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HUMAN RESOURCES AS A RISK FACTOR IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance and importance of the research topic. The success of an organization is determined by a complex set of factors that contribute to maintaining and strengthening its position in a competitive environment. Ranking the importance of these factors is difficult, but the specialized literature highlights the essential role of using management techniques and tools aimed at continuously improving performance, meeting customer requirements under conditions of profitability, capitalizing on human resources, and promoting innovation. Among these factors, human resources occupy a central place, representing an essential determinant of organizational performance and development. Effective management of the human factor is both a strategic necessity and an indispensable condition for the organization's success. The human dimension represents a potential source of vulnerability, since employees' behaviors, competencies, motivation, and decisions can affect the outcomes of rigorously planned and managed activities or projects in the absence of proper management.

Today, the labor market has created a situation in which companies compete for well-trained specialists. This situation is aggravated by negative trends such as the chronic imbalance in the global labor market, including in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, as well as by a general decline in labor supply, due to the projected decrease in the number of individuals in the country.

The relationship between a company and its employees is accompanied by significant risks for both parties. These are determined mainly by the uncertainty associated with human behavior, known as the human factor. Integrating the personnel risk management system within the company's overall risk management system contributes to the effective identification, assessment, and management of these risks.

Despite the recognized importance of personnel risks, they often do not appear as a separate risk category but are mentioned indirectly within other categories. Approaches in the specialized literature highlight the existence of several concepts related to personnel risks, among which can be mentioned: “personnel risks,” “personnel management risks,” “labor potential management risks,” etc. These types of risks are classified according to different criteria, although there is no clear description of the relationship between these concepts. Effective identification of personnel risks involves analyzing where they occur and assessing their possible consequences, thus facilitating the adoption of impact-minimization measures. This is largely due to the fact that companies previously devoted more attention to other types of risk, considered more relevant at the time. Personnel risk management is a field that is at a relatively recent stage of development within organizational risk management.

Extent of research on the topic. The research topic reflects a growing scientific interest, though still characterized by a certain conceptual and methodological fragmentation. In the specialized literature, the issue of organizational risks has been analyzed predominantly from the perspective of financial, operational, strategic, or technological risks, while the human dimension of risk has, for a long period, been treated secondarily or implicitly. In recent decades, however, with the consolidation of fields such as human resource management, organizational behavior, and risk management, a stronger concern has begun to emerge regarding the role of the human factor in generating and amplifying organizational risks.

Research in the field argues that managing human-resource-related risks can be achieved through approaches that promote quality of life at work and employee well-being, contributing to increased organizational performance (Minchela-Gergely, Ferrand, 2016; Haim, Bonnet, 2016). Other authors draw attention to the challenges associated with human resource risks, particularly in the context of reorganization projects or the introduction of new tools, methods, and work environments (SABPP, 2014). Existing research highlights risks that remain insufficiently explored to date (Dufour, Teneau, Moulin, 2015; M. Levine and D. Hoffman, 2000), particularly regarding the role of human error. Also worth mentioning are studies that address human-resource-related risks from the perspective of failing to achieve organizational objectives (Malinowski, 2025). In the specialized literature, there is interest in defining the concept of "personnel risk" (Ackermann, 1999; Huang et al., 2017; Kraev et al., 2019), as well as scientific interest in identifying ways to classify personnel risks that highlight their complexity (Kobi, 2002, 2012; Mitrofanova A., 2013; Zubareva, 2013; Tselyutina, 2019). Researchers from Romania, such as Rotărescu E.-N. (2011), approach these risks specifically through the diagnosis and assessment of continuous training of human resources in the police field, while Negru (Băcanu) E. (2010) analyzes the dual role of human resources in risk management, namely as a source of risk but also as a key element in identifying and addressing it. Similar concerns are found in the French literature. A complex approach to classifying personnel risks is presented by Bencheikh et al. (2019), who consider the causes generating the risks, their impact on the enterprise, and the strategies used to manage them. Researchers from the Republic of Moldova, through their studies, indirectly highlight the fact that employees can become sources of risk through human error, inadequate decisions, lack of competencies, unethical behavior, or resistance to change. A significant part of the specialized literature examines phenomena associated with human resources which, even if not explicitly classified as risks, can be interpreted through the lens of personnel-generated risks. These include behavioral risk (Covaș et al., 2025), competency risk (Bîrcă, 2019), compliance risk (Bîrcă et al., 2019; Cotelnic et al., 2017), and risks associated with organizational culture (Covaș, 2019).

The critical assessment of the specialized literature reveals a fragmented approach to the issue of human-resource-related risks, with most studies analyzing these aspects independently, without integrating them into a unified conceptual framework. Research exploring the bidirectional relationship between the organization and human resources is limited and highlights how risks generated by the organizational environment influence employees, subsequently affecting the organization's performance and safety. This gap indicates the need for in-depth research that integrates both perspectives into a holistic approach.

The critical examination of the literature reveals an insufficient level of development of research dedicated to this topic. Existing contributions, although relevant from a conceptual and applied standpoint, are fragmented and insufficiently integrated. Addressing human resources as a risk factor in organizational management from a unified perspective constitutes an appropriate research direction, capable of supporting the development of theoretical knowledge and managerial practices in the field.

The object of the research is the management of the organization in the context of organizational risks, with an emphasis on the human resources dimension and its role in organizational functioning and performance.

The subject of the research is the analysis of human resources as a factor that generates and amplifies risk, as well as the risks to which the human factor is exposed within the organizational environment, including the mechanisms of manifestation, causes, interdependencies, and their impact on managerial processes and on organizational performance.

The purpose of the research is to provide a theoretical and methodological foundation for the role of human resources as a risk factor in organizational management, by developing an integrated approach that highlights both personnel-generated risks and the risks to which the human factor is exposed, as well as the impact of their interdependence on organizational performance.

To achieve the proposed purpose, the following specific objectives were set:

- ✓ Conducting a critical analysis of the views of domestic and foreign scholars regarding the concept of risk;
- ✓ Defining and delimiting the concept of "personnel risk" in an organizational context;
- ✓ Analyzing the relationship between personnel risks and organizational management, by reference to the main frameworks and models of human resource risk management.
- ✓ Identifying and systematizing the main types of risks generated by human resources, as well as the risks to which the human factor is exposed in the organizational environment, and analyzing their causes based on empirical research;
- ✓ Identifying and systemically modeling personnel risks, by highlighting the interdependence relationships, causal mechanisms, and feedback loops between personnel-generated risks and the risks to which human resources are exposed.
- ✓ Developing an integrated systemic model for managing human-resource-related risks and establishing a methodological framework for their assessment and management at the organizational level.
- ✓ Assessing the relationship between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, by constructing composite indicators of risk and performance and applying correlation analysis, with a view to substantiating recommendations for organizational management.

The scientific problem of the research consists in the insufficient conceptualization and integrated approach to human resources as a risk factor in organizational management, given that the specialized literature fragmentarily addresses either personnel-generated risks or risks affecting the human factor, without highlighting the interdependence and dynamics between these two dimensions.

General hypothesis:

Human resources represent a complex risk factor in organizational management, and an integrated approach to personnel-generated risks and those affecting human resources leads to more effective management of organizational risks and to improved organizational performance.

Specific hypotheses:

1. Personnel-generated risks and risks affecting human resources are interdependent, exhibiting reciprocal influences within the organization;

2. The relationships between the structural causes of personnel risks and organizational impact are systemic and dynamic in nature, being mediated by intermediate organizational states and employee behaviors, and regulated by managerial control mechanisms;

3. An inverse relationship is assumed to exist between the level of manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, such that organizations in which these risks are more pronounced tend to record a lower level of performance.

Scientific novelty and originality of the research lies in the integrated and systemic approach to human resources as a risk factor in organizational management, going beyond the traditional fragmented perspectives existing in the specialized literature. The main original contributions of the research are:

- ✓ Developing the theoretical framework of organizational risk management by integrating the human dimension, conceptualizing human resources not merely as a functional element of the organization but as a dynamic factor capable of generating, amplifying, or mitigating organizational risks;
- ✓ Integrating the concept of personnel risk within human resource management, by theoretically substantiating it and positioning it as a distinct yet interdependent element.
- ✓ Developing an original conceptual model, based on a dual approach to personnel risk, which reflects the dual nature of human resources — both as a generator of risk for the organization and as an element exposed to risks generated by the organizational environment — highlighting the interdependencies between causes, manifestations, and effects, as well as the relationships between individual, team, and organizational risks;
- ✓ Developing an integrated methodological model for assessing and managing personnel risks, which brings together, in a unified approach, the identification and systemic modeling of personnel-generated risks, the construction of the organization's risk profile, the quantification of risk manifestation through composite indicators, the assessment of the relationship between personnel risks and organizational performance, and the substantiation of managerial recommendations for their integrated management.

Theoretical significance of the research. The research contributes to the development and consolidation of the conceptual framework of organizational management and risk management by integrating the human dimension into a systemic and coherent approach. From this perspective, the classical approaches to risk management, predominantly centered on financial, operational, and strategic dimensions, are extended through the recognition of human resources as a distinct organizational risk factor. The contributions of the research aim to complement risk management theory by highlighting the complex and dynamic role of the human factor in the emergence and manifestation of organizational risks. The paper also provides conceptual clarifications regarding the notion of "personnel risk," through its definition, delimitation, and integration within the system of organizational risks. Another important theoretical contribution consists in substantiating a dual perspective on human resources, which are analyzed simultaneously as a source of risk and as an element exposed to risk. By highlighting the interdependence between these two dimensions, the research contributes to developing an integrated vision of organizational behavior and human resource management. The theoretical significance is further complemented by the development of an integrated conceptual model of personnel risks, which contributes to systematizing existing knowledge and creates the premises for further developments in the field. The results of the research support the need for an interdisciplinary approach, situated at the intersection of human resource management, risk management, and organizational behavior. Such an approach contributes to developing the theoretical framework of these fields and facilitates the exploration of new research directions.

Applied value of the research results is determined by the possibility of using the results obtained in managerial practice, with a view to improving the processes of identifying, assessing, and managing human-resource-related risks. Through its integrated approach to personnel risks, the research provides conceptual and methodological tools useful for increasing the efficiency of organizational management. The research results can contribute to the development of human resource management policies and practices aimed at risk prevention, by improving working conditions, reducing organizational stress factors, and increasing employee engagement and satisfaction. The contributions of the research support the inclusion of the personnel risk dimension within the architecture of organizational risk management systems, facilitating the formulation of integrated strategies for their prevention and management. Capitalizing on the research results can support organizations in developing monitoring and control mechanisms adapted to the nature and particularities of human-resource-generated risks.

