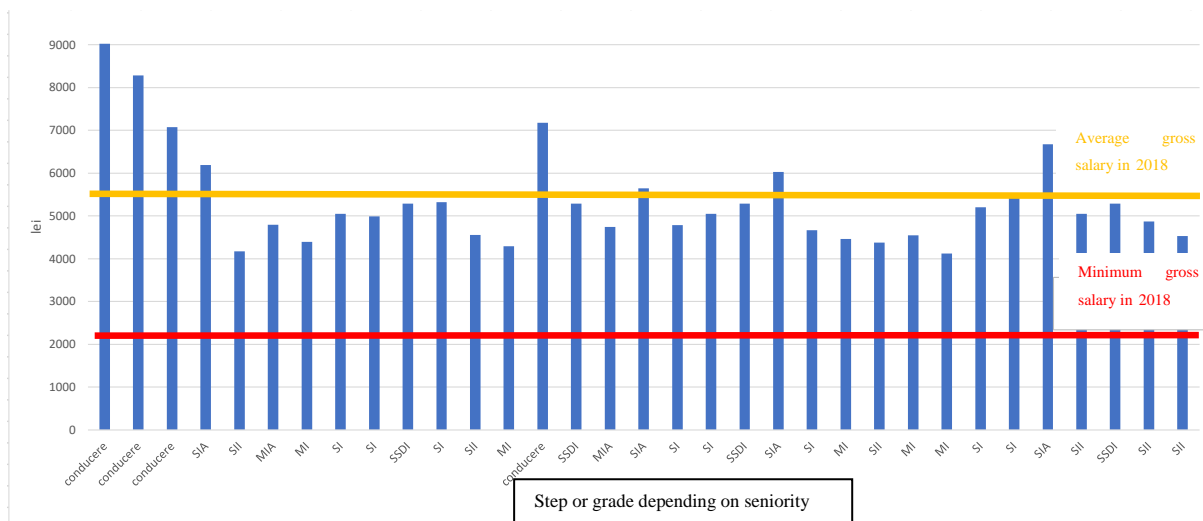
The type of library in which you operate		From the proposed thematic, select the courses that you would consider useful for your upgrade:													Total
		Qualification/upgrade in the librarian position	Social and civic skills-Advocacy and public policies	Marketing of library services	Information processing in UNIMARC format	Development of library services-Computer skills	Organizational communication	Public speaking	Cultural heritage and community	Leadership	Negotiations and sales techniques	Techniques of knowledge and communication with public segments	Personnel assessment and motivation	Library statistics	
county	Number	18	11	21	16	37	21	27	20	14	2	26	14	16	243
	%	2.0%	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%	4.0%	2.3%	2.9%	2.2%	1.5%	0.2%	2.8%	1.5%	1.7%	26.3%
municipal	Number	16	6	14	12	30	10	15	12	3	2	20	3	9	152
	%	1.7%	0.7%	1.5%	1.3%	3.3%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%	0.2%	2.2%	0.3%	1.0%	16.5%
communal	Number	103	32	55	19	99	21	25	53	9	4	55	15	38	528
	%	11.2%	3.5%	6.0%	2.1%	10.7%	2.3%	2.7%	5.7%	1.0%	0.4%	6.0%	1.6%	4.1%	57.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>923</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Employee evaluation, promotion, motivation and salary are sensitive issues for both managers and employees. As in the case of employment, the Romanian legislation has strict provisions on the way in which the personnel from the deconcentrated institutions is evaluated and promoted, category to which public libraries belong. In practice, in the case of promotion, as in the case of evaluation, is created a cumbersome system which doesn't stimulate efficiency. The legislation is rigid and the promotion takes place only if there are funds allocated in the budget and that period of three years since the last promotion has been respected. For really good results, it is necessary, first of all, to emphasize the performance of employees without encouraging bureaucracy. Although in the private sector the promotions aren't based on special regulations, they are carried out in a much more practical way, closely related to the quality of work and the profit that the employee brings to the organization and, because of this, the employees feel more motivated.

