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**IMPROVING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE  
JUDICIAL COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

**Speciality 521.03 – Economics and management in the field of activity**

**SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS OF RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CONTENT OF THE THESIS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS.....	8
2. PARTICULARITIES OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE COURTS OF THEREPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.....	11
3. STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN JUDICIAL COURTS BY ASSESSING RELATED PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF JUSTICE REFORM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA .....	17
<b>GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS ON THE THESIS TOPIC .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>ANNOTATION.....</b>	<b>33</b>

## CONCEPTUAL GUIDELINES OF THE RESEARCH

**The importance and relevance of the research topic.** Human resources have constituted and continue to be the driving force in the activity of any organization, as they have proven their advantages compared to other resources. In the case of public administration institutions, including courts, the importance of human resources is much greater because the contribution of human capital to institutional performance is remarkable, unlike organizations in other fields where financial and material resources have their share of contribution to ensuring success. Similarly, human resources are at the centre of reform processes in the public sector, as they provide services, promote innovations, and produce performance.

To demonstrate their relevance and significance within organizations, human resources need effective management from those responsible, whether it is directly from human resources specialists or from the organization's managers who must have the necessary competencies in this field. Under these conditions, human resource management constitutes the set of procedures and tools that, when developed and implemented properly, contributes to ensuring the stability, coherence, and equity of the organization by unifying its human behaviours and values. Based on the aforementioned, human resource management practices must be anchored in the vision, mission, and objectives of the organization.

In the case of courts, the quality of the act of justice depends on the professionalism and performance of the staff within them. The level of professionalism of the staff in the judicial system, as well as their performance, can be measured, indirectly, by society's perception of the act of justice. From this perspective, human resource management in courts plays an essential role in shaping professional behaviours in the process of exercising, integrally, the work tasks related to the position, as well as assuming ethical roles and responsibilities that do not distort the legal act.

Currently, several dysfunctions are observed in the personnel management system in courts, characterized by the disproportionate workload among judicial staff, the duration of resolving judicial cases, the lack of synchronization in covering vacant positions, etc. The aforementioned problems prove that human resource management in courts requires improvement at all hierarchical levels of the judicial system, by providing flexibility and autonomy in the exercise of work duties.

Moreover, completing the justice reform by eliminating or reducing corruptible elements is one of the main conditions for accession to the European Union. This is the area where Moldova has sufficient shortcomings that need to be addressed to expedite the process of approaching the European Union and to regain society's trust in the act of justice. In recent years, public trust in the jurisdictional act has diminished, with the judicial system being the most detested by various social actors and the majority of society.

**The degree of study of the researched topic.** Since human resources represent one of the main resources in the activity of an organization, especially how they are managed by those responsible, human resource management has become a vital concern for both theorists and practitioners. From an evolutionary perspective, several researchers have contributed to the theoretical and methodological development of this field of activity, each standing out by the inclusion of distinct elements related to human resource management. In this context, we can highlight a multitude of researchers, both foreign and local, who have generally contributed to the development of human resource management content. Among the foreign researchers who

played an essential role in the development of human resource management, we can highlight: Armstrong, M., Beardwell, I., Bratton, J., Burloiu, P., Davis, K., Dessler, G., Fisher, C. D., Guest, D. E., Hatcher, T. G., Ivancevich, J.M., Kleiman, L.S., Manolescu, A., Mathis, R. L., Petrescu, I., Pfeffer, J., Prodan, A., Tyson, S., Ulrich, D., Werther, B. W., Wright, P.M. etc. We can also mention several local researchers who have made their own contributions to the development of the theoretical foundations of human resource management, namely: Bîrcă, A., Cotelnic, A., Covaș. L., Gheorghîță, M., Jalencu, M., Suslenco, A., Șavga, L., Vîrcolici, M. etc.

There is a multitude of researchers who have focused on human resource management research in various fields of activity. Thus, we can highlight several foreign researchers who have developed human resource management in the public sector, namely: Bach, S., Bouckaert, G., Boyne, G. A., Cho, Y. J., Condrey, St., Hvidman, U, Kessler, I., Knies, E., Leisink, P. L. M., Pichault, F., Poister, T. H., Pollitt, Ch., Pynes, J., Ruscio, K. P. etc. A significant contribution to the development of human resource management in the public sector of the Republic of Moldova has been made by several local researchers, such as: Boguș, A., Cojocaru, S., Gheorghîță, T., Movilă, I. Tofan, T. etc.

At the same time, we note the existence of a limited number of studies addressing human resource management in the institutions of the judicial system, both at the national and international levels. Most often, the respective researchers only address certain aspects and practices of human resource management in judicial institutions. In this case, we can highlight the following researchers: Aikman, A., Cojocaru, V., Hernandez, M., Knies, E., Noelliste, M., Novac, T., Vargas-Hernández, J. G., Winstanley, D., Woodall, J. etc.

In the Republic of Moldova, there is a lack of research regarding personnel management in judicial courts, including the implications of the human factor on institutional performance. Even in the case of research conducted abroad, more emphasis is placed on ensuring integrity and professional ethics in the performance of tasks and responsibilities in judicial courts. The development of human resource management in judicial courts is a field that needs to be expanded in the Republic of Moldova, as it is characterized by its particularities, different from those existing in other fields of activity, including the public sector.

**Research object.** It consists of the human resources that operate in the judicial courts at all hierarchical levels in the Republic of Moldova.

**The purpose of the research** is to improve the human resource management system in the judicial courts at all hierarchical levels in the Republic of Moldova in order to enhance institutional performance.

**Research objectives.** In order to achieve the purpose of the research, several objectives have been formulated: 1) researching the theoretical and methodological approaches of human resource management, as well as its implications on the functionality of the organization; 2) investigating the theoretical particularities of human resource management in public sector institutions; 3) dynamic analysis of performance indicators characteristic of judicial courts at hierarchical levels of the judicial system from the perspective of human resource management; 4) assessing the human resource management processes applied in the judicial courts of the Republic of Moldova; 5) retrospective and prospective evaluation of the reform strategies of the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova through the lens of human resources; 6) assessing the elements of the human resource management system in judicial courts through empirical research; 7) identifying and assessing the variables that influence the professional integrity of the

staff in the courts; 8) the development of recommendations for improving the human resource management system in the courts.

**The research strategy.** In order to achieve the purpose and objectives of the research, a research strategy was developed consisting of several stages: *1. formulating the research question; 2. establishing research hypotheses; 3. Reviewing the specialized literature; 4. developing the methodological framework of the research; 5. identifying research methods; 6. analysing and discussing the results; and 7 formulating conclusions and recommendations on the researched topic.*

**1. Formulating the research question.** Can human resource management contribute to improving activities within the courts of the Republic of Moldova?

**2. Establishing research hypotheses.** Four research hypotheses were formulated for this scientific effort. *Hypothesis 1 (H1).* Human resource management in the courts is influenced by the existing legal and institutional framework in the Republic of Moldova. *Hypothesis 2 (H2).* The performance of the courts is influenced by the manner of implementing human resource management processes and procedures. *Hypothesis 3 (H3).* There are a multitude of variables related to human resource management that influence the professional integrity of the staff in the courts. *Hypothesis 4 (H4).* The professional integrity of the staff directly influences the activity and performance of the courts.

**3. Reviewing the specialized literature.** This consisted of analysing the most relevant bibliographic sources related to the researched field, which included both domestic and foreign researchers, as well as various strategic documents developed and implemented by authorized public institutions, namely: the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Justice, the Superior Council of Magistracy, etc.

**4. Developing the methodological framework of the research.** It consisted of several components. First, the legal framework in the Republic of Moldova regarding the human resource management in the courts was researched. Second, an analysis of the main indicators characterizing the activity of the courts was conducted. Third, the human resource management processes applied in the courts were evaluated. Fourth, aspects related to human resource management in the courts were researched in the context of the judicial reform. Fifth, a questionnaire was developed and a sociological survey was organized among the court staff to identify issues related to the research topic.

**5. Identifying research methods.** In order to achieve the purpose and objectives of the research and validate the research hypotheses, several research methods were used, both for the theoretical and the applied components. In the first chapter, the following research methods were used: induction, deduction, document analysis, content analysis, historiographical method, and comparative method. In the second chapter, the following were used: documentary method, comparative analysis, statistical analysis, and systemic analysis. In the third chapter, the following research methods were used: statistical analysis, sociological method through questionnaire, comparative method, and statistical methods and tools (Levene's test, ANOVA test, T-test).

**6. Analysing and discussing the results.** The application of research methods and tools allowed for obtaining relevant results related to the management of human resources in the courts. Additionally, as a result of applying the mentioned methods, several dysfunctions related to the human resource management process were identified. in the courts that influence their performance. The results obtained concern both the traditional human resource management

processes carried out within the courts, as well as some newer processes, analysed in the context of the judicial reform taking place in the Republic of Moldova, which places a special emphasis on ensuring the financial independence and professional integrity of judicial staff.

**7. Formulation of conclusions and recommendations on the researched topic.** The results obtained led to the formulation of general conclusions on the researched topic, as well as the development of recommendations that would contribute to the improvement of the human resource management system in the courts.

The informational support of the work. This paper is based on statistical data obtained from various national and international institutions and annual reports prepared by specialized institutions. In this case, we can mention the statistical data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Agency for the Administration of Courts (AAIJ), and the European Union Statistics (EUROSTAT). Additionally, statistical information was analysed and extracted from the annual reports prepared by the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (ECEJ), as well as from other official documents such as the National Development Strategy (NDS) "European Moldova – 2030" and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A relevant source of information can be considered the responses of the respondents, obtained as a result of applying the sociological method in which the questionnaire was the tool for collecting information.

In the case of analysing and evaluating statistical information, the time frame used was the period 2018-2023. The argument for using the year 2018 as the initial year for analysis was determined by the fact that the modification of the existing legislation led to a reconfiguration of the courts at the territorial level by reducing their number. Using previous data for several calculated indicators would have led to distortion of results and the possibility of making objective comparisons. With certain exceptions, there are also different intervals from the one mentioned above, taken as a reference for analysis, due to the unavailability of information for more recent years.

**The novelty and scientific originality** of the work reside in: strengthening the theoretical and methodological framework of human resource management within organizations; distinguishing and developing the particularities of human resource management in the public sector and in the courts; comparative analysis of the indicators characterizing the activity of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova and the European Union; evaluating specific indicators of human resource management, with the aim of increasing the performance of the courts; retrospective and prospective evaluation of the judicial system reform from the perspective of human resource management; assessing the perception of staff in the courts regarding the reform of the judicial system; highlighting and assessing the influence of external factors on the activity of staff in the courts; profiling and evaluating the set of variables, through the application of statistical tools, that influence the professional integrity of staff in the courts; developing and implementing a set of recommendations aimed at improving human resource management in the courts.