Research methodology and methods. The research methodology is grounded in a complex, interdisciplinary, and integrated approach. The scientific approach combines theoretical and empirical research methods, aiming to ensure a rigorous analysis and a relevant validation of the results obtained. The research methodology included theoretical methods, such as: analysis and synthesis of the specialized literature, to substantiate the conceptual framework and identify the main research directions; the comparative method, to examine different approaches to personnel risks; inductive and deductive methods, to formulate hypotheses and structure the scientific approach; abstraction and generalization, to outline the concept of "personnel risk" and its defining elements. Empirical methods included: a questionnaire-based sociological survey, to identify employees' and managers' perceptions of personnel risks; scientific observation, to capture relevant organizational behaviors. Quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were used to process and interpret the data, such as descriptive statistical analysis; correlation and analysis of relationships between variables; qualitative interpretation of the data obtained from the survey. The research makes use of conceptual modeling, employed in developing the integrated model of personnel risks, as well as a systemic approach, which allows for highlighting the interdependencies between organizational factors and human behavior.

Research results were validated through the author's publications on the research topic: five articles in scientific journals indexed in international databases, including two in Romania, and four presentations at national and international scientific conferences.

Structure of the thesis. The structure of the doctoral thesis includes the introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations. The paper is complemented by annotations in Romanian and English, a list of abbreviations, and a bibliography (193 sources) and appendices (24).

Keywords: dual approach to personnel risks, human resources, organizational performance, organizational risk, personnel risk management, personnel risk profile, personnel risk, risk generated by personnel, risk manifestation, synthetic indicator.

CONTENT OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1. "Theoretical aspects of personnel risk management" is dedicated to analyzing the main concepts related to the specific focus of the doctoral thesis. The chapter begins with an analysis of the concept of risk, tracing in particular its evolution within the economic and managerial sciences. In the conceptual evolution of risk management and the relationship between risk and economic activity, an important role belongs to the earliest theorists of entrepreneurship. Richard Cantillon is considered one of the first authors to explicitly associate entrepreneurial activity with risk-taking, defining the entrepreneur as the person who acquires resources at known prices in order to later capitalize on them at uncertain prices, thereby assuming the risk associated with future income. In his conception, risk represents a defining element of the entrepreneurial function and of the economic decision-making process (Higgs, 1959). Jean-Baptiste Say later developed this perspective, attributing to the entrepreneur the role of organizer and coordinator of the factors of production.. In his view, the entrepreneur does not merely combine available resources, but also assumes the risks generated by uncertainty regarding demand, prices, and market conditions. The perspective proposed by Cantillon and Say reflects the transition from viewing risk as an exclusively negative factor, associated with losses, to interpreting it as an inevitable component of entrepreneurial initiative and of the process of creating economic value, contributing to the foundation of modern risk management theories. (Say, 1855)

This approach highlights the fact that, since the earliest economic theories, risk was regarded as an inseparable attribute of entrepreneurial activity, representing not only the possibility of losses but also the necessary condition for capitalizing on economic opportunities — an idea that underpins the dual approach to risk developed in this research.

This chapter analyzes the evolution of the concept of risk by highlighting the main approaches found in the specialized literature. It presents the perspectives of authors who view risk as a concept with exclusively negative connotations, associating it with terms such as losses, threats, or additional costs (Kiseleva et al., 2018; Diaconu et al., 2017; Muntean et al., 2015; Elahi, 2013). The analysis also includes approaches that go beyond the traditional view of risk, highlighting the fact that it can represent not only a source of negative effects but also an opportunity, when properly managed. Another category of authors defines risk as the probability of an event occurring that may have an impact on organizational objectives (Burkholder et al., 2007). This perspective is consistent with the definition established by the ISO 31000:2018 – Risk management — Guidelines standard, according to which risk represents "the effect of uncertainty on objectives" (ISO, 2018).

The role of risk in managerial decision-making is highlighted, along with the relationship of the term to other concepts such as "uncertainty," and the difference between decision-making under conditions of risk and under conditions of uncertainty; we argue the need for organizations to manage risk in order to reduce losses caused by uncertainty.

We note the works addressing the so-called "contemporary business risks" (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2019), highlighting certain types of risks associated with the current period. The authors argue that today enterprises face a series of new risks, including cyberattacks and incidents; the rapid pace of disruptive innovations and new technologies (for example, artificial intelligence, robotics, and Big Data analytics); business disruption, including supply chain disruption and vulnerability, and many others. This series of new risks requires companies to rethink the tools and strategies currently implemented to monitor and manage risks.

We analyze several classifications of risk existing in the scientific literature and have concluded that none of the existing classifications of organizational risks in the specialized literature can be considered all-encompassing, each reflecting only certain perspectives and classification criteria. The classifications analyzed reflect the dual perspective on personnel risks, highlighting human resources as a possible risk-generating factor for the organization and the organization as a source of risk for employees, which underlines the reciprocal and interdependent nature of organizational risk relationships.

Human-resource-related risks represent a major challenge for companies and organizations. Their consequences can directly influence the proper functioning, development, reputation, and financial results of organizations. At the same time, an analysis of the scientific sources in the field has highlighted the absence of a unified theoretical and methodological approach to defining and managing personnel risks. This is, in our opinion, largely due to the fact that this category is rooted in the nature and essence of the human being, which is the most difficult object of management, simultaneously generating a degree of informational and behavioral uncertainty.

In examining several sources on the topic under study, we found that the specialized literature devoted to human resource risk research shows limited concern and even low interest in addressing this issue. Several studies refer to specific human resource risk topics, such as psychosocial risks, absenteeism, presenteeism, musculoskeletal disorders, and difficult work (Cioca, 2010). Some studies emphasize the role of managing human-resource-related risks through approaches oriented toward quality of life at work and increasing employee well-being within the organization (Ferrand et al., 2016; Haim et al., 2016). Certain works also emphasize the importance of health and prevention policies in organizations, involving a variety of stakeholders: specialists, social partners, and local and community decision-makers. Some authors hold the view (SABPP, 2014, p. 9) that a human resource risk is any people-, culture-, or governance-related factor that causes uncertainty in the business environment and could have a negative impact on the company's operations. Other studies also refer to risks that remain underestimated to date (Dufour et al., 2015; Levine et al., 2000), particularly regarding the role of human error and managers' persistence with a direction they know to be wrong, one that will lead the organization to its downfall, demotivating employees and triggering numerous departures.

Also worth mentioning are the studies that address human-resource-related risks through the lens of unachieved objectives. Malinowski (2025, p. 286) states that personnel risk "must be understood as the impact of measurable uncertainty on an entity's capacity to achieve a given objective, as well as in situations of deviation from the implementation of certain activities". According to Nevmerzhitskaya (2021), human-resource-related risks constitute an integral part of labor risks, having a broader economic significance than personnel risks. The author defines labor risks as the probability of an event occurring that is interconnected with the work process and that has negative consequences. Research dedicated to human resource risk management as a distinct field remains relatively limited, with most studies addressing this issue through the lens of other categories of organizational risk.

Given that the human factor mediates all aspects of economic relationships within an organization, we can state that these relationships are complex and present in all areas of the organization's activity.

The concept of personnel risks, as used in this research, reflects the bidirectional nature of the relationship between the organization and human resources, integrating both the risks that have the organization's personnel as their object and the risks whose origin lies in the behaviors, competencies, or decisions of personnel. Both groups of risks mentioned above are complex and affect the organization's entire activity. We have proposed our own view, by which we define personnel risk *(risk associated with personnel) as the probability that, within the organization, human resources, through behaviors, competencies, decisions, or interaction with the internal and external environment, generate events or situations with a negative or positive impact on organizational performance, continuity, and objectives, while the same human resources can simultaneously become subject to risk, being exposed to conditions, processes, or changes that affect their safety, motivation, development, and efficiency, but which can also create opportunities for growth, adaptation, and innovation.* This definition results from the approach adopted in this research regarding the role of human resources within the organization's risk system, highlighting both states in which human resources find themselves in this respect. The proposed definition highlights the fact that personnel risk constitutes a systemic phenomenon, which includes both the risks generated by the competencies, behaviors, and decisions of personnel, and the risks affecting the organization's capacity to attract, retain, develop, and protect this strategic resource. The conceptualization of personnel risk captures its complex nature, by recognizing both the negative effects and the positive potential associated with its manifestation.

The analysis of the numerous classifications of personnel risks has highlighted several insufficiently clarified aspects regarding their conceptualization and systematization. No classification was identified that captures the dual nature of human resources within the organization, namely as both a risk-generating source and, simultaneously, a subject exposed to risks. This finding constituted the starting point for developing our own view of personnel risks. The analysis of the specialized literature has highlighted the existence of extensive, non-uniform, and dispersed terminology, which creates difficulties in conceptual delimitation and in comparing different approaches. We consider that this terminological diversity is determined by the different perspectives on the concept of personnel risk, by variations in its content, as well as by the particularities of translations from other languages. Starting from the complex nature of these risks, we propose calling them *personnel risks (risk associated with personnel)* or *human resource risks,* as mentioned above. These risks include two broad categories:

- *The risks to which the employee is exposed within the organization (human resources as the subject of risk)*, which include those risks to which the employee is exposed while working within the organization. These are the risks that affect personnel as the subject. These risks are determined by several factors, both internal and external, such as working conditions, relationships within the team, occupational safety, and workplace safety, among others. We are of the view that *human resources, approached as the subject of risk, represent the situation in which employees are exposed to risks generated by the organization's activities, the work environment, or external factors, with the potential to suffer consequences to their health, safety, performance, or well-being.*
- *Risks generated by personnel*, which include those risks caused by personnel (whose source is personnel), while working within the organization. The definition we propose in this regard states: *human resources, approached as a source of risk, represent the situation in which employees' behaviors, actions, decisions, or omissions can generate, amplify, or trigger risks affecting the organization's processes, objectives, or integrity.*

This division of risks may appear formal, since in some cases it is very difficult to determine which category a particular type of risk belongs to. The importance of the proposed grouping lies in its contribution to the complex analysis of personnel risks. The concept of risk has a dual nature, capable of reflecting both the consequences generated by an employee's actions or attitudes and the effects of organizational factors on the employee. If risks were analyzed without taking this division into account, the analysis could become ambiguous, and measuring or prioritizing risks could create difficulties. Differentiating personnel risks calls for specific management measures. Risks generated by the employee require the adoption of preventive and corrective measures oriented toward behavior, competencies, and other individual particularities, while risks associated with employee exposure require the implementation of organizational policies regarding protection, health and safety, equity, and professional development.