Motivation is the accumulation of methods by which managers manage to stimulate employees so that they perform in the activity they carry out. The specialized literature mentions:

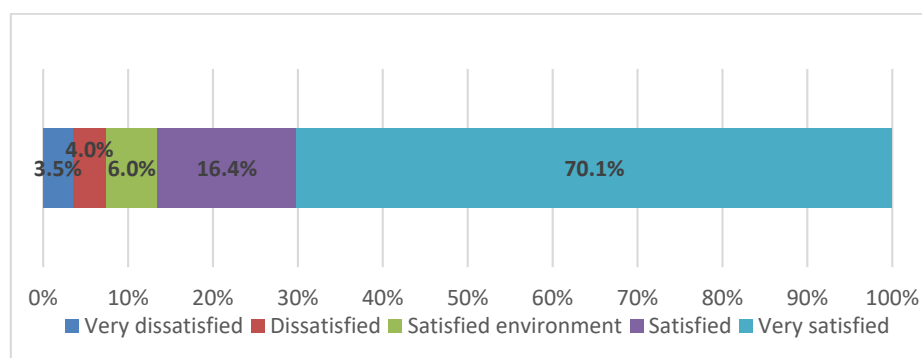
- efficient/assertive communication
- delegation of tasks
- encouraging employees
- regular feedback
- individual and flexible approach that can persuade an employee to take more interest.

Rewarding is a way to motivate, but not the only and not the most effective. But for librarians it is a sensitive issue and there have been many situations in which they have campaigned for obtaining additional salary rights. In order to better understand the real situation, we presented the salary legal framework and conducted a case study, analyzing the salaries corresponding to various employments of the specialized personnel of the County Library "Panait Istrati" Braila compared to the average monthly net salary and minimum gross monthly salary. With only a few exceptions that refer to personnel with management positions, most employees, at the end of 2019, have a gross monthly salary below the average gross salary per economy (Figure 2)



**Figure 21 The gross salary of the specialized personnel according to step or grade, compared to the average gross salary and the minimum gross salary per economy reported at the end of 2019 (source: “Panait Istrati” County Library Braila)**

In the process of motivating employees, it is important to know what their level of satisfaction is and what the levers that support it are. This information also shows what needs to be changed so that things can change for the better. One of the questionnaires conducted in order to identify the degree of satisfaction of public library personnel approach most of the aspects related to employee activity: working conditions, employment relationships, attachment to the profession, conflicts, funding, implementation of modern technologies, etc. One of the interested answers is shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3 Attachment to the profession (depending on the type of library where the respondent is employed)**

200 respondents answered to this questionnaire. The second questionnaire was addressed to library leading personnel and aimed to identify the level of leadership, but also how they interact and know the needs of the team they lead.

The following direct observations emerge from these two questionnaires:

- Although there are situations in which librarians carry out other activities than those specific to the profession, there are labour disputes, they are dissatisfied with the remuneration received, overall, they say they are satisfied with the profession they have chosen and the job they occupy;
- There are differences between rural and urban in relation to working conditions and the duties of a librarian. The role of professional associations, but also of libraries that have methodological and coordination tasks, is to identify solutions to reduce discrepancies.

A questionnaire was created especially for a situation that deserves to be analyzed and that, so far, hasn't been treated separately. In modern libraries, nowadays, it has been observed that activities for the public have "deviated" from the traditional line of book lending, with which most were accustomed when it came to these institutions. Thus, librarians initiate, organize and carry out activities for the public of the most diverse, indirectly related to the book or reading, or, there are situations when this connection is not at all obvious. Based on the experience of over 20 years, it has been observed that librarians don't get to implement such non-specific activities without a serious change of mentality, but once the mechanism is triggered, a very special result is obtained. Librarians show a lot of creativity, innovation and are happy to propose new library activities and services that the public especially appreciate, this being reflected in much better statistics.

