

## Career management and personal integration in organizational culture in medical education – case study University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova, Romania

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### Abstract

A peculiarity in the professional training of medical staff with higher education is the fact that a large part of the teaching staff is also a practitioner of the medical profession, thus combining the activity of educator and trainer with that of doctor or nurse. The two occupations, although distinct at first glance, cannot be separated in the educational–formative process of the medical profession. Practitioners who combine the two professional activities decide to develop a parallel medical and university career, though different are complementary. In this context, through an analysis of the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of employees in medical education institutions regarding career and professional development, one can determine how they position themselves in relation to the choices made in terms of the job, the place where they want to practice it, how they work and their professional satisfaction. This article presents the results of a study conducted at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova, Romania, on professors and auxiliary teaching staff of the Faculties of Medicine and General Medical Assistance, in order to identify how it relates to organizational culture, its own career and how satisfied with the choices they have made.

**Keywords:** medical career, education, professional development, employees in medical education.

### ☒ Introduction

The role that education and training play in the process of identifying and professional development of an individual is undeniable, and career is an important aspect and a significant part of his life [1]. Career failure has repercussions not only on him, but also on his family, the organization in which he operates, and implicitly on society.

In medical career, education, training and professional development are well established, long-term and rather difficult. By going through each stage of professional perfection, the individual can ensure once again if the chosen path is the one he really wants. The educational institutions, in which the future physician is formed, represent the foundation for the future professional career.

A particular feature in the training and professional training of future physicians is the fact that much of the teaching staff is also a practitioner of the medical profession. If professional training assures the acquisition of knowledge necessary for practice, professional development also involves individual career management in an organizational and social context [2]. By combining

the activity of educator and trainer with practitioner, the distinction between the two different professions disappears.

Through an analysis of the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of employees in medical education institutions about career and professional development one can determine how they position themselves in relation to the choices made in terms of the job, the way and the place where they choose to as well as the professional satisfaction they have. Identifying organizational culture, assuming it and integrating it into the work environment can determine the development of a successful career at a personal level.

### Aim

The aim of this research is to identify how trainers involved in university medical education in Romania are assimilated to organizational culture, how they relate to the institution in which they operate and how satisfied they are with their own professional development within the university organization. The factors that engage the individual in an organization are their respect, recognition of professional merits, work satisfaction, and personal

development opportunities. By identifying these determinants, human resource specialists involved in personnel management in the medical sector can identify the best motivators for employees.

### ☒ Participants and Methods

This research was conducted in the academic year 2018–2019 at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova (UMPhCV), Romania – Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of General Medical Assistance. The subjects included in the study are part of the teaching staff and auxiliary teaching staff. Batch determination was done randomly by distribution to departments, offices and related services within a number of 274 questionnaires, of which 206 questionnaires were completed and 139 validated.

The data obtained were encoded, entered and processed using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA) together with the XLSTAT suite for MS Excel (Addinsoft SARL, Paris, France) and IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 20.0, Armonk, NY, USA). In order to carry out the study, the questionnaire was used as a tool of investigation – an extremely useful investigation in the marketing actions, aiming to describe the behavior, to know the reasons for some actions, to find out the opinions and preferences of the analyzed group [3].

The questionnaire contains 34 direct, indirect, factual, opinion, knowledge, and control questions. The following types of measurement scales have been used to achieve these: the nominal scale, the ordinal scale in relation to a certain criterion, the semantic scale and the scale interval. Secondary processing of the data obtained – descriptive analysis of batches according to various parameters, calculation of the basic statistical characteristics, mean and standard deviation, calculation of the coefficient of variation but also their graphical representation – was made using the Pivot Tables, Functions – Statistical, Chart, and the Data Analysis module.

### ☒ Results

Following the processing of the data obtained from the interviewed subjects, a series of data with which they will be analyzed the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of UMPhCV employees from the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of General Medical Assistance, regarding career and professional development within institution. In analyzing and interpreting data, the teaching staff was divided into four analysis groups – university professors, university associate professors, university lecturers and university assistants. Auxiliary teaching staff was considered as a compact group because division into positions held in the institution could distort the anonymity of the questionnaire, being respondents who are the only ones registered on that position throughout the institution or being subjects in a department who have responded in full to the questionnaire. These categories include office heads, secretaries, psychologists and counselors.

Out of the 139 validated questionnaires, 118 were completed by the teaching staff of the Faculty subject to the analysis and 21 by the auxiliary teaching staff.