The proposed grouping contributes to establishing a holistic approach to human resource management, in which employees are analyzed both in terms of their potential to generate risks and as organizational resources requiring protection and development.

The dual nature of human resources highlights the limitations of an approach based exclusively on the classification of personnel risks, as this is not sufficient for building an effective management system for these risks. An analysis of the risk frameworks associated with human resources allows both dimensions of risk — risks generated by personnel and risks to which personnel are exposed — to be integrated into a unified perspective, providing the conceptual and methodological foundation needed for their management. The comparative synthesis of the models analyzed in the thesis, carried out according to criteria regarding structure, description, advantages, and limitations, is presented in Table 1.

Two leading frameworks in this field are considered to be ISO 31000 and COSO ERM, which offer distinct methodologies and philosophies that help enterprises navigate uncertainty (Akshay, 2025). Both frameworks are important, widely addressed in the literature in the field, and used in practice by companies (e.g., Uysal, 2012). Although no explicit applications of these frameworks have been identified in the specific field of personnel risk management, their general and flexible nature allows them to be applied to any type of risk, including risks associated with human resources.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of different human resource risk management models/frameworks

Model/ Framework	Structure/ risk types	Description	Advantages	Limitations
Paul & Mitlacher (2008) – classic model	1. Environmental risks (external) 2. Strategic risks 3. Operational risks	Environment: economy, politics, demographics, culture. Strategic: alignment of strategy, structure, and HR. Operational: processes, systems, people.	Integration of HR risks into overall risk management; Clear and easy-to-apply structure.	Does not cover digital risks; Does not account for organizational resilience and external crises
Mercer Marsh – People Risk Framework (2024)	5 main pillars: health and well-being, recruitment and retention, skills and training, technological change, external factors	- Financial and reputational risks associated with employees; - Impact of the external environment on HR.	Modern, comprehensive approach, includes external and health factors; Easy to link to organizational strategy.	Requires resources and data for assessment; Less formally structured.
AIHR – AI & HR Risk Framework (2025)	1. Internal risks 2. External risks	- Internal: confidentiality, ethics, digital skills - External: regulations, social acceptance, reputation.	Integration of technology and digitalization into HR risk management; Relevant for the AI era.	Very specific to digitalization / AI; Does not fully cover traditional HR factors.
Human-Centric Risk Management (HRM) (2025)	Human factor as the main source of risk	- Employee profiles (behavioral, competencies, culture);	Holistic, human-centred approach Enables personalized prevention measures	Requires detailed assessments and a mature organizational culture.

Model/ Framework	Structure/ risk types	Description	Advantages	Limitations
		- Organizational and security vulnerabilities.		
SHRM in crisis/turbulent contexts (2023)	1. Internal risks 2.External/environ mental risks 3. Strategic risks	- Adaptability to crises; - Organizational resilience; - Health protection and business continuity.	Links HR to organizational resilience and strategic plans; Includes unforeseen crises.	More difficult to operationalize in small companies; Requires complex plans and resources.

Source: developed by the author based on the sources studied

Building on the critical analysis of the specialized literature, on the synthesis of existing approaches, and on the results of the research, we consider that current definitions of personnel risk management do not fully reflect the dual and systemic approach substantiated in this thesis. The specialized literature typically treats personnel-generated risks and risks affecting personnel separately, without integrating them into a unified, dual, and systemic vision. This led us to formulate our own definition: *Personnel risk management is a component of organizational management which, through a dual and systemic approach, aims to identify, assess, monitor, and address risks generated by personnel and risks affecting personnel, leveraging the interdependence between the human factor, managerial processes, and organizational performance in order to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the organization's capacity for adaptation and development*

Chapter 2. "Methodological approach and scientific research process regarding personnel risks" presents the methodological framework of the investigation and substantiates the scientific path followed in carrying out the doctoral research. The rigorous structuring of the research stages ensured the coherence of the investigative process and created the necessary premises for obtaining valid, relevant, and applicable results for organizational practice. The first subchapter presents the methodological design of the research. An in-depth analysis of the specialized literature, normative documents, and methodological sources allowed for the formulation of an original conceptual model for approaching personnel risk from a dual perspective (Fig. 1.)

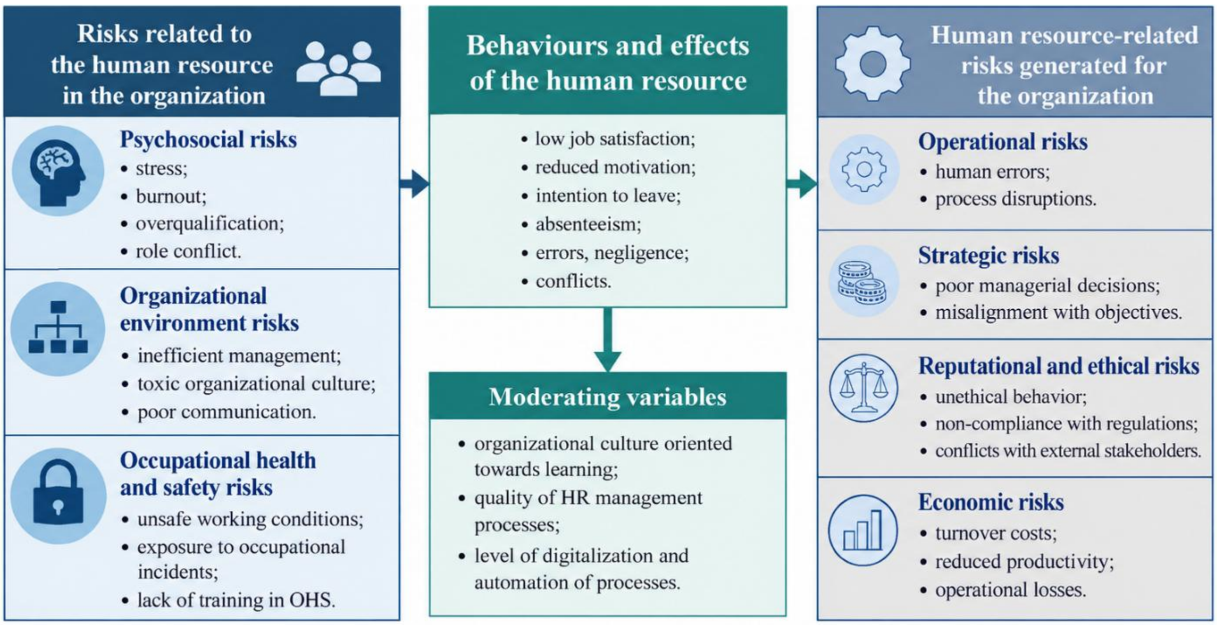

Fig. 1. Integrated systemic model of human resource risks

Source: developed by the author

This conceptual model reflects the causal chain according to which human resources, in the process of carrying out work tasks, are exposed to organizational risks. Their impact is influenced and mitigated by human resource management practices and organizational culture, which shape employees' states, attitudes, and behaviors. These, in turn, can lead to behaviors and decisions that generate risks for the organization.

According to this approach, human resources are analyzed from a dual perspective: on the one hand, as the subject of risks, being influenced by organizational factors, and on the other hand, as a potential source of risks for the organization, through employees' behaviors and actions. Human resources acquire a strategic role within the processes of identifying, preventing, and managing these risks, contributing to strengthening the organization's response capacity. The conceptual model developed constitutes the theoretical foundation of the research and provides an integrative framework for investigating the relationship between the risks affecting human resources, the risks generated by them, and organizational performance.

The sociological survey method was selected to validate the conceptual model, and the questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting primary data. The sample was not random; the selection of the nine companies investigated was made intentionally, based on methodological criteria designed to ensure the relevance and diversity of the organizational contexts analyzed in relation to the research objectives. First, organizations operating in different economic fields were selected (energy and utilities, water treatment and distribution, the chemical industry, fire protection, transportation, technical installations and services, construction, and industrial equipment), characterized by different work processes, risk levels, and human resource management requirements. This diversity allows for assessing the applicability of the proposed conceptual model in varied organizational environments. Second, the sample includes both public- and private-sector enterprises, as well as organizations of different sizes (small, medium, and large). This structure facilitates the comparative analysis of personnel risks according to organizational characteristics and contributes to increasing the generalizability of the research conclusions.

The selection of organizations included entities with different levels of organizational maturity, evidenced by their year of establishment, allowing for an analysis of the influence of organizational experience, the development of managerial systems, and the particularities of organizational culture on the manifestation and management of personnel risks. An essential selection criterion was the organizations' willingness to participate in the research and to provide the information necessary for carrying out the empirical investigation, including access to personnel for administering the questionnaires and to the organizational indicators used in the analysis. This condition was indispensable for correlating employees' perceptions with objective indicators of organizational performance, a central element of the research methodology.

The construction of the sample was not aimed at ensuring statistical representativeness for the entire population of organizations, but rather at achieving the analytical representativeness necessary to test the conceptual model developed and to highlight the relationships between the risks generated by human resources, the risks to which personnel are exposed, and organizational performance across varied organizational contexts.

In addition to the empirical research, the use of internal document analysis and statistical analysis of secondary data provided by the investigated companies was also planned. This approach allowed for broadening the research perspective by correlating employees' perceptions with objective indicators of economic-financial performance and the efficiency of human resource use. For this purpose, relevant indicators were selected, grouped into three complementary categories: indicators of resources made available to personnel, reflecting the material and financial basis of the activity, and indicators of resource-use efficiency, highlighting how these resources are capitalized on in operational processes. The indicators mentioned reflect the capacity of personnel and management to transform resources into sales and profit, highlight the degree of asset utilization and cost control, and express the efficiency of operational processes. The third group contains indicators of results generated by personnel, expressing employees' direct contribution to value creation and to achieving economic-financial performance. The integrated analysis of these categories allows for highlighting the causal relationship between the level of staffing, the efficiency of resource use, and the economic-financial performance achieved.

A separate subchapter was dedicated to presenting the nine organizations included in the research. Their general characteristics were analyzed, such as field of activity, market longevity, size, certifications held, and other elements relevant to understanding the organizational context. The diversity of the companies investigated, coming from different economic sectors and having distinct organizational particularities, contributes to increasing the representativeness and applied value of the research, allowing for capturing a varied range of situations and personnel risk management practices.

The final part of the chapter presents the analysis of the economic-financial indicators and the efficiency of human resource use within the investigated companies. This stage allowed for outlining the economic and financial profile of the organizations, highlighting the level of performance achieved, and identifying trends regarding the use of human resources in correlation with the material and financial resources available. The results obtained provided objective support for interpreting the data collected through the survey and for testing the relationships between the variables analyzed, contributing to strengthening the empirical foundation of the research.

