

# THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SECURITY SYSTEM

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In the contemporary security environment, strategic human resource management has emerged as a critical factor in ensuring the efficiency and sustainability of security systems. This paper examines the significance of a strategic approach to the planning, development, and management of personnel within security structures such as the military, police, and intelligence agencies. Particular emphasis is placed on the unique characteristics of the security sector, including stringent selection standards, continuous training, loyalty, and personnel confidentiality. By addressing challenges such as technological advancements, budget constraints, and the need to adapt to modern security threats, the paper underscores the importance of long-term strategic human resource planning. The aim of this study is to demonstrate how effective personnel management directly contributes to enhancing institutional resilience, sustainability, and operational security efficiency.*

**Keywords:** security system, human resources, management, sustainability, strategy

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the current socio-political context, security systems face complex challenges stemming from rapid technological changes, geopolitical instability, the rise of transnational threats, and shifts in the labor force. Within such an environment, effective human resource management becomes one of the key determinants of resilience and success for security organizations. Traditional approaches to personnel management are no longer sufficient there is a need for the application of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) principles, which align human potential with the long-term goals of the organization while upholding ethical standards, sustainability, and digital adaptation.

Security institutions such as the police, military, and intelligence agencies operate within specific organizational, cultural, and legal frameworks. These unique features require a tailored approach to the strategic planning, development, and implementation of HR policies. This paper aims to explore the challenges and specificities of human resource management within security structures and to identify models of best practice through a comparative

analysis of domestic and international security institutions.

Special focus is placed on institutional resilience, organizational culture, process digitalization, and the sustainability of human capital. Through case studies, the paper will illustrate different approaches to strategic HR management in systems such as NATO, the FBI, and the Israeli Defense Forces, and compare these practices with those of domestic actors such as the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, the Security Information Agency, and the Serbian Armed Forces.

The aim is to identify, through scientific analysis and comparison, the key factors contributing to successful strategic human resource management in the security sector and to offer recommendations for improving domestic practices in line with contemporary standards and challenges.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Over the past decade, human resource management (HRM) has undergone significant transformation, evolving from a traditionally administrative and operational function into a strategic one with direct impact on organizational performance and resilience. This change is especially evident in security structures, where human capital not only contributes to efficiency but becomes a pivotal element in maintaining national stability and responding to the complex challenges of the modern world (Brewster et al., 2020; Collings et al., 2021).

### **2.1 Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) vs. Traditional HRM**

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) represents a conceptual shift in the management of human potential, where the HR function becomes an active agent in shaping and achieving organizational strategy. While traditional HRM focuses on routine functions such as recruitment, payroll, and administration, SHRM encompasses succession planning, leadership development, organizational transformation, and forecasting of staffing needs (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Jackson et al., 2021).

In the context of security institutions such as the military, police, and intelligence agencies SHRM demands an additional level of sophistication. HR strategies in this sector must be directly aligned with national and global security objectives, including personnel readiness for rapid response to terrorism, cyber-attacks, organized crime, and non-conventional threats (Taneja, 2022).

Unlike the reactive nature of traditional HRM, SHRM incorporates predictive mechanisms from early talent identification and systematic education and training to tools for assessing human factor risks (Wright & McMahan, 2020). In security structures, this includes the timely formation of teams specialized in crisis response, cyber defense, or international missions.

Psychological factors also play a critical role in this sector. The selection and development of personnel must account for individual resilience, stress tolerance, and capacity for teamwork under pressure. SHRM addresses these through personality assessments, emotional intelligence testing, and evaluations of adaptive capabilities (Saks, 2021).

### **2.2 Core concepts: sustainability, institutional resilience and workforce development**

Three interconnected concepts form the foundation of SHRM in security systems:

- **Sustainability** refers to the organization's ability to use and develop human resources rationally without compromising long-term functionality. In the security sector, this entails balancing staffing capacity with budgetary resources and implementing mechanisms to prevent overload and professional burnout (Boon et al., 2019).
- **Institutional resilience** denotes the organizational capacity to respond to external shocks and internal challenges. Efficient HR systems enable the rapid redeployment of forces, activation of reserve capacities, and continuity of decision-making in crisis situations (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2020).
- **Workforce development** includes continuous education, adaptation to contemporary trends (e.g., digitalization), and the strategic design of career paths. In security contexts, this means investing in skills such as data analysis, intercultural communication, and cybersecurity (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021).