In order to observe the importance of this type of activities is relevant to follow their weight (share) in a Romanian public library:

**Table 4 Non-specific library activities and participants attending these in the period 2015-2019**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Activities</b>	1.275	1.599	1.537	2.045	2102
<b>Participants</b>	28.907	35.182	31.076	45.696	46.527
<b>Activities/day</b>	5,1	6,4	6,15	8,18	8,4
<b>Participants/day</b>	115,2	140,7	124,3	182,8	186,1

Source: „Panait Istrati” County Library, Braila, 2020

What is the mechanism and what motivates librarians to get involved in these activities that don't bring any increase in salary and, most of the time, aren't included in the job description? In order to understand and have the answers to this question, we have created a questionnaire to which 200 respondents have answered. It seems that, beyond the financial motivation, it is important for librarians that they can value their creativity and that their contentment comes from the satisfaction of their beneficiaries, and these activities bring an additional attractiveness to the somewhat routine work, if it comes to document trading. The results of this questionnaire are useful for managers because the diversification of library services also mean employees who work with more interest, if they are allowed to take the initiative.

The last specific function of human resources management is the administrative one. It is about the work of managing the records of employees and, currently, this is done in a mixed regime: classically, by organizing and archiving all documents found on printed support related to personnel, and electronically, by recording information in a national database using the ReviSal application.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The doctoral thesis deals with a subject that combines and compares information in the field of librarianship and human resources management in the context of the transformations imposed by the information society, the era of digitalization and IT&C. During the documentation period were studied papers from both fields, but very little information was identified in the area of interference between HRM and public libraries. The public libraries are very concerned with the management of services for their users, leadership and the way this can change such an institution, of digitization in all its aspects, digital libraries, digital transformation of the organization, etc. But the analysis of human resources, in libraries, overall, and in the Romanian public libraries, in particular, is quite little approached, although employees are the key to performant services and sustainable development and give value to this institution. The professional association that should deal with the promotion of the

interests of its members, the specialized personnel, has almost no information about them and there is no interest in collecting such data too soon.

A starting point is the national statistics of the INS, which contain general data on the number of libraries and employees grouped on several criteria: year, type of library, age, gender, professional training.

Considering all the above, the work of over 20 years with colleagues from the Braila public library, but also the intense exchange of experience with professionals from all public libraries in the country, has emerged the need for the development of the subject, its documentation and dissemination not only through this paper, but also at the numerous professional meetings held over time.

The research undertaken is extremely useful in the context of the large lack of data related to specialized personnel in the Romanian public libraries. Some aspects are known only by the experienced professionals, from personal observations, but without substantiating figures provided by appropriate research tools and methods. And from this point of view, the paper abounds in information that refers to all the functions of human resource management. The paper can serve as a guide for anyone who wants to learn about the subject, whether from Romania or elsewhere.

If library managers want to increase the efficiency of their institution, they need to know in detail the structure of human resources they work with. And we don't refer only to our own employees, but to the general profile of Romanian public librarians. In addition, they must accept to take over any management techniques based on modern technologies. It seems that the challenges are unexpected and sometimes extremely harsh, and without well-selected, trained and informed employees the library will not cope. Thus, the specialized personnel in public libraries is analyzed from a legislative point of view, of the way in which performs hirings, promotions or evaluations, offering critical points of view and analysis where, from experience, the results aren't as expected.

The subjects approached are very diverse: the attractiveness of a job in a public library, work satisfaction, its specificity, working conditions, technological impact, professional training, conflicts at work, etc. A sufficient number of responses were collected so that a number of conclusions could be drawn and to generate interest for further debates and analyses.