Chapter 3 "Empirical study of personnel risks from the perspective of organizational management" presents the application of the scientific approach algorithm proposed in Chapter II and begins with the analysis of respondents' perceptions from the investigated companies regarding personnel risks. In total, 715 respondents from the investigated companies responded to our request to complete the questionnaire, representing 38.2% of the companies' total employees. When asked to identify the main 3 types of risks generated by human resources within the organization where the respondents work, most responses (608) were attributed to the risk called "d*emotivation risk*" (Figure 2). According to 85% of respondents, employee demotivation represents a major risk for organizations, having negative effects on productivity, work quality, and the organizational climate.

Another important risk perceived by respondents is the risk of failure to adapt to change, mentioned by 83.1% of those surveyed. We consider this high score explainable when taking into account the fact that the contemporary organizational environment is characterized by frequent and often unpredictable changes, generated by economic, technological, social, or political factors. Uncertainty can manifest in multiple forms, from fears related to job security in the context of artificial intelligence development, to stress generated by the redefinition of roles and responsibilities. This unstable climate requires employees to have a high level of flexibility, rapid adaptability, and openness to continuous learning.

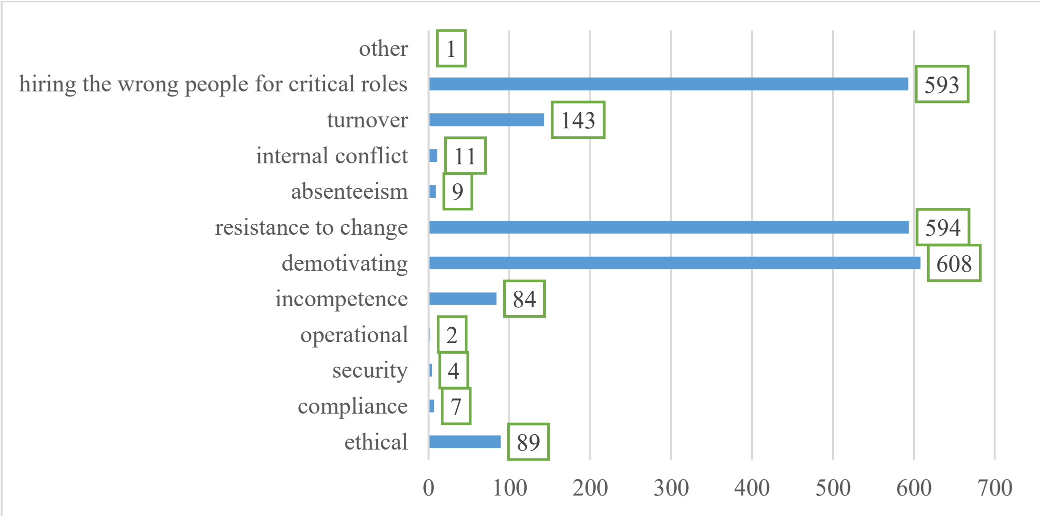

Fig. 2. Main types of risks generated by human resources within the organization where respondents work (select 3 matching options)

Source: developed by the author based on the research

A third important risk in respondents' perception, mentioned by 82.9% of them, concerns the risk of hiring unsuitable people for critical roles within the organization. We fully agree with the respondents and consider that a significant part of human-resource-related problems originate in the recruitment of people unsuited to the positions they hold. This situation is particularly characteristic of the present day, when a labor shortage is evident in many areas of organizational life. The manifestation of these risks can be associated with insufficient professional training to carry out the tasks and responsibilities of the position, with a lack of interest in or personal compatibility with the field of activity, as well as with individual values and interests that are not aligned with the professional requirements of the job. An unsuitable employee can destroy team morale, undermine trust, and reduce productivity due to inefficiency or frequent errors.

The analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding the main risks generated by personnel highlighted a series of significant negative effects on the organization, such as decreased performance, increased staff turnover, deterioration of the organizational climate, or damage to the institution's image. These findings underscore the importance of implementing effective human resource management, including rigorous policies for recruitment, evaluation, training, and employee motivation. Only through careful and proactive management of the human factor can internal risks be prevented and the organization's long-term sustainability ensured.

The analysis of the risks generated by human resources showed that they can affect the organization's functioning, performance, and image. The research argues for the need to approach human resources through two dimensions: as a source generating risk and as a resource exposed to organizational risks.

The answers provided by respondents to the question “What are the main types of risks to which employees are exposed within the organization where you work?” allowed us to note the following (Fig.3):

Respondents were not limited in the number of responses they could indicate for this question. We observe, thus, that the most responses accumulated for: professional risks — every person indicated this response (714 out of 715 respondents). We consider that the diversity of hazards present in the workplace, included within the notion of professional risk, directly influenced the responses formulated by respondents. The specific particularities of each workplace determine the existence of varied forms of risk exposure, regardless of the field of activity. Therefore, a professional environment completely free of risks represents a situation that is difficult to identify, since any occupational activity may include potential risk factors.

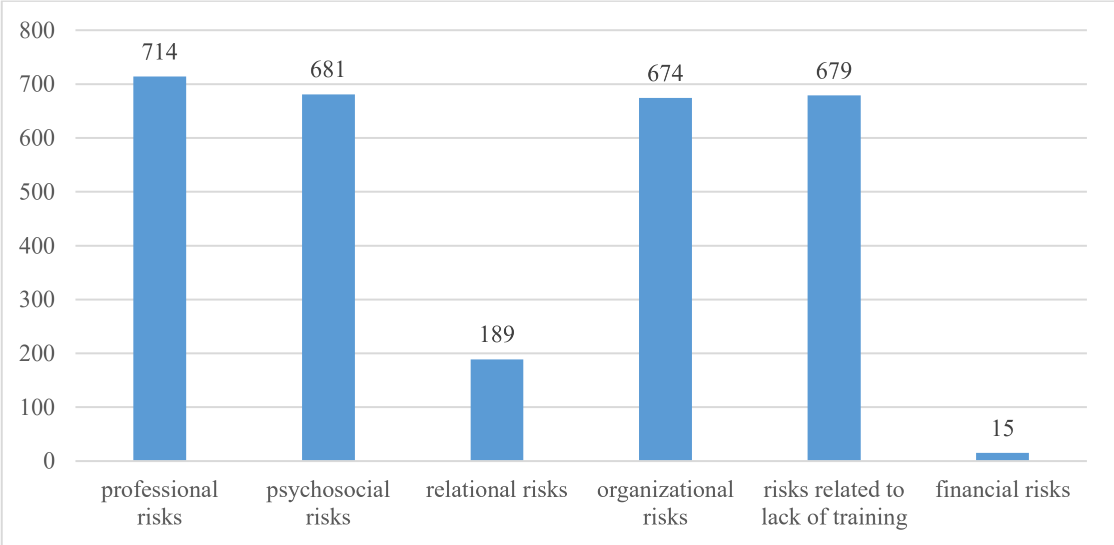

Fig. 3. Main types of risks to which employees are exposed within companies, in respondents' opinion (number of responses)

Source: developed by the author based on the research

Psychosocial risks were identified by 95.2% of respondents as an important type of risk to which they are daily subject at the workplace within the organization where they work. These can cause negative effects on employees' psychological, physical, and social health, manifesting as stress, anxiety, exhaustion, interpersonal conflicts, or decreased performance. Prolonged exposure to such conditions can affect general well-being and professional relationships, as well as personal life. The overwhelming majority of participants (98.2%) indicated that burnout and stress are present in their operational activity and lead to a decrease in concentration ability and attention levels, which significantly increases the risk of errors occurring in the performance of job tasks. A considerable percentage of respondents (74.4%) emphasized that stress negatively affects collaboration and effective communication within teams, essential elements for the safe conduct of professional activities. Some participants (20%) mentioned that employees under psychological pressure tend to neglect established procedures or protocols, which accelerates the occurrence of mistakes and compromises the quality and safety of work.

Risks related to lack of training were mentioned by 95% of the employees surveyed. We consider the manifestation of this risk to be quite serious, taking into account that an employer's disregard for adequate employee training can have a severe impact on business performance, team morale, financial turnover, and the company's ability to attract and retain good employees. Strong development and career advancement opportunities are considered among the most attractive that a company can offer to attract potential employees.

Organizational risks, indicated by 94.3% of respondents, represent the set of internal or external factors that can affect employees' activity and the organization's performance. These are characterized by their diverse nature and by their impact on employees' safety, health, efficiency, and stability, and encompass a large number of different risks, with an impact on employees that is multidimensional and can have serious consequences.

Respondents' perception regarding the main types of risks to which employees are exposed within companies allowed us to complete an important stage in personnel management in general, and in personnel risk management in particular, enabling the organization to know the main hazards in this regard. Knowledge alone is not sufficient to ensure effective management. The company's management must develop an adaptive, comprehensive, and effective system for managing the risks to which personnel are exposed. One of the main strategic challenges facing managers of modern organizations consists in minimizing the threats associated with various business processes, generated directly by the occurrence of personnel risks. Respondents consider that the organizations they belong to develop effective personnel risk management strategies, and that these are communicated to and known by employees. Responses to the question "How well do you consider that risk-prevention measures are communicated within the organization where you work?" indicate that 93% of respondents rated this communication as "very good." The analysis of the risks generated by personnel within the investigated organizations (personnel as a source of risk), as well as the diagnosis of professional and organizational risks (personnel as a subject of risk), substantiated the need to investigate the systemic links between these two perspectives on human resources. The research proposes a risk interdependence matrix, reflecting the relationships between the risks generated by personnel (causes) and the risks to which employees are exposed (effects).

Based on this matrix, we constructed the personnel risk interdependence map (Fig.4), which highlights the systemic relationships between the risks to which employees are exposed and the risks generated by their behaviors within the organization.