**The scientific problem solved in the work.** It resides in the theoretical, methodological, and applicative foundation of the human resource management system in the courts of the Republic of Moldova, as well as its adaptation and readjustment in the context of the judicial reform.

**The theoretical significance of the work.** The research conducted on the theoretical and methodological framework in this work has contributed to the consolidation of the human

resource management content, following the attraction of new concepts related to the field and the awareness of their importance for ensuring an efficient functionality of the courts in the Republic of Moldova. The results obtained lead to the development of new research aimed at deepening the elements and categories related to human resource management from the courts.

**The practical value of the research results.** As a result of the applied research conducted, the results obtained can be used by the senior management of the courts in the Republic of Moldova as a scientific basis for the development and implementation of concrete actions, in the form of policies and programs, to improve the human resource management, with a view to enhancing institutional performance. The quantitative research carried out in this work allowed for a real assessment of the human resource management situation in the courts, as well as an evaluation of the gaps that need to be addressed to align with the requirements of the European Union. Additionally, the results obtained can serve as teaching support for the continuous professional training of staff in the courts.

**Implementation of scientific results.** The scientific results obtained during the development of this work have been used to formulate recommendations addressed to the courts and other actors in the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova, with the aim of improving the human resource management system, the final result being an increase in performance and public trust in the respective institutions. The scientific results are also proven by three implementation certificates issued by the Supreme Court of Justice, North Court of Appeal and the Chisinau District Court.

**Implementation of scientific results.** The scientific results obtained during the development of this work have been used to formulate recommendations addressed to the courts and other actors in the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova, with the aim of improving the human resource management system, the final result being an increase in performance and public trust in the respective institutions.

**Summary of the thesis.** The work is structured in a logical order and includes the following sections: introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography from 209 sources, and 27 annexes. The main text is presented over 156 pages, including 28 tables and 39 figures.

## THE CONTENT OF THE THESIS

### I. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

In chapter I, an incursion into the specialized literature is made, in order to present and develop the most relevant elements specific to the researched problem to allow for a better understanding of the given subject.

Human resource management represents a field of activity, derived from managerial science, which has always been in the attention of researchers and practitioners. In this context, Gheorghiuță and Vîrcolici (2008) mention that human resource management *is a necessary activity for those organizations that aim to become high-performing, that is, leaders in their field of activity* [2; p. 8].

Some researchers have observed that the way human resource management practices are carried out varies in response to a series of social and economic influences, the key source of which is the broader organizational context in which they occur [5; 9]. Under these conditions,



organizations change progressive through the evolution of what are described as post-bureaucratic, flexible, high-performance forms of organization and management [3; 7].

The particular interest in human resource management has led to the development of a series of organizational theories that directly or tangentially address the issue of human resources in organizations. Each theory has contributed to the development of human resource management. Thus, the resource dependency theory draws attention to the fact that human resources are limited in terms of knowledge and professional skills, which organizations, through human resource management, should facilitate continuous learning in organizations, a characteristic of organizational learning. Moreover, organizational learning can be achieved through ongoing investments in human resources, an element supported by human capital theory. In turn, ongoing investments in the development of human resources ensure a certain competitive advantage for the organization.

The implementation of the most suitable human resource management practices also impacts the ethical behaviour of employees. The issue of ethical management from the perspective of human resource management becomes difficult due to the perceived rights or interests of one group of employees conflicting with those of other groups [13]. A significant contribution to the ethical aspect of human resource management was made by Winstanley et al. (1996), who reconceptualized ethical theories into ethical frameworks that are easier for human resource practitioners to use [15].

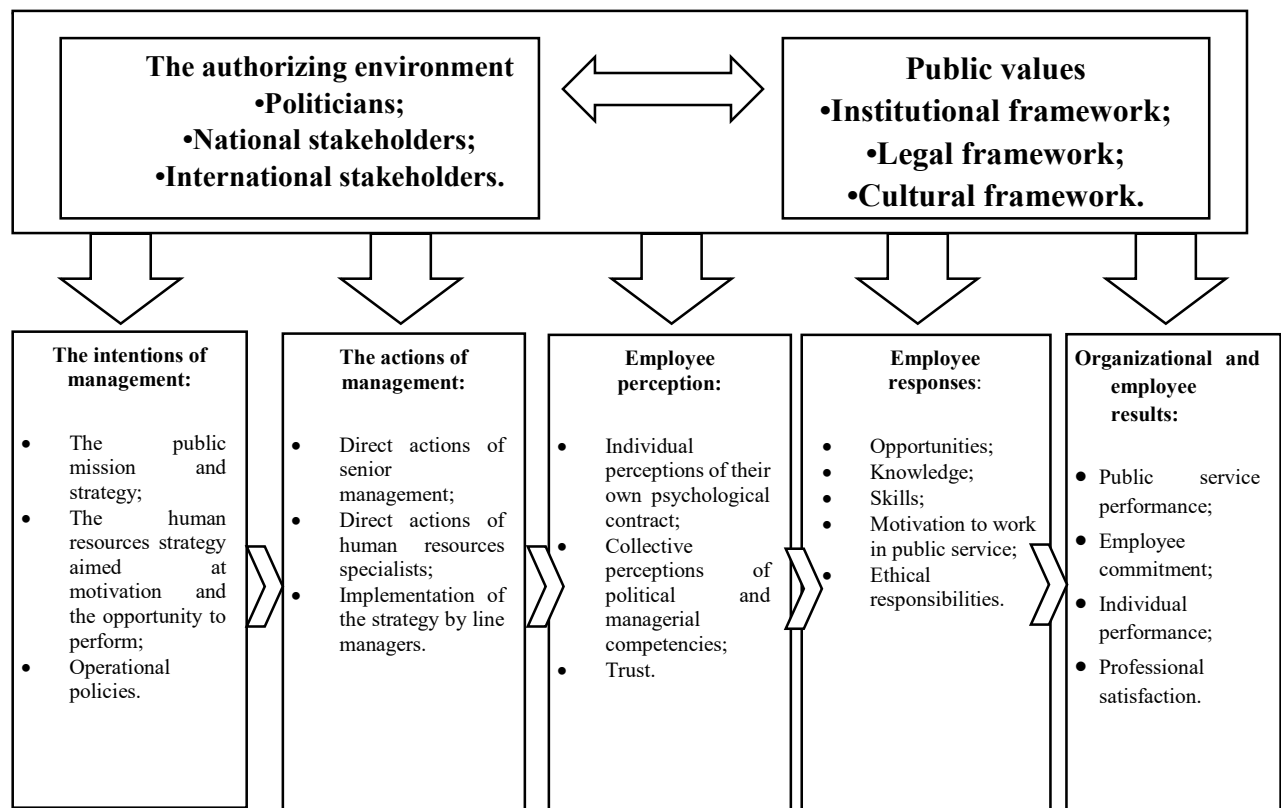
Human resource management, as it results from the way it is defined and the principles underlying its practice, is a subsystem of general management. The specialized literature highlights a wide diversity of structures, more synthetic or more detailed, depending on a broad complex of factors and requirements, among which the size of the organization plays an important role [6]. The most representative activities of human resource management are described and analysed in this paragraph, namely: recruitment and selection; professional training, performance evaluation, work motivation, and employee relations.

Over time, the public sector has developed a distinct approach to human resource management and has presented many innovations that have provided significant opportunities for employees. The public sector has been perceived as a "model employer," and working conditions have been at the forefront of reform and innovation in the field of human resources. According to Bogaş (2018), "the human resource management in the public sector encompasses multiple social, human, political, legal, and technical aspects, which generates a series of discussions regarding: the professional training of public sector staff, their recruitment and allocation, assessment, and promotion in various positions" [1; p. 291].

The new models in the public sector aimed to achieve performance in accordance with the strategic direction of the public institution. From this perspective, emphasis was placed on ensuring and maintaining personnel who could achieve the desired results of the public institution.

The need to reconfigure human resource management in the public sector has been driven by advances made by highly sophisticated information technology, including human resource information systems, the importance of understanding the implications of demographic trends such as population aging, the need for increased attention to leadership, a greater emphasis on workforce capability, and knowledge management systems [12]. Wright and Nishii (2013) proposed a general value chain that highlights the mediating variables linking human resource management and performance, particularly the attitudes and behaviours of employees [16].

Building on this idea, Knies et al. (2018) developed a model that shows the implications of human resource management on public value (Figure 1)



**Figure 1. The process of creating public value from the perspective of human resource management**

Source: Adapted and developed after: [4].

The authors of the above model show that human resource management has implications for value creation in the public sector as well. At the same time, it should be noted the larger number of variables that can directly or indirectly influence the professional behaviour of public sector employees, with direct implications for the value created. The political factor plays an essential role in the public sector, providing the institutional and legal framework that can directly influence the value created in the public sector and the perception that society creates about the results.

Another essential element of human resource management in the public sector is trust. Human resource management practices have a direct influence on trust in public institutions. Moreover, human resource management practices focused on fairness, impartiality, and honesty can lead to increased trust in organizations and a change in society's perception of them. At the same time, the perception of trust must be viewed as a whole, taking into account all employees, regardless of their hierarchical position within the government institution. Trust in the organization is directly related to the professional integrity of public sector employees. Professional integrity can be maintained by implementing general principles that reflect high standards of competence, integrity, professional responsibility, respect for the rights and dignity of individuals, as well as concern for the well-being of others [10]. On the other hand, professional integrity includes the obligations and responsibilities associated with a profession, and when the stakes for society are high, it must take precedence over personal loyalties to friends. Vargas-Hernández (2017) argues that personal integrity is directly related to professional

integrity these being interdependent and compatible, and when a professional places integrity first, they understand their importance, trying to keep them compatible [14].

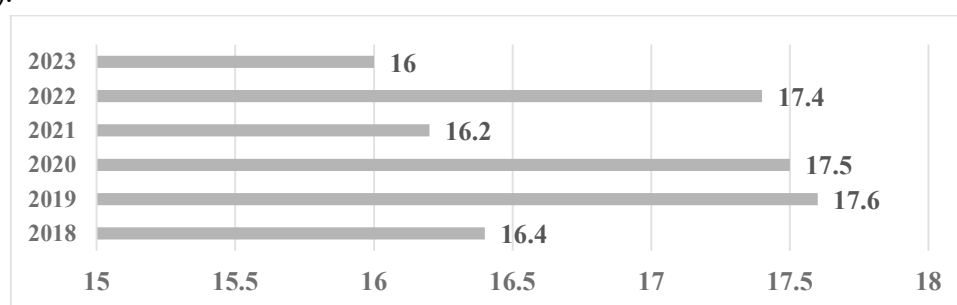
The lack of professional integrity leads to an increase in cases of corruption, making society much more vulnerable and with reduced possibilities for economic and social development. Even at the Madrid Summit (1995), the European Union included the development of a professional and impartial administration, with effective tools to combat corruption, as a relevant criterion for countries wishing to join the European community [8].