### 2.3 Normative foundations and ethical principles in security structures

Security institutions operate within clearly defined legal and normative frameworks that regulate employee behavior, accountability, and professional standards. In addition to laws governing the police, military, and intelligence services, internal regulations and ethical codes play a significant role.

Key ethical values include:

- Loyalty to the state and represented institutions;
- Confidentiality in handling information;
- Impartiality and consistent respect for human rights;
- Integrity, reflected in responsible professional decision-making and conduct.

Within the SHRM model, these values are not merely behavioral guidelines but are actively embedded in recruitment, training, and evaluation processes. Institutionalizing ethics through training, simulations, and procedures fosters a culture of trust and legitimacy (Farndale et al., 2022).

### 2.4 The role of technology in transforming shrm in the security sector

Recent technological advancements have significantly influenced the evolution of HRM functions across all sectors, particularly in security structures, where new technologies enable more sophisticated personnel management methods. The introduction of digital platforms for selection, evaluation, training, and supervision has increased automation while raising ethical and legal concerns regarding personnel management (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016; Marler & Parry, 2021).

In the SHRM context, digital transformation entails:

- Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze competencies and predict performance;
- Employing knowledge management software in organizations with extensive operational personnel;
- Developing e-learning platforms for fast and flexible training aligned with operational priorities;
- Managing employee data through secure systems that enable strategic planning while ensuring compliance with data protection standards (e.g., GDPR and local regulations).

Security institutions that successfully implement digital HR tools achieve better coordination, greater process transparency, and reduced risk of human error in critical operations. However, digitalization also raises ethical questions: How do we retain the human element in decision-making? How do we balance control with trust? (Strohmeier & Kabst, 2018)

## **2.5 SHRM and organizational culture in security structures**

One of the key functions of SHRM is to shape and preserve organizational culture, particularly in sectors where discipline, trust, and coordination are essential to operational success. In security organizations, culture is not merely a set of values but functions as an informal control system often stronger than formal rules. An effective SHRM model:

- Recognizes the importance of organizational socialization, especially for younger members of Generation Z who hold different value systems (Twenge, 2020);
- Incorporates feedback mechanisms to continuously enhance team cohesion and resilience;
- Encourages proactivity, critical thinking, and adaptability over rigid hierarchical control (Collins & McKinnies, 2022).

When properly cultivated, organizational culture becomes the foundation of system resilience by creating collective awareness of the mission, role, and appropriate response during emergencies. SHRM has the power to direct and reinforce that culture through well-designed training, performance evaluation systems, and role-model leadership.

The literature both domestic and international confirms that HRM innovations are not merely technical or procedural advancements, but represent a fundamental paradigm shift in how organizations treat their employees and develop organizational culture. In this context, the literature review provides a foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities that innovative approaches bring to contemporary human resource management.

Based on the analysis of existing theoretical frameworks and the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** Strategic human resource management in security institutions significantly contributes to institutional resilience during crises.

**H2:** The application of modern digital tools within SHRM models in security institutions improves the efficiency of selection, training, and evaluation processes.

**H3:** The integration of ethical values and organizational culture into the SHRM approach positively affects the legitimacy and trust in security institutions.

These hypotheses serve as a basis for further analysis of how a strategic approach to human resource management improves the quality of personnel processes and enhances overall organizational performance within the security system.

## **3. CHALLENGES AND SPECIFICITIES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN SECURITY STRUCTURES**

Human resource management in security institutions is confronted with numerous complexities arising from the distinctive functional role these organizations play in preserving societal stability and national security. Operating in high-risk environments susceptible to rapid and unpredictable changes, these institutions require a high degree of operational readiness, ethical integrity, and employee resilience (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019). At the same time, HR management must adapt to contemporary challenges, including accelerated

digitalization, demographic shifts in the workforce, and the evolving nature of security threats.

### **3.1 High selection standards, confidentiality, loyalty, and continuous professionalization**

The personnel selection process in security structures must ensure not only the formal competence of candidates but also their psychological and moral suitability for work in highly stressful and often extreme conditions (Vaiman, Collings, & Scullion, 2017). Psychological stability, emotional intelligence, ethical robustness, and the capacity to work effectively in teams under pressure are critical determinants of success in this sector.