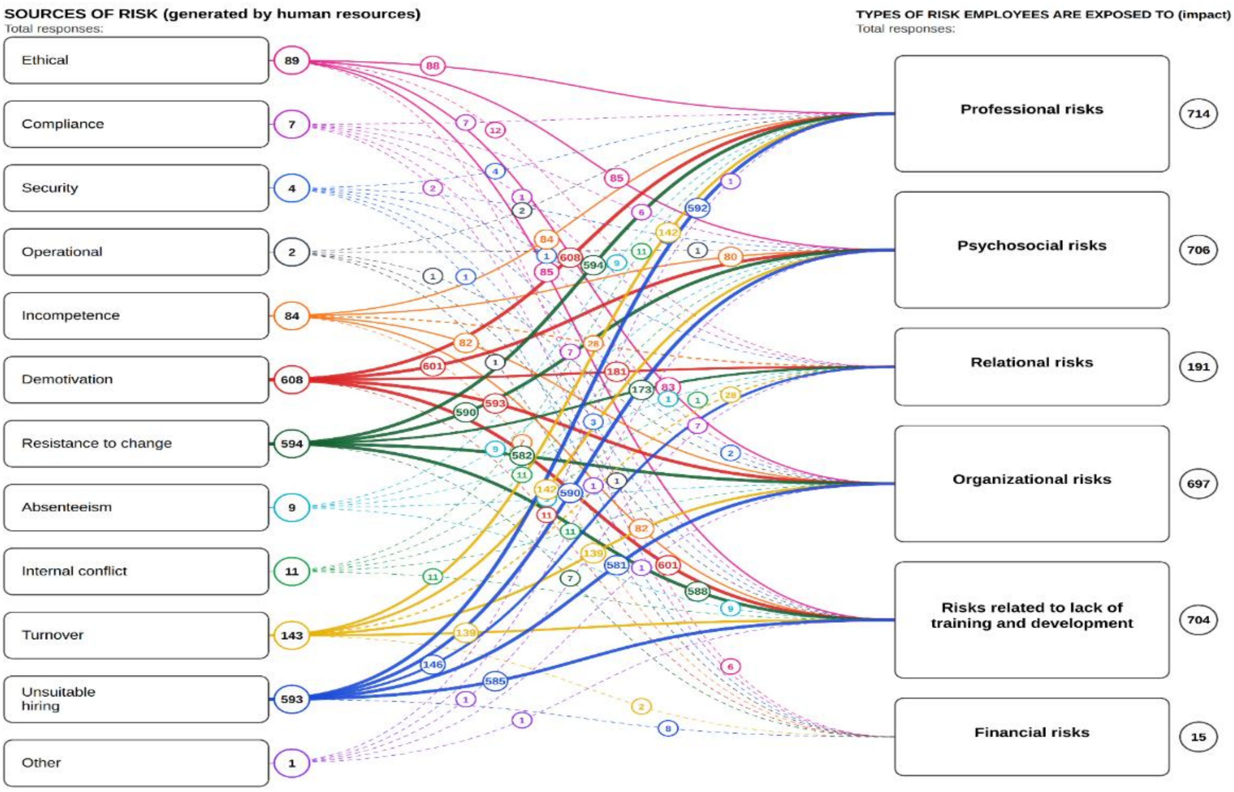

Fig. 4. Conceptual map of the interdependence of personnel risks

Source: developed by the author

The results indicate the existence of strong interdependencies between demotivation and professional risks (608), psychosocial risks (601), risks related to lack of training (601), and organizational risks (593); *failure to adapt to change (593 responses)* — the values are close to those of demotivation and suggest a structural correlation between the two. This situation indicates an organizational dynamic characterized by high pressure for change or ineffective change management. *inappropriate hiring (592 responses)* — is strongly correlated with all types of risk. This indicates a structural problem at the level of recruitment and selection, role definition, and competency management. It is a primary causal factor, as it generates incompetence, adaptation difficulties, and decreased motivation.

The analysis of the correlation between different types of risks, the existence of various amplifying relationships between them, as well as the need for effective involvement of company management in reducing these relationships and, consequently, reducing the impact they may have on the company's overall performance, led us to develop the Causal Model of Personnel Risks (Fig.5), through which we could gain a deeper understanding of how personnel-generated risks influence one another and what their impact is on the organization.

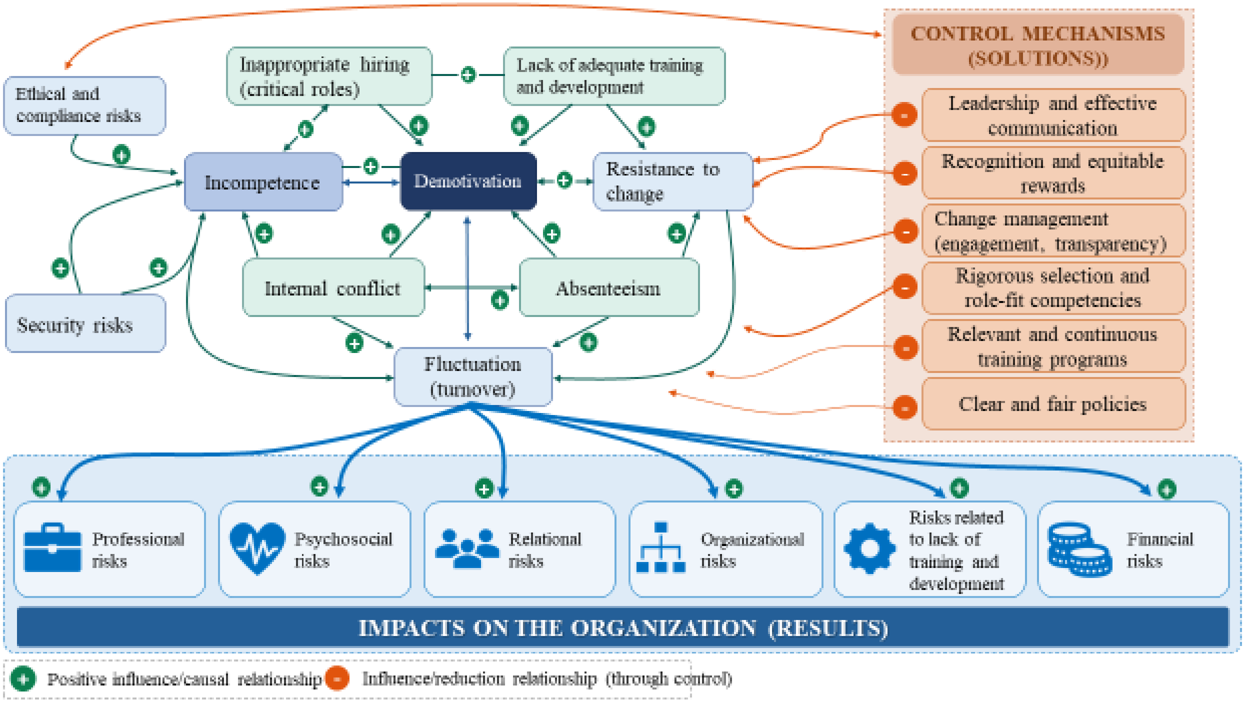

Fig. 5. Unitary relational model of personnel risks in organizational management

Source: developed by the author

Through this model, we aimed to highlight the fact that risks associated with human resources do not occur in isolation, but form an interdependent, dynamic system. The model is structured across three levels: structural causes, intermediate organizational states, and impacts on the organization, complemented by control mechanisms that can intervene across the entire system. Following the empirical research, we identified two fundamental causes, which we placed at the base of the model: inappropriate hiring (particularly for critical roles) and lack of adequate training and development. It is precisely these that initiate the causal chains. They directly influence the emergence of internal imbalances and indirectly affect the organization's capacity for adaptation and performance.

In this way, we consider Hypothesis No. 1 validated, according to which personnel-generated risks and risks affecting human resources are interdependent, exhibiting reciprocal influences within the organization.

The dynamic element of the model is represented by the intermediate organizational states, which include certain types of risk generated by human resources within the organization, such as incompetence, demotivation, failure to adapt to change, internal conflict, absenteeism, and staff turnover. Causal relationships exist between these variables, most of which are amplifying relationships. At the same time, internal conflict and absenteeism interact and can amplify each other. Ultimately, all these variables converge toward staff turnover, which becomes a critical point of the system.

The intermediate states generate direct effects on the organization, with the impact materializing in various types of risks to which employees are subject while working within the organization: professional risks (low performance, errors); psychosocial risks (stress, exhaustion); relational risks (conflicts, poor communication); organizational risks (affecting processes and culture); risks related to lack of training; financial risks (direct and indirect costs). These impacts are the cumulative result of the system's dynamics and reflect the level of organizational vulnerability.

Ethical and security risks, classified within the category of personnel-generated risks, were placed peripherally, this positioning being justified by the fact that they primarily influence incompetence and, indirectly, the system's other components. They do not appear as dominant factors, but rather as contextual variables.

The components listed are particularly important to identify at the organizational level. However, the main goal is to find ways to interrupt these causal chains or, at least, reduce them. This role falls to the organization's management, which can intervene using various tools. On the right side of the model, we included a set of tools (mechanisms) that can reduce or interrupt the causal chains: effective leadership and communication, fair recognition and rewards, change management, rigorous role–competency selection and matching, relevant and continuous training programs, and clear and equitable organizational policies. In this way, we consider Hypothesis No. 2 validated, according to which the relationships between the structural causes of personnel risks and organizational impact are systemic and dynamic in nature, being mediated by intermediate organizational states and employee behaviors and regulated by managerial control mechanisms.

The analysis of the specialized literature on human-resource-related risks allowed for the development of an original conceptual model of personnel risk, grounded in the dual perspective of human resources - as the subject of risk and as a source of risk (Figure 1). The model was validated through empirical research, with the results confirming its conceptual coherence and the relevance of the proposed relationships between variables. The research highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of personnel risks, demonstrating that they are influenced by mechanisms of interdependence and feedback that go beyond linear relationships. The results obtained also highlighted certain limitations of the initial model, determined by the lack of explicit differentiation between levels of analysis (individual, team, and organizational), by the non-integration of external environmental influences, and by the predominant emphasis on the negative manifestations of human behavior. These findings substantiated the need to develop an extended version of the model, integrating the systemic dimension, the multilevel perspective, external factors, and both the negative manifestations and the positive potential of human resources, thus offering a more robust conceptual framework, closer to organizational reality (Fig.6).