Therefore, human resource management practices focused on fairness, impartiality, and honesty lead to ensuring the professional integrity of public sector employees and increasing trust in organizations, as well as changing society's perception of public institutions.

## 2. PARTICULARITIES OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Chapter 2 develops several aspects related to human resource management in the courts. Judicial systems have two aspects: on one hand, as public institutions, their funding, the recruitment and selection of judges, judicial assistants, and clerks, and the procedural rules they must comply with are determined by the state. On the other hand, as organizations that provide dispute resolution services, their effective functioning and management fall to the court managers.

In general terms, judicial administration considers a multitude of managerial methods and techniques that, when applied correctly, can contribute to achieving the short- and medium-term objectives of the court, which would ensure their operational efficiency. However, the effective administration of courts greatly depends on how internal work processes are managed and the performance of human resource management at each court level. A relevant indicator that can characterize the activity of the courts is the number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants (Figure 2).



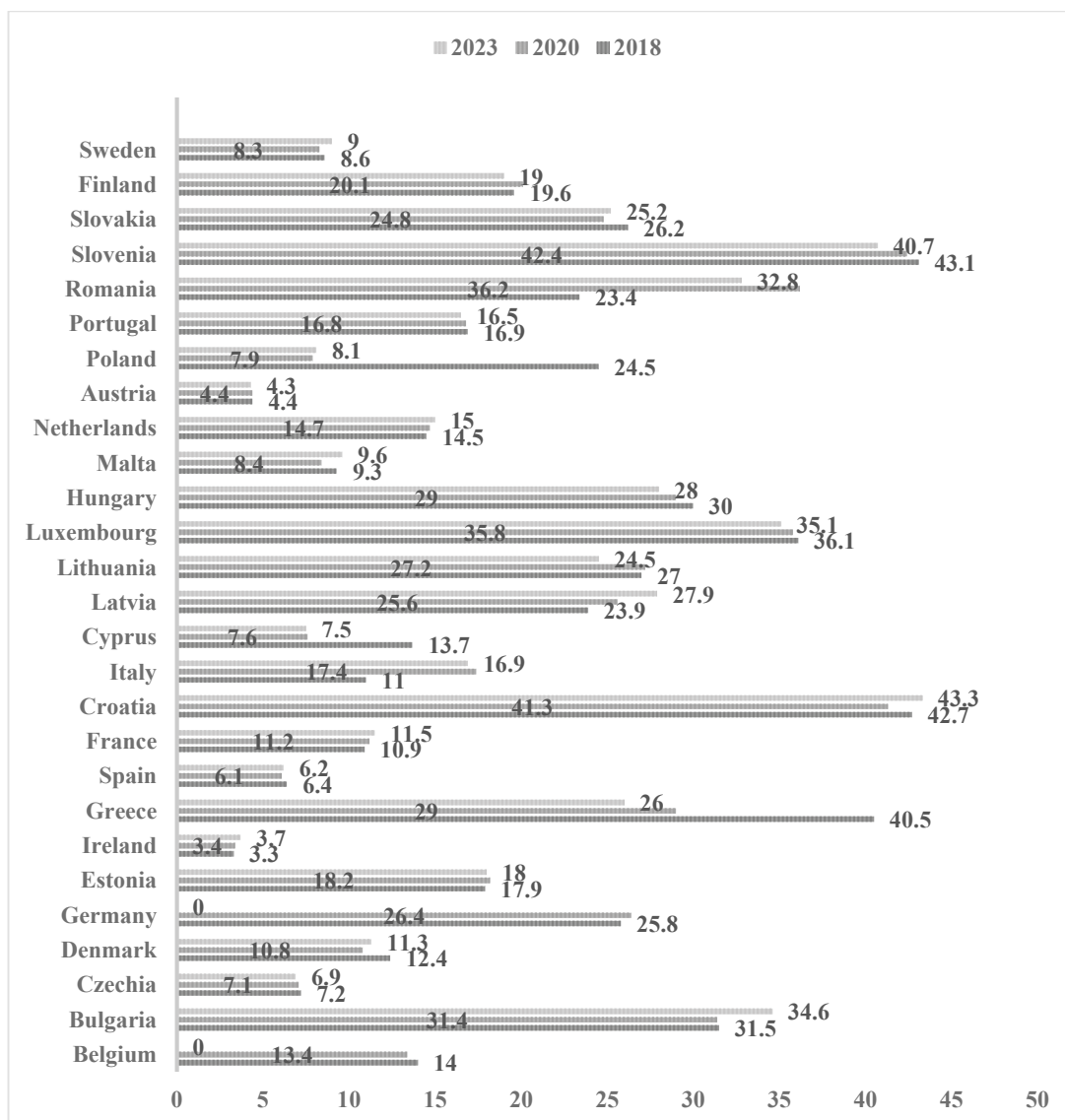
**Figure 2. The number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants in the period 2018-2023, individuals**

Source: Prepared by the author according to the National Bureau of Statistics [17].

According to the figure above, we find that the number of judges per population of the Republic of Moldova has changed over time. If in 2018, the number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants was 16.4, then in 2022 it increased to 17.4. In 2023, the indicator recorded the lowest value over the period analysed. The fact that the number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants increased during the analysed period is due to the decrease in the population. Thus, in the years 2017 and 2022, in The Republic of Moldova has recorded almost the same number of judges, but when reported per 100 thousand inhabitants, this indicator differs greatly. Given that the

population of the Republic of Moldova has tendencies of decline and in the future, this indicator will be in continuous growth, even if the number of judges remains unchanged.

To compare this indicator with that recorded in the member states of the European Union, Figure 3 presents the information dynamically.

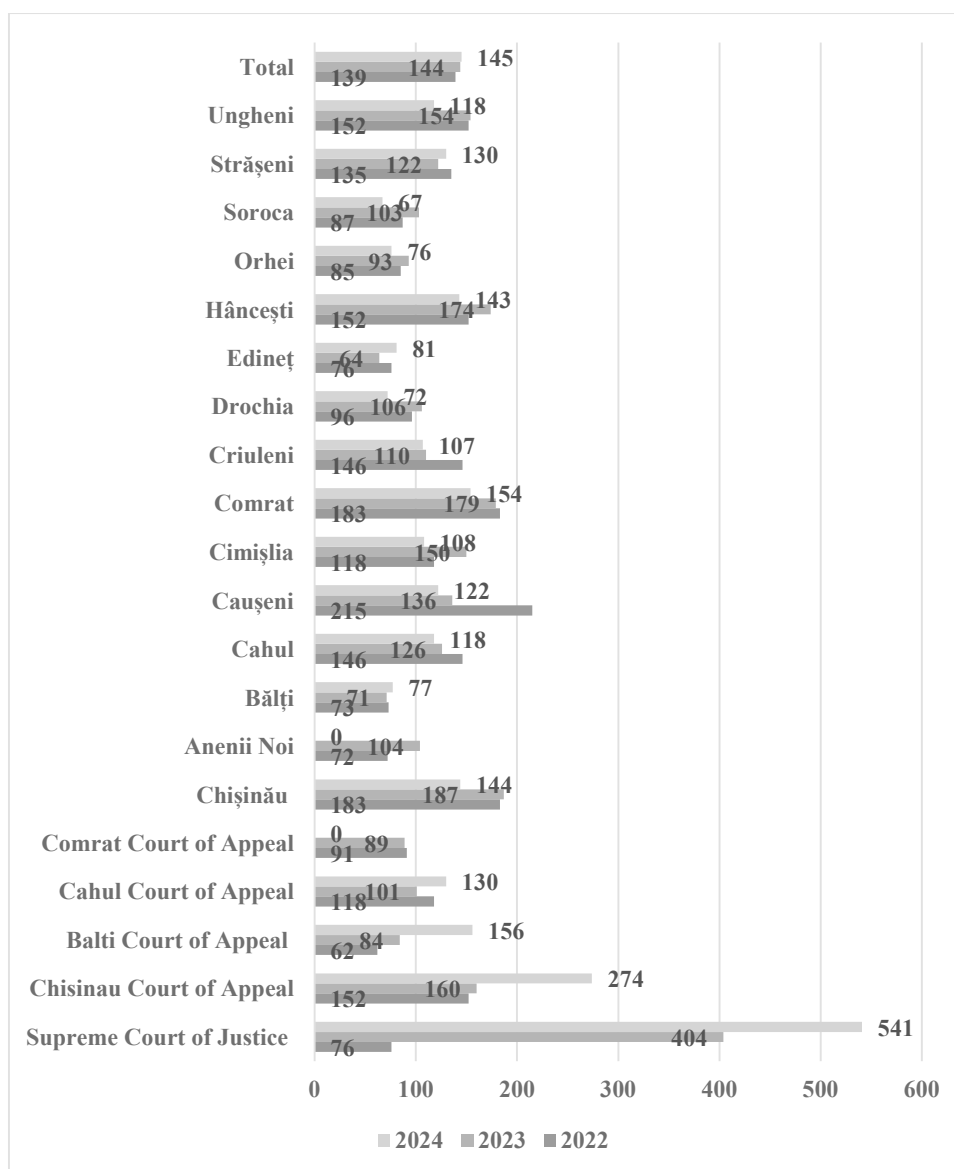


**Figure 3. The number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants in the period 2018-2023 in the EU member states, individuals**

Source: Prepared by the author according to EUROSTAT [18].

In many member states of the European Union, the number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants was higher than in the Republic of Moldova, and it continued to grow in countries such as Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Bulgaria. We can also observe that the number of judges per 100 thousand inhabitants in Slovenia and Croatia is over 12 times higher than that in Ireland and nearly 10 times higher than that in Austria. This demonstrates that there is no paradigm in determining the number of judges, but it depends more on the traditions that have been established over the years and on the economic and social context of the country's development.

One of the indicators that characterize the performance of the courts is the Duration of case resolution. The indicator in question is calculated as the ratio of 365 to the turnover rate of cases [20]. Figure 4 presents the duration of case resolution for the years 2022 - 2024.



**Figure 4. Duration of case resolution in the years 2022 - 2024, days**

Source: Prepared by the author according to [19].