Depending on the gender of the study participants, 93 of them are females and 46 males. According to the age and gender distribution of the participants, the correlation between these criteria highlights the fact that most of the teachers and the auxiliary staff analyzed are in the age group of 31–40 years (51 persons), followed by those in the 26–30 category years (40 people). In all age groups, the number of females is predominant. Two subjects have completed short-term university studies, 28 subjects have completed long-term university studies, 20 subjects have postgraduate studies and 89 are doctoral graduates.

Of the interviewed subjects, 112 are full-time working, 15 are part-time and 12 have more than one contract of employment. Of the persons employed with the cumulative number of positions, two perform both teaching and auxiliary teaching staff at the Faculty of Medicine of UMPhCV. More than half (53.95%) of the surveyed staff have a length of service within the institution less than five years. It is noted that none of the subjects has a working age of more than 30 years. Only 40 people in the study group said the institution was the first job they had. UMPhCV represents the only job for only 19.42% of the subjects of the study group, the other participants having related jobs either in the public system, in the private system or even in both systems. As a result of the study, it can be noticed that 30 of the respondents have at least two more parallel jobs at the UMPhCV.

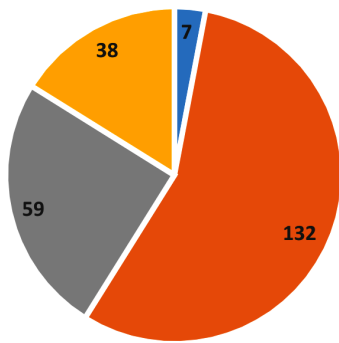
### Identification of organizational culture and institutional integration

The organizational culture of UMPhCV, its public and visible part is transposed into the Charter of the institution by identifying the purpose, its mission and the objectives assumed. To identify how employees refer to it, 13 questionnaire questions with multiple response variants were included in the survey questionnaire used as an analysis tool. Thus, following the analysis of the answers, it was found that from the perspective of UMPhCV employees, they expect them to give maximum priority first of all to fulfill the duties and activities specific to the posts; compliance with policies and procedures relating to their own positions and then the challenges of some activities; finding better working methods. Satisfying the needs and demands of bosses and other high-ranking organizations are not seen as institutional expectations.

The organizational climate in UMPhCV is perceived as satisfactory by teachers and auxiliary teaching staff who are primarily efficient and competent professionals (75% of respondents) and then by those who respect the rules and strive to do things (57.25% of respondents). Close collegiate relationships, cooperation and empathy towards the professional community in the institution are considered characteristics of the internal organizational culture by 42.74% of the subjects of the interviewed group.

In the medical education institution in Craiova, only 16.93% of the interviewed subjects stated that the employees who consider the work environment to be satisfactory are those who are able and willing to use the power and diplomacy to promote. Thus, the perception of the teaching staff and the auxiliary teaching staff on the working climate is that in the institution are appreciated the professionalism (94.96%), the determination and

the competence without departing from the system of organizational rules and regulations (Figure 1).



- (a) Meeting the needs and demands of bosses and other people in the organization's high hierarchy;
- (b) Fulfilling the duties and activities specific to the positions; compliance with policies and procedures relating to their own positions;
- (c) The challenges of some activities; finding better working methods;
- (d) Collaborating with people with whom they work in solving professional and personal problems.

**Figure 1 – Establishing priorities in the work of employees according to institutional culture.**

More than half of the teaching staff and auxiliary teaching staff perceive the relationship with the organization as honest, considering that the institution treats them primarily as devoted partners (62.9% of the subjects). Noteworthy is that only 3.22% of interviewees are considered to be working tools available to superiors. Within the institution, the climate offered to employees is a professional one, with only 17.74% of respondents feeling at work, among colleagues, at home or with friends. In a professional work environment, the policy of running the human resource is established by well-defined procedures and rules.

Coordination of people, their directing or their influence on UMPHCV is considered as being done by those in authority, exercising their power using rewards and punishments of only 16.13% of the respondents. The organization's needs and plans, as well as the system rules followed by correspondence between the job requirements and the interests of the institution, plus individual abilities are a priority in UMPHCV Faculty of Medicine, in setting tasks or assigning positions. Personal requirements or desires for personal evolution are not criteria frequently used in the hierarchy strategy of the medical education institution in Craiova.

The most important qualities of the employee sought by UMPHCV from the perspective of 62.9% of the respondents are the team spirit, the cooperation and the permanent involvement. The institution appreciates less well placed, less determined and loyal employees in the organization – only 22.58% of respondents have a validated variant of the answers above.