Thus, through the research presented in the doctoral thesis **Contributions on human resources management in the context of the evolution of public libraries** were highlighted the following:

- Literature that is directly related and is useful for modern public libraries has been identified, so as to support those who are concerned with this subject.
- Based on those researched, was obtained information that provides a complete picture of the specifics of human resources in Romanian public libraries. In the specialized literature there are papers of librarianship, management, management of modern services, communication and development of collections, library marketing, but there were no concerns for the presentation of the situation of library personnel and its management.
- The inside knowledge of the public library system has led to the conclusion that many improvements can be brought if appropriate leadership techniques are applied, more emphasis on organizational culture would be placed or continuous professional training of employees would be modernized.
- It is important to study library management because libraries around the world are experiencing a period in which they must redefine their purpose in the context of the information society, the progress of the use of new technologies at the expense of the traditional book. Without a realistic and modern management, without the professionals in this field, won't be easily identifiable the solutions related to the questions about the future of books, reading and libraries, that libraries are looking for. Only better trained librarians, aware of their complex role in society, able to always assimilate new information and skills, will give sustainability and meaning to the libraries of the future.
- Based on the analyzed information, it is found that in Romanian libraries there is a need to put more emphasis on continuous professional training, starting from managers to personnel with specialized positions, but also administrative. The “poverty” and insufficiency of the courses available to librarians were mentioned, the need for them to be current, modern, focused on **information technology, leadership, project management, communication**, etc. In this sense, the professional associations have an important role, proposing as many training programs as possible one step ahead. The basic training of a librarian is important, but without continuous

updating and completion of information, no substantial progress is made for the libraries where such librarians work.

The paper also brings a number of useful professional contributions:

- A detailed analysis of current practices on human resource management in public libraries.
- A SWOT analysis of public libraries in terms of human resources
- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the activity of human resources management, as well as opportunities for the development of the profession in libraries
- Design of questionnaires whose structure covers the requirements of a detailed analysis. These questionnaires can be taken and used to the extent that the answers received meet the necessary conditions.
- Critical analysis of the answers and their structuring according to the main specific HRM activities
- Development of the scientific research and documentation base in the field of HRM.
- Grouping the research results so as to highlight the main aspects that define the human resources management: personnel planning, selection, training, motivation and remuneration.
- Defining a model that can be applied in Romanian public libraries
- Identifying three interconnected directions of analysis: human resources management, the specifics of the public library system and the information society, the way in which the latter influences the other two.
- Presentation of the public library system and human resources management in the context of new technologies.
- Identifying the latest practices applied to human resources in libraries or which are taken from other fields in order to represent examples of good practices in libraries as well.
- Highlighting the differences between what happens in Romanian libraries compared to those in other countries. What models can be taken over or it is necessary to take over for the Romanian employees to perform.

- Identifying the discrepancy between the modernity of human resources management based on technology applied in the private environment and the way this is understood in public libraries, institutions considered to be conservative, with a budget provided by local governments and less interested in efficiency.
- Recommendations of action for the factors and entities involved in the development of libraries in the context of digital transformations in the information society.

If we were to define in one word everything that this thesis wants to propose to public libraries, that word would be CHANGE. After a few centuries in which the librarian was mainly an erudite custodian of books, the end of the twentieth century surprises him with the massive technological evolution that triggers a series of changes of all kinds. Libraries change the structure of their collections and services, the librarian can have various basic trainings, starting from the humanities and ending with the social and technical ones, adapting from the services based on trading to those of relationship, because the book depository library in the institution has become a community space. The most complex process is the change of mentality and the role of human resource management needs to be felt more, providing the conditions for the formation of an organizational culture strong enough to meet the increasingly pretentious demands of the public, so that the employee is not demotivated or lacks sufficient resources to fulfill the mission.

It is possible to obtain, based on the information contained in this paper, strategies and programs adapted to the specifics of human resources in the Romanian libraries without applying techniques taken from other parts of the world that are not unverified whether or not they match with the Romanian library system, because it is presented a sufficiently large and comprehensive data set which subsequently can be supplemented or developed as needed.

This paper is a good starting point and a motivation for opening other research directions of this vast and insufficiently approached subject such as the human resources management in libraries. At the same time, the dynamics of the field is fast and the information must be continuously refreshed because the implementation of IT&C, digitization, AI, robotics and others bring spectacular changes.

All the researches undertaken or that we will undertake in the future have a single purpose, to improve the efficiency of the results that the library professionals must have, the contribution to the progress of the institution called Library, so that to become truly modern and meet the needs of its users.



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