At the level of the court system, the duration of solving cases was 144 days in 2023, increasing by 5 days compared to 2022, reaching 145 days in 2024. Also, we note that in many courts (Supreme Court of Justice, Chisinau Court of Appeal, Balti Court of Appeal and Cahul Court of Appeal and the court in Edinet) the duration of cases has increased compared to 2022. The created situation may be determined by the severity of the cases to be resolved or by the human factor, that is, by the way files are managed by the court staff. At the same time, we observe that in some courts the duration of case resolution is more than twice as long.

Ensuring effective human resource management in the courts must start from the fair management of the workload. In the case of judges, the quantitative perspective of the workload is determined, first of all, by the number of cases to be resolved, and secondly, by the degree of coverage of judge positions, while the qualitative perspective is determined by the complexity of the judicial cases that need to be resolved. In the first case, the workload of judges increases due to unfilled positions in real time (Table 1).

Table 1. Coverage rate of judge positions in the period 2018-2023

Court	2018			2019			2020			2021			2022			2023		
	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %	Judicial positions according to the positions roster,	The actual number of judges, persons	Judge Position Coverage Rate, %
Supreme Court of Justice	33	23	69,7	33	20	60,6	33	19	57,6	33	21	57,6	33	21	63,6	0	18	-
CA Chişinău	57	49	86,0	57	43	75,4	57	46	80,7	57	44	77,2	57	45	78,9	57	35	61,4
CA Bălţi	24	22	91,7	24	22	91,7	24	24	100	24	20	83,3	24	19	79,2	24	19	79,2
CA Cahul	9	9	100	9	9	100	9	9	100	9	8	88,9	9	6	66,7	9	6	66,7
CA Comrat	7	5	71,4	7	5	71,4	7	7	100	7	7	100	7	7	100	7	4	57,1
Chişinău	155	129	83,2	155	133	85,8	155	135	87,1	155	130	83,9	155	110	71,0	155	107	69,0
Anenii Noi	10	8	80,0	10	6	60,0	10	8	80,0	10	7	70,0	10	5	50,0	10	4	40,0
Bălţi	29	25	86,2	29	24	82,7	30	29	96,7	30	29	96,7	30	27	90,0	27	27	100,0
Cahul	15	10	66,7	15	10	66,7	15	14	93,3	15	13	100	15	13	86,7	14	6	42,9
Căuşeni	10	8	80,0	10	6	60,0	10	9	90,0	10	7	70,0	10	7	70,0	10	6	60,0
Cimişlia	10	8	80,0	10	9	90,0	10	8	80,0	10	8	80,0	15	9	90,0	10	8	80,0
Comrat	10	5	50,0	10	4	40,0	10	9	90,0	10	9	90,0	10	7	70,0	10	5	50,0
Criuleni	9	8	88,9	9	8	88,9	9	9	100	9	8	88,9	9	7	77,8	9	10	111,1
Drochia	14	10	71,4	14	11	78,6	14	13	92,9	14	13	92,9	14	12	85,7	14	12	85,7
Edineţ	16	15	93,7	16	14	87,5	16	15	93,7	16	14	87,5	16	13	81,2	16	15	93,8
Hânceşti	16	16	100	16	16	100	16	13	81,2	16	12	75,0	16	13	81,2	16	14	87,5
Orhei	25	17	68,0	25	18	72,0	25	22	88,0	25	22	88,0	25	22	88,0	25	23	92,0
Soroca	14	10	71,4	14	8	57,1	13	11	84,6	13	11	84,6	13	10	76,9	14	13	92,9
Străşeni	14	12	85,7	14	11	78,6	14	12	85,7	14	11	78,6	14	10	71,4	14	10	71,4
Ungheni	12	12	100	12	9	75,0	12	12	100	12	11	91,7	12	12	100	12	11	91,7

Source: Prepared by the author based on [19].

During the analysed period, the lowest coverage rate of judge positions was recorded at the Supreme Court of Justice, fluctuating between 69.7% (2018) and 57.6% (2021). At the same time, the Agency for the Administration of Courts presents 0 judge positions at the Supreme Court of Justice for the year 2023, as the new law of the Supreme Court of Justice was approved in that year, which provides for a number of 20 judge positions, which could not be extended for the entire calendar year, and the external evaluation process of candidates for the judge position at the Supreme Court of Justice was ongoing.

In addition to judges, other categories of staff also work in the courts. In turn, the staff assisting the judges play an important role in their efficient activity. Therefore, we analysed several indicators that characterize the staff of the courts. Since the Agency for the Administration of Courts has not published information for the years 2022 and 2023, Table 2 includes the period 2015-2021.

**Table 2. Indicators characterizing the staff of the courts**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of judges, <i>persons</i>	410	397	386	405
Number of judicial assistants, <i>persons</i>	893	867	855	858
Non-judicial staff, <i>units</i>	1026,5	909	386	926
Total number of employees, <i>units</i>	1919,5	1776	1241	1784
Ratio of judicial assistants to judges	2,18	2,18	2,22	2,12
Ratio of non-judicial personnel to judges	2,5	2,29	1,0	2,29
Ratio of total number of employees to judges	3,18	4,47	3,22	4,40
Cases resolved per judge, <i>units</i>	603	627	621	614
Cases resolved per employee, <i>units</i>	190	140	193	139

Source: Prepared by the author based on [19].

In the case of other categories of employees in the courts, the workload varies depending on the number of registered cases. At the same time, we observe variations in non-judicial staff from year to year. At the level of the court, a judge was served, on average, by 4.4 employees. We also note that compared to the year 2015, the number of employees per judge has increased by more than one unit, from 3.18 in 2015 to 4.40 in 2021.

The performance level of court employees depends on their participation in professional training programs. The professional training programs offered to court staff had both legal and non-legal characteristics. Table 3 presents the dynamics of participation in continuous professional training by modules for both judges and other categories of employees in the courts. Since 2020, there has been an increase in the number of participants in continuous professional training programs among both judges and other categories of court employees. The highest number of participants in continuous professional training was recorded in 2021. Additionally, in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of participants in continuous professional training among other categories of staff in the courts.

**Table 3. Dynamics of the participation of court staff in continuous professional training in legal modules during the period 2018-2022, *individuals***

Year	Category of Personnel	Legal training programs							
		Domestic Violence and Juvenile Justice	Non-Discrimination/Equality	Combating Human Trafficking	Combating Torture	Investigating Sexual Crimes	Cybercrime	Asylum/Migration	Combating Corruption
2018	Judges	125	25	52	27	48	80	15	193
	Judicial Assistants	38	32	6	15	25	0	0	30
	Clerks of Court	0	13	11	7	21	0	0	3
	Registry Specialists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
	Secretary Head	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
2019	Judges	74	48	35	27	74	58	52	164
	Judicial Assistants	57	45	15	31	89	49	34	27
	Clerks of Court	35	23	20	9	46	34	19	10
	Registry Specialists	2	7	0	2	0	7	6	3
	Secretary Head	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2020	Judges	157	11	42	9	42	90	35	217
	Judicial Assistants	136	28	8	16	48	75	24	0
	Clerks of Court	135	5	5	6	37	59	9	0
	Registry Specialists	5	3	0	4	3	8	1	0
	Secretary Head	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0
2021	Judges	228	57	92	62	124	58	27	173
	Judicial Assistants	364	101	33	101	158	101	39	0
	Clerks of Court	215	58	25	51	110	54	0	0
	Registry Specialists	156	43	10	62	66	45	49	0
	Secretary Head	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0
2022	Judges	42	96	56	56	60	40	15	150
	Judicial Assistants	52	87	69	69	78	49	0	0
	Clerks of Court	36	51	34	34	58	30	0	0
	Registry Specialists	24	63	48	48	64	22	0	0
	Secretary Head	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0

Source: Prepared by the author based on [21].

The existence of a continuous professional training system at the national level allows for the development of knowledge and professional skills of all categories of court staff. Involving court staff in the continuous professional training process in non-judicial modules is a commendable action that must continue permanently if there is a genuine desire to increase the efficiency of the courts. Although judges play an essential role in ensuring the efficiency of court activities, the work of other categories of employees in the respective subdivisions should not be overlooked. In the context of the Republic of Moldova's accession to the European Union, it would be necessary to diversify the professional training modules to better understand the requirements for aligning the national jurisdictional act with that of the community space.



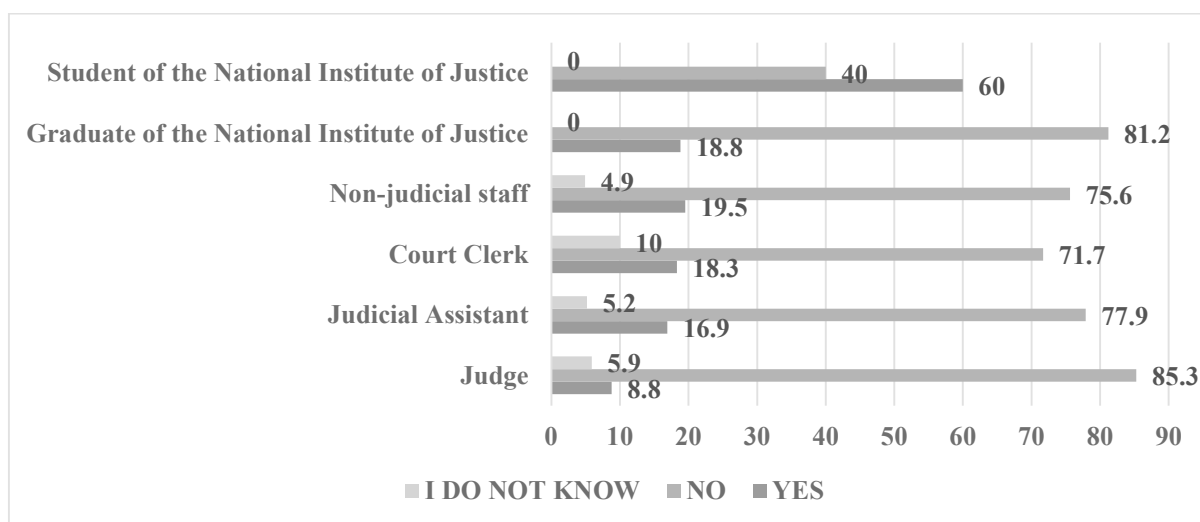
### 3. STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN JUDICIAL COURTS BY ASSESSING RELATED PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF JUSTICE REFORM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Chapter 3 investigates aspects of human resource management through the lens of justice reform. Human resources represent the most important resource in reforming the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova. Started many years ago, the reform of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova has been delayed for a long time due to human factors.