The leadership desired by teachers and auxiliary teachers should have a democratic style and accept the ideas of the subordinates. The less wanted formal leaders in the institution (only 27 people validated this answer) are the sensitive and concerned about personal issues and subordinate needs. Thus, it is certified that in the organizational culture of the analyzed institution, the

interpersonal relationships are based on professionalism and not on friends or family ties. The hierarchy of responses to the typology of the hierarchical superior desired by employees leads to the shaping of a democratic, innovative, open, cooperative, and honest person who does not use authority for personal reasons and avoids getting involved in the personal problems of employees.

The strongest motivation for the subjects involved in the study is determined by the strong desire to succeed, create and innovate. On the pole, the most unstimulated motivational factors identified are fear of punishment or personal loyalty to the boss and the pressure of colleagues to contribute to the success of the organization.

Intra- and interdepartmental relations are viewed by interviewees as 80.64% of cooperation when meeting common goals. In addition, according to the responses provided, only 10.48% of respondents believe that collegiate relationships are based on competition, each pursuing their interest and helping their colleagues only if they see any advantage for themselves.

If the rules, systems or procedures interfere with the meaning of the activity, questioned UMPHCV employees act according to the following principles:

(a) People violate them if they have enough influence to deal with it, or I think they may not be caught – 0%;

(b) Employees generally follow as they are or pass through hierarchical channels to get permission to divert or change – 67.74%;

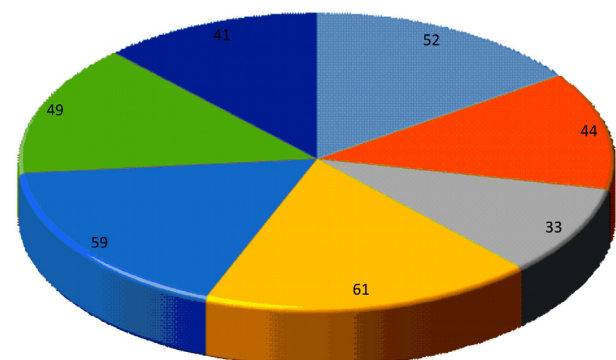
(c) Employees tend to ignore or circumvent them in order to fulfill their missions or to carry out their work better – 13.7%;

(d) People rely on each other in their ignorance or adjustment if they realize that they are unfair or cause difficulties to others – 21.77%.

It can be noticed that the employees respect the working procedures and the institutional hierarchy. Even in situations where the legal framework makes it harder for a business to work, no respondent has said he is willing to break the rules on the assumption that he will not be caught.

From the systemic perspective of UMPHCV employees, new entrants to institutions should first learn formal rules and procedures, respect them, and do not exceed their competencies.

Analyzing the professional activity undertaken at the UMPHCV and what elements of it considered the employees to be improved, the results are schematized in Figure 2.



- (a) Organization;
- (b) Relationships with colleagues;
- (c) Relationships with students;
- (d) Institutional communication;
- (e) Time management;
- (f) Professional development.

**Figure 2 – Improvement of the professional activity from the perspective of UMPHCV employees.**

### Perspective of teaching staff and auxiliary teaching staff at the UMPHCV workplace

The survey questionnaire distributed to teaching staff and auxiliary teaching staff at UMPHCV included seven items aimed at identifying how the employees included in the study group relate to the work they have and the professional activity that they have achieved.

From the analysis of the results, both on the responses received from the subjects and on the validations carried out on each response variant, it was found that the greatest challenge in combining work and personal life is the need for time and management, followed by the tendency spend more time at work than at home. If work activity can affect family time, only 4.03% of respondents say that personal problems can make them difficult to accomplish their job tasks.

Only 15.32% of respondents feel underprivileged for their work. In addition, only 26.61% of the teachers and auxiliary teaching staff surveyed want more institutional support in professional development.

To assess the level of work-related stress, subjects had an assessment scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents a very low stress level and 5 a very high stress level. Thus, according to the responses received, 20 subjects rated stress as level 1, 16 subjects rated stress as level 2, 59 subjects rated stress as medium (score 3 on the assessment scale) and 35 subjects assessed the stress as being level 4. The maximum stress level – 5 points – on the evaluation scale was given only by nine subjects of those surveyed. There were no significant differences between gender stress levels compared to the distribution of the entire sample. By age, the maximum stress level was met only in the 26–40 age group. In addition, none of the subjects who have perceived the maximum level of stress at the workplace have superior hierarchical positions.

The self-evaluation of the participants in the study in relation to the service tasks revealed that 20.16% of the subjects are considered as very good professionals, 49.19% think good professionals and 30.65% are convinced that they have to work for the improvement their. None of the interviewed subjects was considered to be a weak professional.