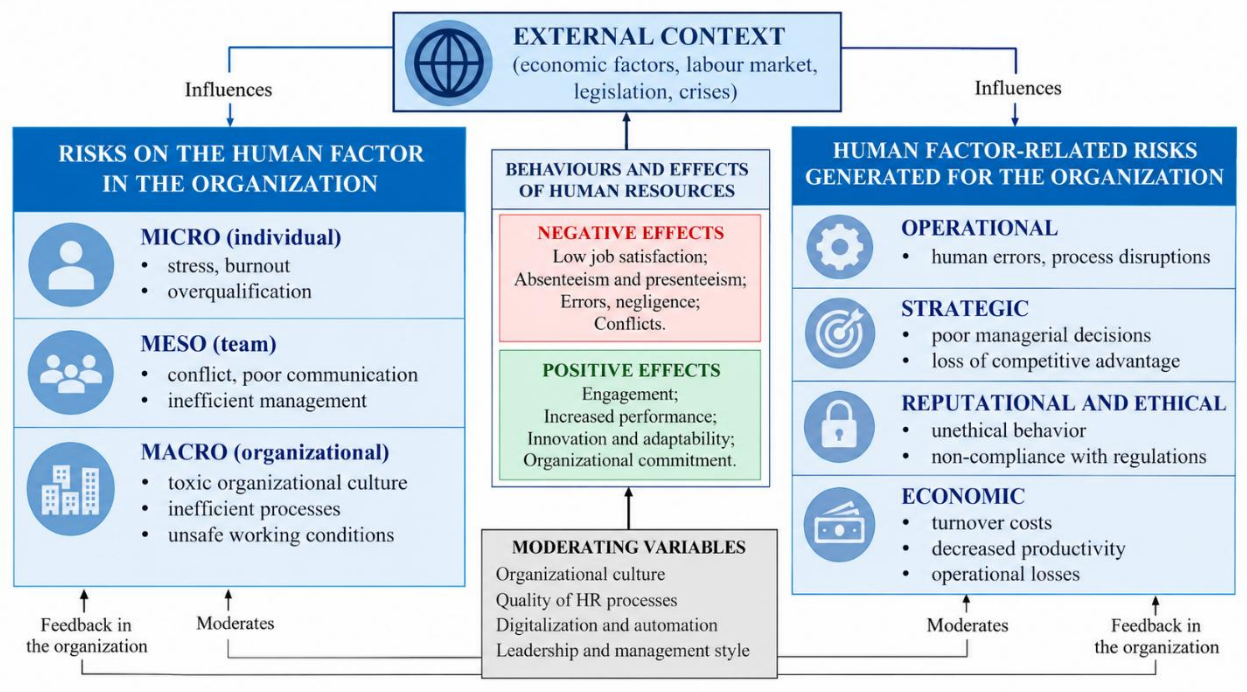

Fig. 6. Integrated systemic model of human-resource-related risks (extended version)

Source: developed by the author

The conceptual model, in its extended version, proposes a systemic and dynamic approach to personnel risks, highlighting the interdependencies between internal and external factors, employee behaviors, and organizational outcomes. Unlike the initial model, it describes circular and recursive relationships, based on feedback mechanisms, through which organizational outcomes influence the risks and conditions that generate them, thus more accurately reflecting the dynamics of the organizational environment.

The model integrates the influences of the external environment (economic factors, the labor market, the legislative framework, crisis situations) and of the internal context (organizational culture, human resource management, the level of digitalization), regarded as factors that can generate, amplify, or mitigate personnel risks. A novel element is the structuring of the model across three levels of analysis: micro (individual), mezzo (team), and macro (organizational), which allows for highlighting the specific mechanisms through which risks manifest and for substantiating managerial interventions tailored to each level.

The proposed model offers a balanced perspective on human resource behavior, integrating both negative effects (stress, absenteeism, errors, conflicts) and positive effects (commitment, performance, innovation, and organizational involvement). The risks generated for the organization are grouped into five categories: operational, strategic, reputational, ethical, and economic, facilitating the analysis of the impact of employee behavior on organizational performance and the prioritization of managerial measures.

The relationships between the components are represented through cause–effect connections, feedback mechanisms, moderating relationships, and reciprocal influences, transforming the model into a dynamic, self-regulating system. Through this approach, the model provides an integrated conceptual framework for understanding how personnel risks arise, evolve, and influence organizational performance.

In order to investigate the relationship between personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, and to test Hypothesis No. 3, we first developed the risk profile for each company, and then, based on it, formed a Personnel-Generated Risk Manifestation Index (IMRARU), which allowed us to quantify the level of exposure of each organization to human-resource-related risks.

To develop the risk profile, we divided all the personnel risks analyzed, according to their importance, into two groups, which we called: primary investigated risks (primary risks). These are the risks that explain why vulnerabilities arise, representing the system's triggering factors (ethics and compliance, security, inappropriate hiring, lack of training). They do not result from other risks, but rather generate them. Manifestation risks are generated by the primary risks and, in turn, generate other risks and effects on performance (incompetence, demotivation, failure to adapt to change, internal conflict, absenteeism, turnover).

The profile reflects not only the existence of risks, but also their structure, as well as the way in which they interconnect within an organization. This is consistent with the systemic model we developed and presented in Fig.5, and we consider that it provides a solid basis for the connection with economic-financial indicators.

Based on the above, we propose the definition according to which the personnel risk profile represents the specific configuration of the risks generated by human resources within an organization, characterized by the nature, intensity, and interdependence relationships between primary risks and manifestation risks, which determine the organization's level of vulnerability and influence its performance.

Since primary risks do not directly affect performance, but rather manifest through a series of risks that become visible in the behavior and functioning of human resources and which, subsequently, influence the organization's performance, the index that will allow us to see the correlation with organizational performance is built based on manifestation risks, which generate an impact on the organization's performance. The Personnel-Generated Risk Manifestation Index (IMRARU) was calculated by relating the cumulative frequency of manifestation risks to the total number of possible responses (3 responses × number of respondents).

The Composite Organizational Performance Indicator (IPO) was calculated based on the selection of the indicators most relevant to the research objective, analyzed in Chapter II of the doctoral thesis: labor productivity, profit per employee, asset turnover, and net profit margin. These indicators were selected because they reflect both the efficiency of human resource use and the organization's capacity to transform available resources into economic results. According to the proposed systemic causal model, the indicators analyzed can be directly or indirectly influenced by the manifestation of personnel-generated risks. Labor productivity and profit per employee express the efficiency of human capital, while asset turnover and net profit margin reflect the efficiency of organizational resource use and the final economic outcome. These indicators form the basis for constructing a composite index — the Organizational Performance Index (IPO).

For calculating the IPO, we considered it more accurate to determine the average value of the indicators considered for the 2020–2024 period, rather than for a single year, since a 5-year average will characterize the organization more faithfully than the performance of a single year.

The organizational performance index was calculated according to the following relationship:

$IPO = 0{,}35 * W' + 0{,}35 * Ps' + 0{,}15 * RotA' + 0{,}15 * Marja'$, where (1)

W' - represents standardized labor productivity;

Ps' – standardized net profit per employee;

RotA' – standardized asset turnover;

MARJA' – standardized net profit margin.

The need to standardize the indicators used is determined by the fact that they have different units of measurement (thousands of lei, coefficients).

The weights used in constructing the Organizational Performance Index were established according to the relevance of each indicator to the research objective. Labor productivity and net profit per employee received higher weights, of 0.35 each, since they directly reflect the efficiency of human resource use and its contribution to the organization's economic results. Asset turnover and net profit margin were included with weights of 0.15 each, as they express the organization's overall performance but are also influenced by external or structural factors not exclusively related to human resources. The structure of the weights reflects the predominance of the dimension associated with human capital efficiency, while also integrating the overall economic-financial component.

To deepen the analysis and verify how personnel-generated risks are associated with different dimensions of organizational performance, we considered it appropriate to construct two additional composite indicators: the Human Resource Use Efficiency Index (IEFP) and the Economic-Financial Performance Index (IPEF), which were subsequently correlated with the Personnel-Generated Risk Manifestation Index (IMRARU). By constructing these two indicators, we sought to distinguish the direct effects of personnel-generated risks on the efficiency of human resource use from their indirect effects on the organization's economic-financial performance.

The Human Resource Use Efficiency Index characterizes the performance of human resources and is calculated as follows:

$IEFP = \frac{W+Ps}{2}$, where (2)

W – average value of labor productivity;

Ps – average value of profit/employee

The Economic-Financial Performance Index is calculated according to the following relationship:

$IPEF = \frac{RA+MP}{2}$, where (3)

RA – average value of asset turnover;

MP – average value of profit margin

Statistical processing was carried out using the *IBM SPSS Statistics 20* software, applying the Spearman correlation coefficient, which is considered appropriate in situations where the sample is small, the variables do not meet the normality assumption, or the aim is to assess a monotonic relationship between variables (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020). The relationship between IMRARU and the organizational performance indicators was analyzed using the Spearman correlation coefficient (ρ). The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the correlation analysis results between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and the composite indicators of organizational performance

Relationship analyzed	Spearman ρ	p	Interpretation
IMRARU – IPO	0,450	0,224	Moderate negative relationship, not statistically significant
IMRARU – IEFP	0,550	0,125	Moderately high negative relationship, not statistically significant
IMRARU - IEFP	0,183	0,637	Very weak positive relationship, not statistically significant

Source: developed by the author based on the research

The Spearman coefficients obtained indicate the existence of an inverse relationship between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, and respectively between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and the efficiency of human resource use. The strongest association was identified in relation to the efficiency of human resource use ($\rho = -0.550$), suggesting that the effects of personnel-generated risks manifest primarily on the efficiency of human capital and subsequently on organizational performance. Given a sample of nine organizations, the relationships identified do not reach the threshold of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$), which allows us to note that *the direction of the identified relationship confirms the theoretical assumption according to which the intensification of personnel-generated risks is associated with a decrease in organizational performance. However, the lack of statistical significance requires interpreting the results as an empirical tendency, which needs further validation on a larger sample.*

The results of the analysis allow us to conclude that personnel-generated risks do not exert a direct influence on overall economic-financial performance. They first influence the efficiency of human resource use, and this, over time, is also reflected in organizational performance, which confirms the mechanism from the systemic model presented in Fig. 7 and, at the same time, suggests the following causal chain:

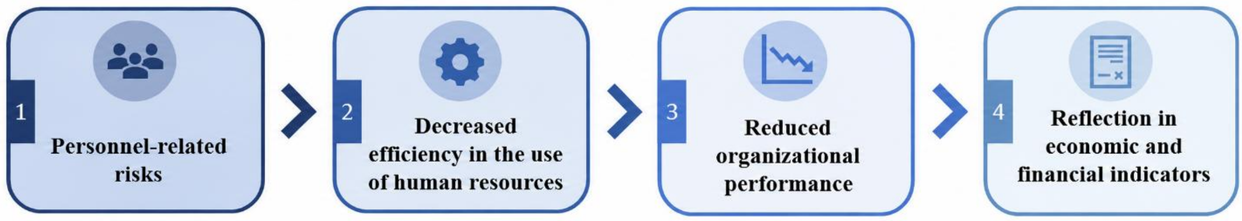

Fig. 7. The influence of personnel-generated risks on organizational performance

Source: developed by the author based on the research

This causal chain is in full agreement with the systemic model we built in the thesis (Figure 5). It explains why the relationship with IEFP is stronger than that with IPO, and why the relationship with IPEF is very weak.