In recent years, there has been an acceleration of the justice reform process in the Republic of Moldova, including the judicial system, with several laws and decisions adopted aimed at improving the judicial act to increase public trust in the judicial system. The successful implementation of justice reform, especially of the judicial system, represents a condition for the faster accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union. In this context, the Strategy for Ensuring the Independence and Integrity of the Justice Sector for the years 2022 – 2025 states: "The quality of justice is a commitment undertaken by the Republic of Moldova in the process of European integration and becomes a dominant factor in establishing, through the act of justice, a rule of law, order, justice, and truth in society" [22].

The process of reforming the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova concerning human resource management, according to the strategy for the years 2022-2025, began with the creation and activity of the independent external evaluation commission (extraordinary) of judges and candidates for the position of judge of the Supreme Court of Justice. The Venice Commission accepts the extraordinary evaluation of judges when "it is necessary as a remedy for eradicating a very high level of corruption and lack of professional competence or when there has been significant political interference in the process of appointing judges in previous periods" [11].

The conducted research shows that the staff of the courts do not agree with the current ratio between the number of judges and that of the population (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Respondents' opinion on the adequacy of the ratio between the number of judges and that of the population, %**

Source: Developed by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

The obtained results prove that all categories of staff in the courts, including potential employees (graduates and students of the National Institute of Justice), believe that the ratio

between the number of judges and that of the population of the Republic of Moldova is not adequate. However, judges being the most involved through the decisions they issue represent the weight the largest among all respondents who believe that the number of judges is insufficient compared to the population size.

The activity of any employee can be influenced by several variables, each having a different impact, depending on the category of staff. Starting from this, in our research we aimed to identify and evaluate the variables that influence the professional activity of the staff within the courts. In total, the questionnaire included 12 variables that influence the professional activity of the court staff, each being evaluated on a Likert scale, from "1" to "5" (Table 4).

**Table 4. Assessment of the variables that influence the professional activity of the employee in the court**

N. o.	Questionnaire variables	Occupational status of the respondents:			
		Judge	Judicial Assistant	Court clerk	Non-Judicial Staff
1.	Respect from colleagues	3.94	3.94	4.27	3.95
2.	Fair treatment at the workplace	3.87	3.86	4.13	3.66
3.	Content of job tasks	3.86	3.87	4.25	3.9
4.	Court management	3.65	3.58	3.92	3.73
5.	Work under continuous stress	3.58	3.27	3.82	3.61
6.	Risk of involuntary errors during tasks	3.43	3.35	3.6	3.61
7.	Salary level	3.35	3.65	3.83	3.85
8.	Communication within the institution	3.34	3.34	3.7	3.93
9.	Additional work tasks to be performed	3.27	3.43	3.85	3.56
10.	Work schedule	3.05	3.05	3.95	3.61
11.	Job insecurity	2.95	2.78	3.2	3.68
12.	Too much pressure from superiors	2.78	2.95	3.17	3.32

Source: Prepared by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

From Table 4 we note that the variables included in the questionnaire influence the professional activity of the court staff with varying intensity. However, we find that Respect from colleagues is the variable highlighted by all categories of respondents that most influences their activity. Thus, it results that at the level of the courts there is no organizational climate that would favour the conduct of professional activity under good conditions. Fair treatment at work represents the next variable in terms of intensity, according to the calculated weighted average, that influences the activity of employees in the courts. This variable can also be viewed as part of the organizational culture, which is why the management of the courts must pay greater attention to this aspect. In the case of non-judicial staff, Fair treatment at work has a lesser influence on professional activity. By degree of intensity, this variable ranks 7th out of a total of 12 variables. Ensuring high efficiency of the court depends on the professionalism of its staff. In this context, the criteria applied in the selection process play an essential role of candidates for the position of judge. Therefore, I asked the respondents to assess the importance of each criterion on a scale from "1" to "5" (Table 5).

**Table 5. Assessment of the selection criteria for judges by the respondents**

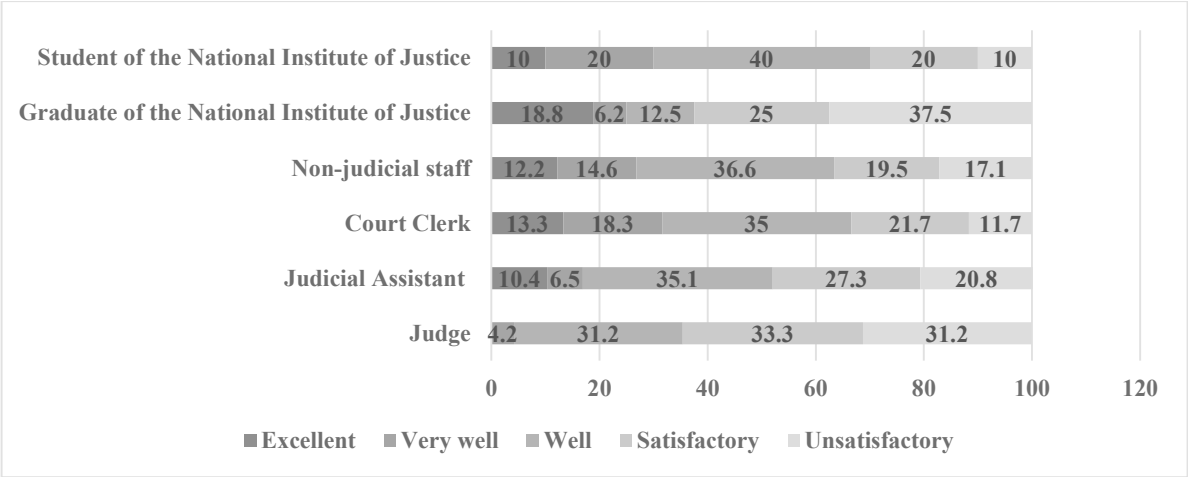
Criteria	Total Weighted Average	Standard Deviation	Weighted average based on occupational status					
			Judge	Judicial assistant	Clerk of court	Non-judicial staff	Graduate of the National Institute of Justice	Student of the National Institute of Justice
Verticality and impartiality in the exercise of the profession	4.54	0.907	4.23	4.75	4.78	4.34	4.19	4.8
Ability to resolve complex legal situations	4.52	0.894	4.19	4.73	4.75	4.34	4.12	4.8
Integrity in performing the profession	4.57	0.858	4.15	4.71	4.72	4.32	4.06	4.8
Decision-making ability	4.56	0.863	4.15	4.71	4.7	4.29	4.0	4.7
Absence of criminal records	4.46	1.021	4.06	4.68	4.67	4.27	4.0	4.6
Analytical capacity	4.37	0.936	3.96	4.6	4.62	4.24	3.94	4.5
Ability to manage stressful situations	4.36	0.952	3.94	4.58	4.58	4.24	3.81	4.5
Experience in legal specialist positions	4.39	1.037	3.75	4.44	4.53	4.15	3.75	4.4
Physical health status	4.01	1.106	3.58	3.91	4.4	4.07	3.69	4.3
Results of the professional training exam held at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)	3.89	1.226	3.35	3.77	4.38	3.85	3.62	3.7
Participation in non-formal education activities, projects, and initiatives	3.62	1.243	3.06	3.45	4.07	3.78	3.38	3.2
Knowledge of foreign languages	3.36	1.258	2.96	3.14	3.72	3.73	3.38	3.0
Holding a scientific title and having teaching and scientific experience	3.11	1.288	2.69	2.77	3.5	3.49	3.19	2.9

Source: Developed by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

Overall, Correctness in the exercise of the profession and the Ability to make decisions are the criteria that received the highest score from the respondents. Analysing the scores recorded by categories of respondents, we find certain discrepancies, which demonstrate that court employees interpret the respective criteria differently. Likewise, we observe different degrees of intensity in the assessment of the selection criteria. In the opinion of the respondents. The verticality and impartiality in the exercise of the profession is the criterion considered the most important in the selection process of judges. However, the degree of intensity for assessing the aforementioned

criterion varies from one category of respondents to another. In the case of judges, the average score obtained was 4.23p., which is higher than the score recorded for NIJ graduates (4.19p.), but much lower than that obtained from the students of the National Institute of Justice (4.8p.). The discrepancy between the maximum and minimum value of this criterion is 0.61p.

One of the most discussed issues in society and in the judicial system has been the amendment of legislation that led to the creation of the External Evaluation Commission for the current judges of the Supreme Court of Justice as well as for the candidates for the position of judge of the Supreme Court of Justice regarding professional ethics, integrity, and financial independence. In our research, we asked for the respondents' opinions regarding the activity of the external evaluation commission (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Respondents' opinions on the activity of the external evaluation commission, %**  
Source: Developed by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

From the figure above, we note that both the staff of the courts and the graduates and students of the National Institute of Justice did not give high ratings to the activity of the external evaluation commission of the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice and the candidates for judge of the Supreme Court of Justice. Among all the judges participating in the survey, none rated the commission as 'excellent'. We also find that most of the respondents who rated it as 'unsatisfactory' are among the graduates of the National Institute of Justice (37.5%), followed by those among the judges (31.2%). At the level of all categories of respondents, most rated the activity of the external evaluation commission as 'satisfactory'.

One of the directions of the justice reform strategy for the years 2022-2025 refers to the efficient and modern administration of justice, which consists of several objectives: improving the managerial capacities of the courts; optimizing the judicial system; developing and implementing judicial information systems. In order to achieve the mentioned objectives and to enhance the performance of the judicial court, in our research we formulated several measures. Respondents had the opportunity to rate each proposed measure on a scale from '1' to '5' (Table 6).

Survey participants rated the proposed measures differently, which aim to ultimately improve the performance of the judicial court (Table 6). Simplifying judicial procedures, as a measure to enhance the performance of the court, was rated with the highest score of judicial assistants and clerks, as well as students of the National Institute of Justice. The high appreciation from judicial assistants and clerks can be explained by the fact that they are directly involved in the daily activities they carry out, and a simplification of judicial procedures would result in improving individual and institutional performance.

**Table 6. Assessment of measures that contribute to increasing the performance of the judicial court**

The variables included in the questionnaire:	Total Weighted Average	Standard Deviation	Weighted average based on occupational status					
			Judge	Judicial assistant	Clerk of court	Non-judicial staff	Graduate of the National Institute of Justice	Student of the National Institute of Justice
Simplification of judicial procedures	4.24	1.071	3.79	4.36	4.62	3.95	3.69	4.40
Better cooperation between judges	4.13	1.026	3.48	4.26	4.42	4.12	3.81	4.20
Establishment of a quality management system at the court level	3.95	1.111	3.44	3.99	4.32	3.83	3.81	4.10
Specialization of judicial assistants	4.11	1.048	3.40	4.29	4.40	4.02	3.88	4.00
Greater use of information technology in professional activities	3.92	1.114	3.35	3.88	4.13	4.05	4.00	4.40
Improvement of court management	4.04	1.084	3.27	4.13	4.40	3.95	4.00	4.20
Delegation of more tasks to judicial assistants and court clerks	2.91	1.344	3.23	2.30	3.08	3.41	3.00	3.30
More effective control by the court management	3.52	1.193	3.06	3.29	3.88	3.68	3.75	3.70

Source: Prepared by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

Two major objectives outlined in the strategy for reforming the justice sector for the years 2022-2025 consist of strengthening the independence of the judiciary system, on one hand, and the integrity and accountability of judges, on the other hand. In this context, the research conducted formulated several variables that characterize the independence and integrity of the judiciary system, in which respondents could evaluate each variable on a scale from "1" to "5", where "1" means Total Disagreement, and "5" means Total Agreement (Table 7).