The need for professional development is felt more to teachers underlying hierarchy and who have low job seniority. In this context, it can be inferred that with the hierarchical growth and the strengthening of the institutional position over time of the employees, the degree of trust of the individual in the professional activity undertaken increases. In the self-evaluation process, none of the

respondents employed as an auxiliary didactic did not feel that they needed to work on their own training.

Most of the participants in the study would feel fully satisfied with the current job at UMPHCV, if they were better paid and had better working conditions. Hierarchical promotion in the medical education institution in Craiova is not an important criterion in the satisfaction offered by the workplace, according to the results obtained in this study.

For most of the subjects included in the study, the organizational climate in UMPHCV is perceived as positive, with more than half of the respondents feeling satisfied, involved, quiet, creative and appreciated. The perceived relaxation level validates the results obtained in the previous stress analysis.

Teachers and auxiliary teaching staff could increase the institutional value of UMPHCV would further stimulate creativity and individual initiative and develop strategies and plans at the centralized level of employee development. Promoting a positive image of the institution by its staff is not considered to be important in valuing the organization.

Increasing the level of communication and changing the hierarchy at the organizational level would not in the future change the good course of UMPHCV, according to the opinion of the teaching staff and the auxiliary teaching staff of the institution.

### Perception of individual careers

In the context of the positive functioning of any organization, the human factor plays a decisive role. As a human factor to work from a professional point of view to a high potential, it must be motivated by his/her own career and motivated by the institution in which he/she works. Thus, the degree of individual satisfaction increases, which also reflects on the quality of the whole life of the individual.

The way in which UMPHCV employees, teachers and auxiliary teaching staff relate to their own career can be perceived by analyzing the results of the study obtained based on the last four items of the survey questionnaire to which they answered. Thus, referring to the present moment of their own career, respondents to the study had one of the following options:

(a) Thank you, I think I have achieved all my career goals set by that date;

(b) Partially satisfied, there is much to be done to achieve the objectives set;

(c) Unhappy, things did not go out as I intended;

(d) I have not thought about it yet.

The results obtained are schematized in Figure 3.

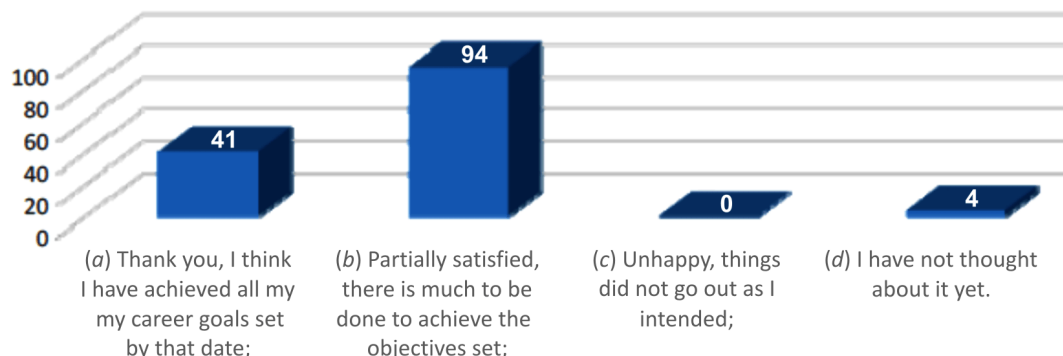


Figure 3 – Perception of UMPHCV employees on their individual careers.

For most UMPPhCV employees, career success is important and very important. Thus, in equal proportions of 41.13%, they awarded 4 and 5 points, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very small and five very much), career success. We found that 12 (90% of respondents) were positioned in an area of neutrality in relation to professional success. Four subjects (23%) gave only two points to the importance of career success, while 1.12% (two people) did not attach any importance to it. People who do not attach any importance to professional success are female, belong to the age group 31–40 years and are part of the auxiliary staff. In the four personal attaches little importance to career success (with two points on the rating scale), they are male teachers and falls in ages between 31 and 50 years.

The creation of a balance between professional activity and professional life is, according to the study, given by the equitable sharing of personal lifetime in relation to the career for 74 people. For 40 respondents, time for personal life must be greater in percentage terms than career advancement, while 25 of the respondents believe that the time dedicated career is more important. Success in career is primarily given by professional training. In the analyzed institution, the individual careers of the employees are rather horizontally oriented, focusing on permanent development, the harmony they manage to achieve in combining professional work with personal life and how they are useful to society. Gaining a higher hierarchical position is not a marker of success for medical system trainers.