The results of the correlation analysis allow for *the partial validation of research hypothesis No. 3, according to which we assumed the existence of an inverse relationship between the level of manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, such that organizations in which these risks are more pronounced tend to record a lower level of performance.*

The results obtained and the validation of the research hypotheses are not limited to confirming the identified trends, but also provide the necessary foundation for formulating managerial recommendations, tailored to the personnel risk profile and aimed at improving organizational performance within the investigated companies.

Recommendations are formulated for the investigated organizations regarding the improvement of personnel risk management, grouped in accordance with the proposed systemic model:

1. *Interventions targeting structural causes* (primary prevention). Their purpose is to reduce the occurrence of incompetence and initial vulnerabilities. The recommendations formulated for the investigated organizations target: implementing rigorous role–competency selection and matching processes; developing systematic training and continuous development programs; standardizing and clarifying organizational procedures; introducing effective change management mechanisms.

2. *Managing intermediate organizational states* with the aim of preventing dysfunctions from turning into risk behaviors. The recommendations refer to the need for: periodic assessment of motivation and satisfaction levels; early identification of demotivation and resistance to change; implementation of transparent communication mechanisms; development of organizational well-being programs.

3. *Managing employee behaviors*. Their purpose is to reduce operational and relational risks. Behaviors represent the critical point where risks transform into organizational effects; for this reason, we consider it necessary to introduce systems for monitoring behavioral indicators, such as absenteeism, errors, and conflicts, and to promote a culture based on responsibility, ethics, and collaboration. The implementation of continuous feedback mechanisms is recommended.

4. *Using control mechanisms* (direct intervention) with the aim of reducing negative effects and stabilizing the system. The model highlights the critical role of control mechanisms in reducing risks, and the recommendations refer to: developing participative leadership; implementing fair recognition and reward systems; using change management as a strategic tool; strengthening the human resources function.

5. *Implementing early warning mechanisms*. The purpose of these actions is to ensure rapid intervention before risks escalate. Given that risk prevention requires early identification of dysfunction signals, our recommendations refer to: using systems that allow employee-related problems to be observed early (e.g., absenteeism, turnover, errors); correlating behavioral indicators with organizational risks; periodic audits of the organizational climate.

5. *Implementing early warning mechanisms based on human resource data*. It is recommended to develop systems through which the organization can identify, in advance, risk signals generated by employee behaviors (increases in absenteeism, high turnover, decreased performance).

6. *Managing feedback loops* (systemic approach). The purpose of these recommendations is to prevent the escalation of risks in a chain: identifying and monitoring risk loops (e.g., demotivation – turnover – overload); early intervention at critical points in the system; using lessons learned to adjust policies.

7. *Integrating the external context into risk management*. Organizations must adopt an adaptive approach to the external environment in order to reduce vulnerability to external factors, through: continuous monitoring of the labor market; adapting human resource strategies to the economic context; developing organizational resilience capacity;

Through the integration of the results obtained within the research, a *unified methodological algorithm for the assessment and management of personnel risks* takes shape, which combines the identification and systemic modeling of risks, the construction of the organization's risk profile, the quantification of risk manifestation through composite indicators, the assessment of the relationship between personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, and the substantiation of managerial recommendations, thus providing an applicable tool for organizations' decision-making process.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

In the context of the theoretical and methodological grounding of this research, the analysis of the specialized literature and managerial practices allowed for the delimitation of two major directions, essential for understanding the complexity of the topic addressed: human resources as a risk-generating factor for the organization, and the risks to which the human factor is exposed within the organizational environment. The initial formulation of the topic might suggest a one-sided approach, centered on personnel as a source of risk; however, this research starts from the premise that, in contemporary organizational reality, human resources must be analyzed in a dual capacity: both as a generator and as a recipient of risks. These two dimensions are not independent, but deeply interrelated, each directly influencing the other. The research proposes an integrated and bidirectional approach to personnel risks, going beyond traditional one-sided perspectives. This vision contributes to outlining a more comprehensive conceptual framework and can be considered, within certain limits, an innovative approach in the field, by highlighting the interdependence between the two dimensions of risk associated with human resources.

The conclusions below are formulated in accordance with the established objectives of the research.

1. The critical analysis of the perspectives of domestic and international scholars highlights the fact that the notion of risk does not have a unified definition, being approached differently depending on the field and the context of application. The specialized literature shows a consensus regarding the probabilistic nature of risk and the close relationship between it, uncertainty, and the potential impact on organizational objectives. Risk is defined as a combination of the probability of an event occurring and its associated consequences, manifesting through both negative components (threats) and positive components (opportunities). This variety of approaches shows that risk must be viewed in a unified yet adaptable manner, taking into account the particularities of the organization and the environment in which it operates.

2. The achievement of the second objective: "Defining and delimiting the concept of 'personnel risk' in an organizational context" allowed for clarifying the concept of "personnel risk" by delimiting it from other types of organizational risks. Its dual nature was highlighted — employees can represent both sources of risk and subjects of risk. This delimitation contributes to a clearer understanding of the role of human resources within risk management and provides a conceptual basis for their effective analysis and management. The research allowed for the delimitation and definition of two main categories of risk: personnel risk within the organization (human resources as the subject of risk) and personnel as a risk factor for the organization, with a proprietary view on the concept of personnel risk management being formulated.

3. The achievement of Objective 3 demonstrated that personnel risks are strongly influenced by the way organizational management is designed and applied. The comparative

analysis of the main personnel risk management frameworks (Paul and Mitlacher, Mercer Marsh Benefits, AIHR, Human-Centric Risk Management), as well as of established benchmarks (strategic human resource management, ISO 31000, and COSO ERM), highlights the need to integrate personnel risks into the organization's overall risk management system. The research results confirm that these risks cannot be managed in isolation, but rather through a systemic approach, in which human resources are treated both as a source of risk and as an essential factor in its prevention and management. The research results highlight the decisive role of organizational culture, leadership, and human resource management practices in reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening organizational resilience.

Objective No. 4 was achieved through the identification and classification of the main types of risks associated with human resources, both from the perspective of employees as a source of risk and as subjects exposed to it. Based on the empirical investigation carried out within nine companies in Romania, risks of a professional, psychosocial, organizational, and relational nature were highlighted, as well as factors such as lack of competence, poor communication, ineffective management, or failure to adapt to change. The analysis allowed not only for the systematization of these risks, but also for the identification of the causes that generate and amplify them, demonstrating their interdependent nature. The results obtained provide a clear picture of the complexity of personnel risks and constitute a solid basis for developing effective prevention and management measures within organizations.

5. Highlighting the interdependence between personnel-generated risks and those affecting human resources (Objective 5) demonstrated that these constitute elements of an integrated causal system, in which human resources simultaneously play the role of generator and recipient of risk. The research led to the development of the personnel risk interdependence map, which allowed for the identification and visualization of the intensity of the relationships between the sources of risk and their effects, highlighting the existence of dominant elements characterized by very strong links, particularly around demotivation, failure to adapt to change, and inappropriate hiring. The systemic causal model developed deepened the analysis, highlighting the existence of causal chains and amplifying feedback loops, in which intermediate variables, such as incompetence, demotivation, and failure to adapt to change, mediate the relationship between structural causes and organizational impacts. The development of the systemic causal model of personnel risks highlights the interdependent and dynamic nature of these risks, integrating both structural causes and intermediate organizational states, employee behaviors, and the impact on the organization. An element that adds value to the model is the representation of feedback loops and amplifying relationships, which help explain the recursive nature of the risks and how they can evolve over time. The integration of control mechanisms highlights the possibility of managerial intervention on determining factors, providing an applicable framework for reducing organizational vulnerabilities. Through the integration of these dimensions, the model goes beyond traditional linear approaches and offers a systemic perspective.

6. The achievement of Objective 6 of the research resulted in the development of the Integrated Systemic Model of Human-Resource-Related Risks (extended version). It provides a coherent and comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding and integratively managing personnel risks. Through its structure, the model integrates multiple relevant dimensions, such as: structural causes, intermediate organizational states, employee behaviors, as well as external influences and control mechanisms, highlighting their interdependencies and dynamics. The

applicable nature of the model results from the possibility of formulating concrete managerial recommendations, aimed at preventing and reducing risks. The proposed model explains the mechanisms generating risks and provides support for substantiating managerial decisions, contributing to the integrated management of human-resource-related risks.

7. In order to assess the relationship between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance (Objective 7), a composite personnel risk indicator was developed — the Personnel-Generated Risk Manifestation Index (IMRARU) — along with three composite performance indicators: the Organizational Performance Index (IPO), the Human Resource Use Efficiency Index (IEFP), and the Economic-Financial Performance Index (IPEF). The application of correlation analysis revealed a tendency toward an inverse relationship between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and organizational performance, as well as between the manifestation of personnel-generated risks and the efficiency of human resource use, supporting the hypothesis that the intensification of personnel-generated risks is associated with a decrease in the organization's performance.

The research carried out allowed us to formulate several recommendations regarding the improvement of activity in the field analyzed, addressed to the investigated enterprises and presented in subchapter 3.4. The degree of generalization of the results obtained allows for extending the recommendations formulated to other organizations.

Additional recommendations of a general nature are presented, applicable to a broader range of companies.

1. *Integrating personnel risks into the overall risk management system*. Organizations should explicitly include human-resource-related risks within the organizational risk management system, treating them at the same level as operational, financial, or strategic risks. This involves including personnel risks in risk registers and defining clear responsibilities for managing them.

2. *Developing and implementing standardized procedures for identifying and assessing human-resource-related risks*. These procedures can, to a large extent, follow the general logic of risk management applicable to other categories (operational, financial, or strategic), while requiring adaptation to the particularities of human resources. Organizations need to develop clear methodologies that include:

- systematic identification of personnel risks (e.g., incompetence, demotivation, resistance to change, conflicts);
- assessment of the probability of occurrence and their impact on organizational activity;
- prioritization of risks and establishment of appropriate intervention measures.

The importance of these procedures derives from the fact that personnel risks cannot be assessed exclusively through quantitative indicators, but require an integrated approach that combines quantitative with qualitative methods. The particular nature of human resources, unlike other types of resources, has a pronounced behavioral and psychological dimension, being influenced by subjective, relational, and contextual factors.

3. *Integrating these procedures into the overall organizational risk management system*, so that personnel risks are monitored and managed in correlation with other risk categories. Such an approach contributes to increasing the organization's capacity to identify vulnerabilities generated by the human factor early and to intervene effectively to reduce their impact.

4. *Implementing early warning mechanisms based on human resource data*. It is recommended to develop systems through which the organization can identify, in advance, risk

signals generated by employee behaviors (increases in absenteeism, high turnover, decreased performance).