Overall, survey participants acknowledge that public trust in the judiciary system is low, accumulating an average score of 3.51p. (Table 7). Among all respondents, judges are those who least agree with this statement. At the same time, graduates of the National Institute of Justice most agree with this statement (3.94p.), with a gap of nearly one unit between these two categories of respondents. The statement that There is no corruption in the judiciary was rated by all respondents with an average of 2.87p. This proves that court employees recognize the existence of corruption. Graduates and students of the National Institute of Justice are the categories of respondents who least agree with the aforementioned statement. The statement the judiciary system is considered the most corrupt in society shows that judges are the least in agreement with this, while at the opposite end are the graduates and students of the National Institute of Justice, who are not yet part of the judicial system, as well as non-judicial staff working in the courts.

**Table 7. Assessment of the variables characterizing independence and integrity in the courts**

The variables included in the questionnaire:	Total Weighted Average	Standard Deviation	Weighted average based on occupational status					
			Judge	Judicial assistant	Clerk of court	Non-judicial staff	Graduate of the National Institute of Justice	Student of the National Institute of Justice
Public trust in the judicial system is low	3.51	1.292	3.02	3.55	3.53	3.63	3.94	3.70
Judges apply different standards in adopting a judgment	2.94	1.374	2.90	2.81	2.95	3.17	3.06	3.30
There is no corruption in the judicial system	2.87	1.316	2.52	2.94	2.95	3.27	2.19	2.50
A new evaluation of judges' integrity will reduce corruption in the judiciary	2.87	1.406	2.67	2.53	3.27	3.34	2.44	2.90
Completion of the justice reform will reduce corruption	2.81	1.398	2.60	2.45	3.22	3.17	2.44	3.20
Perception-wise, the judiciary is considered the most corrupt in society	2.77	1.414	2.31	2.66	2.72	3.20	3.38	3.00
Some judges' decisions are influenced by political factors	2.63	1.352	2.69	2.42	2.35	3.02	3.31	3.20
Some judges have political protection in making illegal decisions	2.50	1.340	2.60	2.13	2.28	3.07	3.19	3.10

Source: Prepared by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

In the situation where the lack of professional integrity in the courts is recognized, we aimed to investigate the causes that led to the emergence of this phenomenon. In Table 8, several variables were formulated, in which respondents had the opportunity to rate them on a scale from "1" to "5", where "1" means "Least", and "5" – "Most".

From Table 8, we note that the most important variables that led to deviations from professional integrity in the judicial system were the low salaries practiced for all categories of staff in the courts and the expansion of the corruption phenomenon at the level of society as a whole. These two variables that led to deviations from professional integrity have a general character that also targets other fields of activity. At the same time, there are other variables related to the judicial system that also influence the professional integrity of judicial staff. Thus, in the opinion of respondents, the selection and promotion of candidates without taking.

Considering their professional integrity is one of the causes related to the judicial system most appreciated by all categories of respondents – (3.29p.), rated even higher by graduates and students of the National Institute of Justice. The lack of moral integrity is another relevant cause that has led to deviations from the principles of professional integrity in the courts. The possibility

of quick enrichment is a variable that influences professional integrity in the judicial system less. At the same time, it is also a concern as respondents acknowledge that working in the judicial system is a "solution" for quick enrichment.

**Table 8. Assessment of the variables influencing professional integrity in the courts**

The variables that influence the principles of professional integrity	Mean	Standard deviation	Respondents' occupational status					
			Judge	Judicial Assistant	Court Clerk	Non-judicial staff	Graduate of the National Institute of Justice	Student of the National Institute of Justice
Extending professional integrity misconduct to the whole of society	3.57	1.360	3.35	3.36	3.90	3.46	3.75	4.20
Low wages not enough to make a decent living	3.31	1.284	3.21	3.13	3.32	3.32	3.75	4.10
Lack of moral integrity	3.29	1.373	3.23	3.00	3.40	3.39	3.75	3.70
Lack of transparency in the court system	3.26	1.346	3.33	2.91	3.37	3.44	3.50	3.80
Tolerance of breaches of professional integrity by decision makers in the court system	3.23	1.408	2.90	2.99	3.42	3.39	3.63	3.90
The kinship phenomenon used in the court system	3.03	1.359	2.94	2.79	2.97	3.29	3.56	3.90
Selection and promotion of candidates in the court system without taking into account their professional integrity	2.97	1.328	2.90	2.64	3.10	3.39	3.19	3.40
Get rich quick	2.95	1.463	2.60	2.73	2.93	3.37	3.44	3.70

Source: Developed by the author following the processing of data from the questionnaire.

Moreover, I applied Levene's test for testing the homogeneity of variances based on professional status. In the conducted research, I excluded two groups (Graduates and Students of the National Institute of Justice) that differ significantly from the other groups. The results show that the Sig values for the eight variables determining deviation from the professional integrity of the staff in the judicial system are greater than 0.05, which proves that the variances for the four categories of respondents are equal. I also applied the ANOVA test to determine the mean values between groups and within them. The more different the group means are from each other, the greater the variation between groups; and the smaller the variation within groups, the greater the F test statistic (Table 9).

**Table 9. Results of the ANOVA test application for the variables included in the research based on the occupational status of the respondents**

ANOVA						
Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Extending professional integrity misconduct to the whole of society	Between Groups	1.556	3	.519	.318	.813
	Within Groups	362.479	222	1.633		
	Total	1.556	3	.519	.318	.813
Low wages not enough to make a decent living	Between Groups	11.997	3	3.999	2.163	.093
	Within Groups	410.392	222	1.849		
	Total	422.389	225			
Lack of moral integrity	Between Groups	11.315	3	3.772	2.088	.103
	Within Groups	401.061	222	1.807		
	Total	412.376	225			
Lack of transparency in the court system	Between Groups	17.011	3	5.670	3.389	.019
	Within Groups	371.453	222	1.673		
	Total	388.465	225			
Tolerance of breaches of professional integrity by decision makers in the court system	Between Groups	6.733	3	2.244	1.252	.292
	Within Groups	397.909	222	1.792		
	Total	404.642	225			
The kinship phenomenon used in the court system	Between Groups	11.774	3	3.925	2.085	.103
	Within Groups	417.806	222	1.882		
	Total	429.580	225			
Selection and promotion of candidates in the court system without taking into account their professional integrity	Between Groups	6.856	3	2.285	1.299	.276
	Within Groups	390.635	222	1.760		
	Total	397.491	225			
Get rich quick	Between Groups	15.281	3	5.094	2.524	.059
	Within Groups	447.997	222	2.018		
	Total	463.279	225			

Source: Developed by the author following the application of statistical methods.

Following the application of the ANOVA test (Table 9), the results show that for the variable – Extending professional integrity misconduct to the whole of society – the F test statistic is low (0.318) with an associated probability Sig. (0.813), greater than 0.05. This proves that the hypothesis of equality of means across groups is not rejected. Therefore, the variable regarding the Extending professional integrity misconduct to the whole of society does not differ significantly in relation to the respondent's status. The same finding is characteristic of the other variables included in the research.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigations carried out within this research theme have led to obtaining new results, reflected by the expansion of knowledge regarding human resource management in the courts of the Republic of Moldova. Similarly, the conducted research has allowed for the identification and completion of the particularities of human resource management in the courts, which are characterized, first of all, by the restriction of decisions and less freedom of action regarding their staff, having a more centralized nature, impacting the entire judicial system of the Republic of Moldova.



The innovative aspect of the obtained results is expressed through the complex research of the set of activities related to human resource management for all hierarchical levels in which the courts in the Republic of Moldova operate, providing the possibility of determining and making vertical and horizontal (territorial) comparisons of a multitude of indicators that characterize the performance of the courts from the perspective of human resource management. In addition, potential problems of human resource management have been identified in the context of initiating justice reform, considered essential for ensuring the economic and social progress of the Republic of Moldova.

The practical aspect of the research allowed for obtaining results that contribute to solving specific problems of human resource management in the courts and particularly highlight: the workload to be accomplished expressed through several specific indicators of the courts; the discrepancies in the existing workload between different courts; the determining factors that delay justice reform in the Republic of Moldova.

The purpose of this research was achieved by identifying and evaluating specific human resource management activities that have a significant impact on the performance of the courts, as well as the most pressing issues that need to be addressed to change society's attitude towards the judicial system.

The comprehensive approach to human resource management in the courts of the Republic of Moldova, resulting from the combination of the theoretical and methodological framework and the application of both quantitative and qualitative methods, allowed us to formulate the following general conclusions:

1. Human resource management is one of the most important fields of managerial science that has proven its effectiveness and direct impact on organizational performance. Regardless of the organization's field of activity, human resource management has direct implications for achieving its short, medium, and long-term objectives. Similarly, human resource management contributes to creating added value for the organization and enhancing its favourable image in the labour market both nationally and internationally. Due to the positive effects of human resource management on organizational success, demonstrated over time, there has been a particular interest from researchers, each trying to highlight certain aspects of this field of activity. Human resource management complexity encompasses a set of activities that can be extrapolated to all organizations, regardless of their size, activity profile, or legal form of organization. The activities of human resource management are interdependent, complement each other, and support one another, and the exclusion of one or the other from the human resource management system can have negative effects and long-term repercussions on organizational performance. Therefore, it is important that the activities related to human resource management be treated with maximum responsibility, primarily by the senior management of the organizations. They must be aware that human resources can ensure a qualitative leap in the existence of organizations, under the conditions of implementing the best practices for managing all processes related to the organization's personnel. The results achieved lead to the first research *objective*.

2. The research conducted has shown us that there are differences in the approach to human resource management. Unlike organizations in the private sector where the objective of human resource management is to achieve high performance resulting in maximum profit, in public sector institutions, human resource management aims to provide quality services to all citizens, which will lead to an increase in their trust. Human resource management practices, focused on fairness, impartiality and honesty lead to increased trust in public institutions and to changing societal

perceptions. In addition, trust among employees at the same level, trust between employees and superiors leads to strengthening work relationships and ensuring harmony at the institutional level, which contributes to the efficiency of activities, respectively to increasing the performance of the public institution. Therefore, the findings on human resource management particularities in the public sector prove that *objective 2* of the research has been achieved.