## ☒ Discussions

### General aspects

The career concept covers and identifies different roles attributed to the individual (student, employee, community member, parent, etc.) and how it works in the family, school, society, and all stages of life. In addition to a person's evolutionary career, career can also be seen under economic, sociological or psychological aspects [4]. In other opinions, careers are regarded as a pool of professional activities and positions occupied by a person in an organization, which are determined by the attitudes, knowledge and skills developed over time [5]. Thus, the career becomes a complex of actions for the purpose of professional development based on education, training and experience. In order to have a career, it is not enough to get a certain hierarchical position, but you have to constantly improve yourself to meet the organizational needs and evolve as a "resource" of your career [6]. In the career management process, the central objective is how individual career and organizational career are in harmony [7, 8]. The medical career is like a tripod whose three feet are: patient care, research and education. Thus, medical practice is conditional on lifelong learning and research [9]. How human resources management is approached in health can lead to the stimulation or inhibition of the achievement of the goals of the organization. The main objectives of the human resources management in the health care system concern the mobilization, motivation and development of the staff capacities [10].

In medical education, one of the fundamental roles of human resources management is the successful management of organizational careers in order to improve motivation and increase staff satisfaction and consequently to improve the quality of the educational process for future practitioners and reflected in the medical act. All these correlations have the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life [11–14]. Thus, individual career management must be correlated with organizational career management and integrated with institutional culture. The elements of organizational culture are found on three levels, differentiated according to their degree of visibility, pregnancy and consistency. The first two levels constitute the visible part of the culture and consist of phenomena, objects and processes that can be perceived by any foreign person when they come into contact with an organization – the first level; attitudes, behaviors, rituals and values shared by group members – the second level. The third cultural level includes fundamental beliefs, elements that suffer little variation within an organization that are usually invisible and unconscious [15]. An important role in creating institutional identity and in generating organizational culture has both formal and informal leadership [16].

### Characteristics of UMPPhCV

UMPhCV functions as a higher education institution with a medical profile according to Law No. 119/05.06.1998. It has "a legal personality and a nonprofit character, deeply attached to the European values system and animated by the desire to maintain itself in this value chain". UMPPhCV is an "academic community of which teachers, students, researchers, doctors and pharmacists in post-graduate training, as well as non-teaching auxiliary and teaching staff are members" [17]. The higher education institution with a medical profile in Craiova operates with four Faculties – Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Nursing –, and six study programs.

The mission, purpose and institutional objectives – elements that define the visible organizational culture – are expressed in the Charter of the Institution. Through its established goal, UMPPhCV "protects the human and professional dignity of its community members". Thus, "age discrimination, gender, ethnicity, social origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation or other forms of discrimination are not allowed in the academic community". The activity of UMPPhCV focuses on the proper training of the students and on the continuous training of the teaching staff through the didactic and scientific activity undertaken [18–20].

UMPhCV operates with 731 employees, of which 65.94% (482 persons) teachers and 34.06% (249 persons) auxiliary teaching staff, maintenance and administration services. For the teaching positions in UMPPhCV, the structure is the following: 77 university professors, 85 university associate professors, 178 university lecturers and 142 university assistants. The analysis of gender distribution of academic posts shows that 42.53% (205 persons) of the teachers are male and 57.47% (277 persons) are female. The average age of the teaching staff registered at the institution level is 45 years. The weight of the

positions occupied in the total number of positions legally constituted at UMPHCV is 73.59%, of which 33.61% are professors and university lecturers. In addition, the share of teachers under the age of 41 is 37.14%. All postgraduate teachers from UMPHCV are Doctors of Science.

## ☒ Conclusions

The visible organizational culture, transposed into the mission, purpose and objectives of the institution, is accepted and assumed by most employees. Research has found that employees' vision of institutional expectations of the human resource is reflected by the highest priority, being given primarily to the fulfillment of the duties and activities specific to the posts; compliance with policies and procedures relating to their own posts and then the challenges of some activities and finding better working methods.

Organizational leadership is not authoritative, management policies being based on the rules and hierarchy established and assumed by the institution. Decision-making processes are characterized by adherence to formal channels and trust in decision-making policies and procedures.

In the organizational culture of the analyzed institution, interpersonal relationships are based on professionalism and not on friends or family ties.

The strongest motivation to work identified by this study of trainers involved in medical education is determined by the strong desire to succeed, create and innovate. On the pole, the most unstimulated motivational factors identified are fear of punishment or personal loyalty to the boss and the pressure of colleagues to contribute to the success of the organization.

The self-evaluation of the participants in the study in relation to the service tasks revealed that the majority of the employees are considered good or very good professionals.

## Conflict of interests

None to declare.

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