Accordingly, recruitment and selection involve rigorous procedures, including security screenings, psychological assessments, polygraph examinations, and evaluations of loyalty and confidentiality (Wright & Nishii, 2013). These values form the foundation of institutional trust and are essential for preserving the functional integrity of the organization.

Continuous professional development is an integral part of career progression in security institutions, with emphasis not only on technical and tactical skills, but also on leadership, crisis decision-making, intercultural communication, and stress management (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). This approach supports the ongoing modernization of competencies and sustains a high level of organizational readiness in response to the dynamic challenges of the security environment.

### **3.2 Technological change, budget constraints and complex security threats**

The transformation of security challenges in recent years has involved a shift from traditional forms of threat to hybrid, transnational, and digital manifestations of endangerment (Bauman, 2016; Taneja, 2022). This expansion of the threat landscape necessitates a broader range of knowledge and skills among security personnel, including cybersecurity, data analytics, and the application of artificial intelligence in operational processes (Marler & Boudreau, 2017).

However, the introduction of modern technologies encounters institutional limitations chiefly budgetary. Maintaining technical capabilities, digitizing HR functions, and retaining highly qualified personnel all require strategic management of limited resources (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). In sectors such as information security, competition with the private sector further complicates the retention of top talent.

Despite these challenges, security organizations that successfully integrate digital tools such as knowledge management systems, e-learning platforms, and algorithm-based recruitment demonstrate higher levels of operational efficiency and adaptability (Strohmeier & Kabst, 2018). Therefore, a combination of strategic orientation and innovation in HR policy is essential for responding effectively to the complexity of the contemporary security landscape.

### **3.3 Psychological pressures and generational challenges**

A defining feature of security work lies in the constant exposure to stress, operation in emergency conditions, encounters with fatal outcomes, and the necessity of sustained readiness. These factors contribute to the risk of professional burnout, mental health disorders, and declining motivation unless adequate psychological support systems and organizational resilience mechanisms are in place (Saks, 2021; Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021).

Moreover, generational dynamics present additional challenges. Members of Generation Z,

increasingly represented in the recruitment of security personnel, bring different expectations regarding flexibility, digital communication, and work-life balance. These expectations often conflict with the entrenched hierarchical and rigid patterns preferred by older generations (Twenge, 2020).

An SHRM approach must incorporate strategies for intergenerational learning, mentoring, and adaptability in order to preserve organizational cohesion and motivation. Managing such diversity requires modernized leadership, emotionally intelligent managers, and the implementation of policies that value inclusiveness, participation, and teamwork core elements of contemporary organizational culture in security systems (Farndale, Paauwe, & Boselie, 2022).

## **4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES**

In order to assess the level of development and potential for enhancing strategic human resource management (SHRM) within security structures, this chapter relies on a comparative analysis of selected international and domestic examples. The primary focus is placed on innovative HR practices aimed at improving operational readiness, resilience, and the long-term sustainability of security institutions.

### **4.1 International examples**

#### **4.1.1 The NATO personnel development model**

NATO regards personnel development as a key component of interoperability and the strategic readiness of its member states. Initiatives such as the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) are designed to build capacity through partnerships and the modernization of educational doctrines (NATO, 2023). Emphasis is placed on leadership, multilateral cooperation, and adaptive skillsets, supported by modern e-learning technologies and simulation-based training scenarios.

#### **4.1.2 The FBI – Application of HR analytics**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is recognized as a pioneer in implementing HR analytics within security structures. Through tools such as the Workforce Analytics Framework, the FBI conducts sophisticated analyses of personnel data to forecast risks, optimize training programs, and identify critical talent (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2021). This approach facilitates timely succession planning and resilience building through objective performance measurement.

#### **4.1.3 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) – Innovations in selection and training**

The IDF is renowned for its dynamic and psychologically sophisticated selection methods, particularly within elite units. The model is grounded in the concept of "adaptability under pressure," integrating psychological assessments, simulations, and evaluations of team cohesion (Ben-Shalom et al., 2018). Training programs are characterized by continuous feedback, adaptive learning strategies, and an emphasis on leadership development through practice and mentoring.