3. In the Republic of Moldova, there is an adequate legal and institutional framework for conducting legal acts in accordance with the requirements of the European Union, and the courts operate based on a package of laws that regulate all aspects of their activities – legal, financial, behavioural – being in a continuous process of improvement and adjustment to the new requirements and developments taking place in society. The Superior Council of the Magistracy is the institution responsible for ensuring the efficient activity of the courts at all hierarchical levels and for the career of judges. In this regard, the Superior Council of the Magistracy provides the appropriate framework for implementing legal norms in the activities of the courts, developing methodologies for various processes targeting all categories of personnel and coordinating the activities of the courts. Human resource management in the courts is regulated by a series of laws concerning the recruitment and selection of personnel, professional training, evaluation of professional performance, rewarding of personnel, labour relations, etc. The implementation of human resource management practices is carried out and coordinated by several higher legal institutions whose mission is to oversee the activities of both judges and other categories of personnel within them. The entire package of laws regulating human resources activities in the courts is supplemented by several government decisions that define the tactical and procedural aspects for the efficient management of personnel.

4. The indicators characterizing the performance of the courts, from the perspective of human resource management, vary dynamically, in territorial aspects and across hierarchical levels. The largest discrepancies in the indicators characterizing human resource performance in the courts are observed in the Case Resolution Rate. In the period 2018-2023, this indicator decreased in most courts in the Republic of Moldova. At the level of the judicial system, the case resolution rate decreased by 7.5 percentage points during the period 2018-2023. However, the largest discrepancy is observed at the Supreme Court of Justice where the case resolution rate has nearly halved. Therefore, the results on performance indicators from human resource management perspective prove that *objective 3* of the research is achieved.

5. In the Republic of Moldova, there is a dysfunction regarding the coverage rate of vacant judge positions. During the analysed period, the lowest coverage rate of judge positions was recorded at the Supreme Court of Justice, varying between 69.7% and 57.6%. In 2023, a noticeable reduction in the coverage rate of judge positions was observed in several territorial courts (Anenii Noi, Cahul, Comrat), reaching up to 50%. Only in the Bălți Court was the coverage rate of judge positions 100%, while in the Criuleni Court it was 111.1%. In 2024, as a result of the voluntary departure of a large number of judges from the judicial system, the value of this indicator decreased even further, leading to an increase in the workload per judge.

6. In recent years, the workload of judges has increased significantly, caused by the low level of the vacancy coverage rate. If the coverage rate of judge positions were 100%, their workload would be significantly reduced. In 2023, the workload per judge, expressed in the number of cases to be resolved, averaged 1001 cases per judge. At the same time, we note that the workload per A judge in the Cahul court had, on average, 2254 cases in 2023, which is more than twice the average recorded at the level of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, at the

Courts of Appeal in Bălți and Cahul and at the Criuleni Court, there were fewer than 500 cases per year, which is more than 2 times lower than the average recorded in the judicial system and 4.5 times lower than the Cahul Court, which recorded the highest number of cases for resolution on average per judge. The same trend is characteristic in terms of the degree of demand for judges in relation to the number of cases concluded.

7. The National Institute of Justice is the main institution responsible for the initial and continuous training of personnel in the judicial system. Annually, the National Institute of Justice develops the educational offer which includes several professional training programs both of a judicial and non-judicial nature. All categories of employees in the judicial system participate in the professional training process. The number of participants in the continuous professional training program varies by categories of personnel. However, there is a higher participation from judges in the continuous professional training programs of a legal nature. In the case of continuous professional training programs of a non-legal nature, there is a higher participation from other categories of personnel in the courts. The conclusions 5, 6 and 7 in this section demonstrate the achievement of *objective 4* of the thesis.

8. The justice reform in the Republic of Moldova has focused, in recent years, on ensuring the ethical and financial integrity of judicial personnel, especially judges. In this context, several evaluation criteria for the position of judge have been developed and approved, aiming to exclude candidates who do not meet the requirements of ethical and financial integrity. At the same time, the process of evaluating judges' integrity is cumbersome, consuming a lot of time and with many delays, which creates more dissatisfaction among society. This conclusion proves that *objective 5* of this scientific endeavour is achieved.

9. The activity of court personnel is influenced by several variables. The results of the sociological research demonstrate that the variables included in the research have different impacts on the activity of the courts. The variables included in the research were rated differently by the categories of respondents who participated in this scientific exercise. However, out of the 12 variables that influence the activity of the courts, we can highlight 4 variables that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest impact: *Respect from colleagues, Fair treatment at the workplace, Content of work tasks, and Management of the court*. Ensuring the performance of the courts also depends to a large extent on the selection criteria for judges. In the opinion of the respondents, the most important selection criteria are considered to be: *Integrity and impartiality in exercising the profession, Ability to resolve complex legal situations, Correctness in exercising the profession, and Ability to make decisions*. These criteria were rated, according to their degree of importance, in the same order by all categories of respondents. In addition to the selection criteria, other measures must also be implemented to enhance the performance of the courts, such as: simplifying judicial procedures, specializing judicial assistants, improving court management, etc. The results obtained therefore led to the achievement of *objective 6*.

10. In the context of judicial reform, strengthening the independence of the judicial system, as well as integrity and accountability, are two primary objectives of the Republic of Moldova for its accession to the European Union. The lack of professional integrity is largely determined by the fact that judges apply different standards when making judicial decisions, a fact confirmed by the results of sociological research. This, in turn, leads to a decrease in public trust in the judicial system. Respondents, who are employees of the judicial courts, themselves acknowledge that public trust in the judicial system is low. The professional integrity of staff in judicial courts can be influenced by several variables, each having a greater or lesser impact on ethical and

professional behaviour. The research results have shown that the variables with the greatest impact on the professional integrity principles of employees within the judicial system are: Low salaries that do not ensure a decent standard of living and the widespread lack of professional integrity at the societal level. In addition to the aforementioned variables, which are characteristic of society as a whole, there are specific variables within the judicial system that lead to the deviation of personnel from the principles of professional integrity, namely: The selection and promotion of candidates without considering their professional integrity, the phenomenon of "cronyism and nepotism" used within the judicial system, the tolerance of breaches of professional integrity by decision-makers in the judicial system, lack of transparency in the judicial system, etc. The research findings therefore lead to the achievement of *objective 7*.

The general conclusions and those at the end of each chapter, allow us to formulate some recommendations leading to the improvement of human resource management in the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova and, respectively, to the achievement of *objective 8* of the paper.

1. *Development and implementation of a comprehensive human resources strategy at the judicial system level*, by establishing an overall vision of staff development in the judicial courts and covering all aspects related to personnel management to enhance their quality.

2. *Development of a human resources policy at the level of each judicial court*, adapted to its needs, providing the flexibility to adjust operational activities for personnel in order to increase performance and improve the quality of judicial acts.

3. *Development of a strategic plan for staffing judicial courts for all categories of positions*, with the aim of maintaining a balance in employee flow both at the level of the entire judicial system and within each judicial court, ensuring efficient functionality.

4. *Creation of an effective mechanism for anticipating the need for judge positions at all levels of the judicial courts*, ensuring synchronization between departures and entries, which would contribute to covering vacant judge positions at a 100% rate in judicial courts. Currently, the coverage rate for judge positions is much lower in most judicial courts.

5. *Improvement of the case distribution algorithm among judges and other categories of personnel*, both within and between judicial courts, to ensure equitable workload distribution and reduce disproportionality and professional demand on judicial staff, thus enhancing professional comfort.

6. *Development of well-argued initial training plans for judges*, tailored to the needs of the judicial system, aiming to reduce the transition time for young graduates of the National Institute of Justice to become judges. Currently, the waiting period for appointment as a judge may last several years, leading to the devaluation of the professional skills of graduates or even their abandonment of a career in the judiciary.

7. *Adaptation and continuous updating of professional legal training programs for judicial staff*, based on specific needs in various areas of law, in view of the Republic of Moldova's accession to the European Union, for the development of adequate competencies that contribute to ensuring judicial performance.

8. *Development of non-legal competencies by diversifying non-legal professional training programs* for both judicial and non-judicial staff. In this context, we consider it imperative to introduce a module on Human Resources Management or Personnel Policies in the educational offerings of the National Institute of Justice, highlighting its importance, significance, and contribution to ensuring the efficient functionality and performance of the judicial institution.

9. *Professional specialization of judges and judicial assistants.* Specialization of judges and judicial assistants in specific areas of law will reduce case examination time, leading to increased efficiency and restoring public trust in the judicial system.

10. *Implementation of efficient managerial procedures within the promotion and evaluation policies for staff,* considering both professional criteria and integrity standards, with the principle of meritocracy serving as the fundamental decision-making element in securing careers within the judicial system.

11. *Ensuring an effective correlation of human resources management policies,* aiming for the optimal and efficient functioning of the judicial system and adequate motivation for both judicial and non-judicial personnel, as well as improving client satisfaction as a result of the quality of public service received.

12. *Increasing financial motivation for all categories of personnel in judicial courts,* by ensuring fair salaries relative to the effort made and responsibilities assumed, as well as reducing salary disparities between personnel categories within judicial courts.

13. *Implementation of effective procedures within the judicial system* to eliminate any variables that could influence judicial personnel away from the principles of independence and professional integrity.

14. *Promotion of a national awareness campaign on the importance of the judicial system,* through examples of best practices by judicial staff, to regain public trust in the judicial process.

The research conducted during the doctoral studies, including the conclusions and recommendations formulated, led to finding an answer to the research question posed at the beginning of the work. Additionally, the research hypotheses presented in the paper have been validated through the results obtained, with some being tested through the application of various statistical tools.

As with any research, this doctoral project has certain limitations. First, it is an initial attempt to analyse human resources management in judicial courts, which prevents comparison with previous studies. Second, human resources management in judicial courts is strictly regulated by national legislation, which prevented the author from exceeding legal prerogatives. Third, the results obtained are based on quantitative research, where the questionnaire was the tool for collecting information, without using qualitative research based on in-depth interviews.

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"Improving human resources management in the judicial courts of the Republic of Moldova", Speciality 521.03 – Economics and management in the field of activity

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## ADNOTARE

**la teza de doctor în științe economice „Perfecționarea managementului resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești din Republica Moldova”, autor: Ion CUPCEA, specialitatea 521.03, Economie și management în domeniul de activitate, Chișinău, 2025**

**Structura tezei:** introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografia din 209 de titluri, 27 de anexe, 156 de pagini text de bază, 28 de tabele și 39 de figuri. Rezultatele tezei sunt reflectate în 10 lucrări științifice publicate în reviste indexate în baze de date internaționale și în volumele conferințelor științifice internaționale.