5. *Integrating change management into the risk-reduction strategy*. Organizational changes must be treated as potential sources of personnel risk and managed in a planned manner.

6. *Aligning human resource policies with the risk management strategy*. Recruitment, evaluation, reward, and development policies must be correlated with organizational risk-reduction objectives.

Limitations of the research. Despite the complexity and depth of the study, the research presents certain limitations of a theoretical, methodological, and empirical nature.

First, methodological limitations should be noted. The research methodology involved using a survey as the main instrument for collecting primary data on personnel risks within companies in Romania. Given the individual nature of the research, the sample size was influenced by the author's capacity to attract participating organizations. The sample can be considered representative of the companies included in the study (38.2%), but remains limited from the perspective of generalizing the results on a broad scale. Another limitation of the research is represented by the subjective nature of the responses, which reflect respondents' individual perceptions. The different level of knowledge and familiarity with the risk categories analyzed may influence how the questions were interpreted and, implicitly, the responses formulated by participants.

Second, the research faced limitations related to access to information within the organizations analyzed, particularly regarding the availability of specific indicators relevant to the topic studied (such as the staff turnover rate, the number of work accidents, employee satisfaction levels, etc.).

Third, these methodological and empirical constraints have an impact on the interpretation of the results, in the sense that they must be analyzed with caution, without being extended absolutely to all organizations. The limitations identified outline directions for future research, aimed at deepening and validating the results obtained through the use of larger samples and complementary data sources.

Directions for future research.

The research presents certain limitations inherent to the methodological approach adopted, which, however, do not diminish the value of the results obtained, but rather highlight opportunities for deepening and extending the research. The following future research directions are highlighted:

- ✓ Validating the methodological model on an extended sample of organizations.
- ✓ Applying advanced statistical methods to investigate the causal relationships between personnel-generated risks and organizational performance.
- ✓ Extending the model by integrating emerging risks generated by digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and new forms of work organization.
- ✓ Analyzing differences in risk perception according to personnel category (managers and executive staff), field of activity, and organizational characteristics.
- ✓ Developing and validating a standardized diagnostic and monitoring instrument for personnel risks, based on the proposed methodological model.

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ADNOTARE

SCARLAT Constantin, „RESURSELE UMANE CA FACTOR DE RISC AL MANAGEMENTULUI ORGANIZAȚIEI” , Teză pentru titlul de doctor în științe economice, specialitatea 521.03. Economie și management în domeniul de activitate, Chișinău, 2026

Structura lucrării: introducere, 3 capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 193 titluri, 24 anexe, 146 de pagini de text de bază, 19 figuri și 11 tabele.

Rezultatele cercetării sunt publicate în 9 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte cheie: abordare duală a riscurilor de personal, indicator sintetic, managementul riscurilor de personal, manifestarea riscurilor, performanța organizațională, profilul riscurilor de personal, resurse umane, risc organizațional, risc de personal, risc generat de personal.

Scopul studiului: fundamentarea teoretică și metodologică a rolului care revine resurselor umane în calitate de factor de risc în managementul organizației, dezvoltând o abordare integrată care ar evidenția atât riscurile generate de personal, cât și riscurile la care este expus factorul uman, precum și impactul interdependenței acestora asupra performanței organizaționale.

Obiectivele cercetării: realizarea unei analize critice a abordărilor savanților autohtoni și străini cu privire la conceptul de risc; definirea și delimitarea conceptului de „risc al personalului” în context organizațional; studierea relației dintre riscurile de personal și managementul organizațional, luând în considerare principalele cadre și modele de management al riscului resurselor umane; identificarea și gruparea principalelor tipuri de riscuri generate de resursele umane, dar și a riscurilor la care este expus factorul uman în mediul organizațional în baza realizării unei investigații empirice; evidențierea relațiilor de interdependență între riscurile de personal și a mecanismelor cauzale dintre riscurile generate de resursa umană și riscurile la care este expus personalul; fundamentarea unui cadru metodologic de evaluare și gestiune a riscurilor asociate resurselor umane prin elaborarea unui model sistemic integrat; determinarea relației dintre manifestarea riscurilor generate de personal și performanța organizațională, prin elaborarea unor indicatori sintetici ai riscurilor și performanței. Aplicarea analizei corelaționale, în scopul elaborării unor recomandări pentru managementul organizației.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică constă în abordarea complexă și sistemică a resurselor umane ca factor de risc în managementul organizației. *Principalele contribuții originale ale cercetării sunt: d*ezvoltarea bazei teoretice a managementului riscului organizațional prin integrarea dimensiunii umane, prin abordarea resurselor umane nu doar ca element practic al organizației, dar ca factor dinamic, care poate să genereze, să intensifice sau să reducă riscurile organizaționale; integrarea conceptului de risc de personal în cadrul managementului resurselor umane, prin argumentarea teoretică a acestuia și plasarea sa ca element separat, dar interdependent; elaborarea unui model conceptual, bazat pe abordarea duală a riscului de personal, care exprimă dubla ipostază în care se află resursa umană – atât ca factor generator de risc pentru companie, cât și ca subiect expus riscurilor generate de mediul organizațional, prin distingerea interdependențelor dintre cauze, manifestări și efecte, dar și raporturile dintre riscurile individuale, de echipă și cele organizaționale; fundamentarea unui model integrat de evaluare și gestiune al riscurilor de personal, care integrează într-un tot întreg identificarea și modelarea sistemică a riscurilor generate de personal, elaborarea profilului de risc al organizației, măsurarea manifestării riscurilor prin elaborarea unor indicatori sintetici, cuantificarea relației dintre riscurile de personal și performanța organizațională.

Problema științifică soluționată constă în insuficienta conceptualizare și abordare integrată a resurselor umane ca factor de risc în managementul organizației, în condițiile în care literatura de specialitate tratează fragmentar fie riscurile generate de personal, fie riscurile care afectează factorul uman, fără a evidenția interdependența și dinamica dintre aceste două dimensiuni.

Semnificația teoretică a lucrării. Cercetarea aduce o contribuție importantă la dezvoltarea și consolidarea cadrului conceptual al managementului organizațional și al managementului riscurilor, prin integrarea dimensiunii umane într-o manieră sistemică și coerentă. Semnificația teoretică este completată și de elaborarea unui model conceptual integrat al riscurilor de personal, care contribuie la sistematizarea cunoștințelor existente și creează premisele pentru dezvoltări ulterioare în domeniu. Rezultatele cercetării evidențiază necesitatea unei abordări interdisciplinare, situate la intersecția managementului resurselor umane, managementului riscurilor și comportamentului organizațional, cu implicații semnificative pentru consolidarea bazei teoretice a acestor domenii și pentru dezvoltarea unor noi direcții de cercetare.

Valoarea aplicativă a studiului este determinată de posibilitatea utilizării rezultatelor obținute în practica managerială, în vederea îmbunătățirii proceselor de identificare, evaluare și gestionare a riscurilor asociate resurselor umane.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice. Rezultatele științifice au fost implementate în cadrul a 6 companii investigate.

ANNOTATION

SCARLAT Constantin „HUMAN RESOURCES AS A RISK FACTOR IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT" Dissertation for the title of doctor of economics, specialty 521.03. Economics and Management in the Field of Activity, Chisinau, 2026.

Structure of the work: introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 193 titles, 24 appendices, 146 pages of the main text, 19 figures and 11 tables.

Results were published in 9 scientific papers.

Key words: dual approach to personnel risks, personnel risk management, personnel risk profile, human resources, organizational risk, personnel risks.

Purpose of the research: Purpose of the study: to provide a theoretical and methodological foundation for the role of human resources as a risk factor in organizational management by developing an integrated approach that highlights both the risks generated by personnel and the risks to which the human factor is exposed, as well as the impact of their interdependence on organizational performance.

Research objectives: to conduct a critical analysis of the views of domestic and foreign scholars regarding the concept of risk; to define and delimit the concept of "personnel risk" in an organizational context; to analyze the relationship between personnel risks and organizational management, with reference to the main frameworks and models of human resources risk management; identifying and systematizing the main types of risks generated by human resources, as well as the risks to which the human factor is exposed in the organizational environment, and analyzing their causes based on an empirical investigation; to identify and systematically model personnel risks by highlighting the interdependencies, causal mechanisms, and feedback loops between risks generated by personnel and those to which human resources are exposed; developing an integrated systemic model for managing human resource-related risks and establishing a methodological framework for their assessment and management at the organizational level; evaluating the relationship between the manifestation of risks generated by personnel and organizational performance by constructing composite indicators of risks and performance and applying correlational analysis, with a view to substantiating recommendations for the organization's management.

Scientific novelty and originality: developing the theoretical framework of organizational risk management by integrating the human dimension, through the conceptualization of human resources not merely as a functional element of the organization, but as a dynamic factor capable of generating, amplifying, or mitigating organizational risks; integrating the concept of personnel risk into the human resources management framework by providing a theoretical foundation for it and positioning it as a distinct yet interdependent element; developing an original conceptual model, based on a dual approach to personnel risk, which reflects the dual nature of human resources—both as a source of risk for the organization and as an element exposed to risks generated by the organizational environment—and highlights the interdependencies between causes, manifestations, and effects, as well as the relationships between individual, team, and organizational risks; the development of an integrated methodological model for the assessment and management of personnel risks, which combines into a unified approach the identification and systemic modeling of risks generated by personnel, the construction of the organization's risk profile, the quantification of risk manifestations using summary indicators, the assessment of the relationship between personnel risks and organizational performance, and the substantiation of managerial recommendations for their integrated management.

The solved scientific problem resides in the insufficient conceptualization and integrated approach of human resources as a risk factor in the management of the organization, given that the specialized literature deals fragmentarily with either the risks generated by personnel or the risks that affect the human factor, without highlighting the interdependence and dynamics between these two dimensions.

Theoretical significance of the work. The research makes an important contribution to the development and consolidation of the conceptual framework of organizational management and risk management, by integrating the human dimension in a systemic and coherent manner. The theoretical significance is also complemented by the development of an integrated conceptual model of personnel risks, which contributes to the systematization of existing knowledge and creates the premises for further developments in the field. The research also supports the need for an interdisciplinary approach, located at the intersection of human resource management, risk management and organizational behavior, thus contributing to the enrichment of the theoretical basis of these fields and to the opening of new research directions.

The practical significance of the study is determined by the possibility of using the results obtained in managerial practice, in order to improve the processes of identification, assessment and management of risks associated with human resources.

Implementation of scientific results. The scientific results were implemented within 6 investigated companies.

SCARLAT CONSTANTIN

HUMAN RESOURCES AS A RISK FACTOR IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

SPECIALTY 521.03 – Economics and Management in the Field of Activity

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