**Cuvinte cheie:** resurse umane, managementul resurselor umane, instanțe judecătorești, personal judiciar, sector public, reformă judiciară, integritate profesională.

**Domeniu de studiu:** Economie și management în domeniul de activitate.

**Obiectul cercetării** îl constituie resursele umane care activează în instanțele judecătorești de la toate nivelele ierarhice din Republica Moldova.

**Scopul lucrării** constă în îmbunătățirea sistemului de management al resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești de la toate nivele ierarhice din Republica Moldova în vederea sporirii performanței instituționale.

**Obiectivele cercetării:** 1) cercetarea abordărilor teoretice și metodologice ale MRU și implicațiile acestuia asupra funcționalității organizației; 2) investigarea particularităților teoretice ale managementului resurselor umane în instituțiile din sectorul public; 3) analiza în dinamică a indicatorilor de performanță caracteristici instanțelor judecătorești pe nivele ierarhice ale sistemului judiciar din perspectiva managementului resurselor umane; 4) aprecierea proceselor de management al resurselor umane aplicate în instanțele judecătorești din Republica Moldova; 5) evaluarea retrospectivă și prospectivă a strategiilor de reformare a sistemului judecătoresc din Republica Moldova prin prisma resurselor umane; 6) aprecierea percepției sistemului de management al resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești prin cercetare empirică; 7) identificarea și aprecierea variabilelor ce influențează integritatea profesională a personalului în instanțele judecătorești; 8) elaborarea unor recomandări în vederea îmbunătățirii sistemului de management al resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică** constă în: consolidarea cadrului teoretic și metodologic al managementului resurselor umane în cadrul organizațiilor; distingerea și dezvoltarea particularităților managementului resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești; analiza comparativă a unor indicatori ce caracterizează activitatea sistemului judecătoresc din Republica Moldova și Uniunea Europeană; evaluarea indicatorilor specifici managementului resurselor umane, cu scopul sporirii eficienței instanțelor judecătorești; evaluarea retrospectivă și prospectivă a reformei sistemului judecătoresc din perspectiva managementului resurselor umane; aprecierea percepției personalului din instanțele judecătorești asupra reformării sistemului judecătoresc; reliefaarea și aprecierea influenței factorilor externi asupra activității personalului din instanțele judecătorești; profilarea și evaluarea setului de variabile, prin aplicarea instrumentelor statistice, care influențează integritatea profesională a personalului din instanțele judecătorești;

**Problema științifică soluționată** rezidă în fundamentarea teoretică, metodologică și aplicativă a sistemului de management al resurselor umane în instanțele judecătorești din Republica Moldova, precum și adaptarea și reajustarea acestuia în contextul desfășurării reformei judiciare.

**Semnificația teoretică a lucrării.** A contribuit la consolidarea conținutului managementului resurselor umane, prin atragerea unor noi concepte aferente domeniului și al conștientizării importanței acestora pentru asigurarea unei funcționalități eficiente a instanțelor judecătorești din Republica Moldova. Rezultatele obținute conduc la dezvoltarea unor noi cercetări în vederea aprofundării elementelor și categoriilor aferente managementului resurselor umane din instanțele judecătorești.

**Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării.** Rezultatele obținute pot fi folosite de managementul superior al instanțelor judecătorești din Republica Moldova drept bază științifică pentru elaborarea și dezvoltarea unor acțiuni concrete, sub formă de politici și programe, pentru îmbunătățirea managementului resurselor umane, în vederea sporirii performanței instituționale.

**Implementarea rezultatelor științifice.** Au fost folosite pentru formularea unor recomandări adresate instanțelor judecătorești și altor actori din sistemul judiciar al Republicii Moldova, cu scopul perfecționării sistemului de management al resurselor umane, rezultatul final fiind sporirea performanței și a încrederii societății în instituțiile respective.

## ANNOTATION

**PhD dissertation in economics "*Improving human resources management in the courts of the Republic of Moldova*", author: Ion CUPCEA, specialty 521.03, Economics and management in the field of activity, Chisinau, 2025**

**Structure of the thesis:** introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 209 titles, 27 appendices, 156 pages of basic text, 28 tables and 39 figures. The results of the thesis are reflected in 10 scientific papers published in journals indexed in international databases and in volumes of international scientific conferences.

**Keywords:** human resources, human resource management, courts, judicial personnel, public sector, judicial reform, professional integrity.

**Field of study:** Economics and field management.

**The object of the research** is human resources working in courts of all hierarchical levels in the Republic of Moldova.

**The aim of the study** is to improve the human resources management system in courts of all hierarchical levels in the Republic of Moldova in order to enhance institutional performance.

**Research objectives:** 1) to research the theoretical and methodological approaches of HRM and its implications on the functionality of the organization; 2) to investigate the theoretical peculiarities of human resources management in public sector institutions; 3) to analyze in dynamics the performance indicators characteristics of the courts on hierarchical levels of the judicial system from the perspective of human resources management; 4) to assess the human resources management processes applied in the courts of the Republic of Moldova; 5) retrospective and prospective evaluation of the reform strategies of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova from the human resources perspective; 6) assessment of the perception of the human resources management system in the courts through empirical research; 7) identification and assessment of the variables influencing the professional integrity of the personnel in the courts; 8) elaboration of recommendations for the improvement of the human resources management system in the courts.

**The innovation and scientific originality** consists in: strengthening the theoretical and methodological framework of human resources management in organizations; distinguishing and developing the particularities of human resources management in courts; comparative analysis of indicators characterizing the work of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova and the European Union; evaluation of specific indicators of human resources management, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of courts; retrospective and prospective evaluation of the reform of the judicial system from the perspective of human resources management; assessment of the perception of the staff of the courts on the reform of the judicial system; highlighting and assessing the influence of external factors on the activity of the staff of the courts; profiling and evaluation of the set of variables, by applying statistical tools, which influence the professional integrity of the staff of the courts;

**The solved scientific problem** resides in the theoretical, methodological and applicative substantiation of the human resources management system in the courts of the Republic of Moldova, as well as its adaptation and readjustment in the context of the judicial reform.

**Theoretical significance** of the work. It contributed to the consolidation of the content of human resources management, by attracting new concepts related to the field and raising awareness of their importance for ensuring an efficient functioning of the courts of the Republic of Moldova. The results obtained lead to the development of new research in order to deepen the elements and categories related to human resources management in the courts.

**Applied value of the work.** The obtained results can be used by the senior management of the courts of the Republic of Moldova as a scientific basis for the elaboration and development of concrete actions, in the form of policies and programs, for the improvement of human resources management, with a view to enhancing institutional performance.

**Implementation of scientific results.** They were used to formulate recommendations addressed to the courts and other actors in the judicial system of the Republic of Moldova with the aim of improving the human resources management system, the final result being the increase of performance and the confidence of the society in the respective institutions.

## АННОТАЦИЯ

**Докторская диссертация по экономике «Совершенствование управления человеческими ресурсами в судах Республики Молдова», автор: Ион Купча, специальность 521.03, Экономика и управление в сфере деятельности, Кишинев, 2025 г.**

**Структура диссертации:** введение, три главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиография из 209 наименований, 27 приложений, 156 страница основного текста, 28 таблицы и 39 рисунков. Результаты диссертации отражены в 10 научных статьях, опубликованных в журналах, индексируемых в международных базах данных, и в сборниках материалов международных научных конференций.

**Ключевые слова:** человеческие ресурсы, управление человеческими ресурсами, суды, судебные кадры, государственный сектор, судебная реформа, профессиональная честность.

**Направление исследований:** Экономика и управление отраслью.

**Объектом исследования** являются человеческие ресурсы, работающие в судах всех иерархических уровней в Республике Молдова.

**Цель исследования** - совершенствование системы управления человеческими ресурсами в судах всех иерархических уровней в Республике Молдова для повышения эффективности работы учреждения.

**Цели исследования:** 1) изучить теоретические и методологические подходы HRM и его влияние на функциональность организации; 2) исследовать теоретические особенности HRM в учреждениях государственного сектора; 3) проанализировать в динамике характеристики показателей деятельности судов на иерархических уровнях судебной системы с точки зрения HRM; 4) оценить процессы HRM, применяемые в судах Республики Молдова; 5) ретроспективная и перспективная оценка стратегий реформирования судебной системы Республики Молдова с точки зрения человеческих ресурсов; 6) оценка восприятия системы управления человеческими ресурсами в судах с помощью эмпирического исследования; 7) выявление и оценка переменных, влияющих на профессиональную целостность сотрудников судов; 8) разработка рекомендаций по совершенствованию системы управления человеческими ресурсами в судах.

**Научная новизна и оригинальность** заключается в: укреплении теоретических и методологических основ управления человеческими ресурсами в организациях; выделении и развитии особенностей управления человеческими ресурсами в судах; сравнительном анализе некоторых показателей, характеризующих деятельность судебной системы в Республике Молдова и Европейском Союзе; оценке конкретных показателей управления человеческими ресурсами с целью повышения эффективности работы судов; ретроспективная и перспективная оценка реформы судебной системы с точки зрения управления человеческими ресурсами; оценка восприятия персоналом судов реформы судебной системы; выделение и оценка влияния внешних факторов на деятельность персонала судов; профилирование и оценка набора переменных, с применением статистических инструментов, которые влияют на профессиональную целостность персонала судов;

**Решаемая научная проблема** заключается в теоретическом, методологическом и прикладном обосновании системы управления человеческими ресурсами в судах Республики Молдова, а также ее адаптации и перенастройке в контексте судебной реформы.

**Теоретическая значимость работы.** Она внесла вклад в консолидацию содержания управления человеческими ресурсами, привлекая новые понятия, связанные с этой областью, и повышая осознание их важности для обеспечения эффективного функционирования судов Республики Молдова. Полученные результаты ведут к разработке новых исследований с целью углубления элементов и категорий, связанных с управлением человеческими ресурсами в судах Республики Молдова.

**Прикладное значение работы.** Полученные результаты могут быть использованы высшим руководством судов Республики Молдова в качестве научной основы для разработки и развития конкретных действий в виде политик и программ по улучшению управления человеческими ресурсами с целью повышения эффективности работы учреждения.

**Внедрение научных результатов.** На их основе были сформулированы рекомендации, адресованные судам и другим субъектам судебной системы Республики Молдова с целью совершенствования системы управления человеческими ресурсами, конечным результатом которых является повышение эффективности работы и доверия общества к соответствующим учреждениям.

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