### **4.2 Domestic Examples**

#### **4.2.1 Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia (MoI RS) – Recruitment and education**

The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is one of the most significant security institutions, encompassing police officers, civilian personnel, and specialized units. Recruitment is conducted through strictly standardized procedures, which include security checks, psychological testing, physical fitness assessments, and evaluations of candidates' moral and ethical qualities (MoI, 2023).

Special importance is assigned to institutionalized education provided by the Police Academy and the Basic Police Training Centre (COPO), which constitute the foundation of professional development. Nevertheless, the integration of contemporary HR practices—such as personalized training and e-learning systems remains in a gradual phase of implementation. Notable progress has been achieved in the introduction of specialized training in the fields of cybersecurity and digital crime prevention; however, further investments are needed in developing soft skills, leadership capacities, and intercultural communication (Knežević & Pavićević, 2022).

#### **4.2.2 Security Information Agency (BIA) – Strategic personnel development**

As a key counterintelligence and security agency, the BIA operates in a highly confidential and dynamic operational environment. Human resource management within the agency is based on the principles of selectivity, long-term discretion, and the strategic preparation of personnel for specific tasks. The role of SHRM in this context is reflected in the systematic identification of talent, multi-tiered security vetting, and in succession planning and internal leadership development.

Particular attention is devoted to discreet training models, as well as so-called mission-tailored training approaches designed to meet concrete security challenges. However, limited transparency in evaluation systems and a lack of widely accessible data hinder the application of modern HR analytics tools (Popović, 2021). The introduction of structured development programs, mentoring schemes, and digital knowledge management systems represents a possible direction for improvement.

#### **4.2.3 Serbian Armed Forces – Professionalization and human capital management**

In recent years, the Serbian Armed Forces have undergone significant reforms aimed at the professionalization of personnel and the modernization of organizational structures. The SHRM framework in military institutions is centered on a career development system, which includes clearly defined advancement pathways, specialized training programs both domestically and abroad (e.g., in cooperation with NATO's Partnership for Peace programs), and an evaluation system encompassing assessments of personal and professional competencies (Mitrović & Vuković, 2020).

One of the key challenges remains the transition from military service to the civilian sector, for which the Serbian Armed Forces are still developing appropriate support models for former personnel during the reintegration process. Additionally, there is considerable room for improvement in the digitalization of HR processes and the provision of systematic support for stress management and mental health care especially for veterans and personnel engaged in international missions.

### 4.3 Comparative findings – key differences

To provide a clearer overview of the distinctions between international and domestic security institutions, a comparative table has been constructed evaluating key areas of strategic human resource management. The assessments were assigned based on descriptive analysis, expert sources, and the presented case studies.

Table 1. Comparative assessment of HR practice development

Aspect	International Institutions (Rating 1–5)	Domestic Institutions (Rating 1–5)	Brief Analysis
HR Analytics	✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓	International institutions such as the FBI utilize advanced tools for prediction, selection, and evaluation. In domestic institutions, HR analytics remains in its infancy, with limited application.
Leadership and Mentorship	✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓	NATO and the IDF develop leaders through structured programs and mentorship networks. In Serbia, such programs exist sporadically and lack systemic integration.
Digital Training and E-Learning	✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	E-learning systems and simulations are widely utilized abroad. Domestic institutions are introducing digital training, though with limited application and infrastructure.
Psychological Support and Resilience	✓✓✓✓	✓✓	IDF and NATO maintain developed mechanisms for mental health support. In Serbia, this area is still emerging, often addressed reactively and without institutional backing.
Reintegration into the Civilian Sector	✓✓✓✓	✓✓	Many Western countries have established transition programs for service members. In the domestic context, this issue is only beginning to appear on the agenda, mostly through pilot projects.

#### Legend – Evaluation Scale (1–5)

- ✓ – No visible initiatives; the area is undeveloped, not even at an initial stage.
- ✓✓ – Initial activities are present but neither systematized nor strategically established.
- ✓✓✓ – Partial implementation; individual initiatives or pilot programs exist.
- ✓✓✓✓ – Systematic implementation in most units; institutional support is present.



✓✓✓✓✓ – Highly developed and integrated programs with clearly defined success metrics and evaluation mechanisms.

Chart 1: Comparison of HR practice implementation – Global vs. Serbia

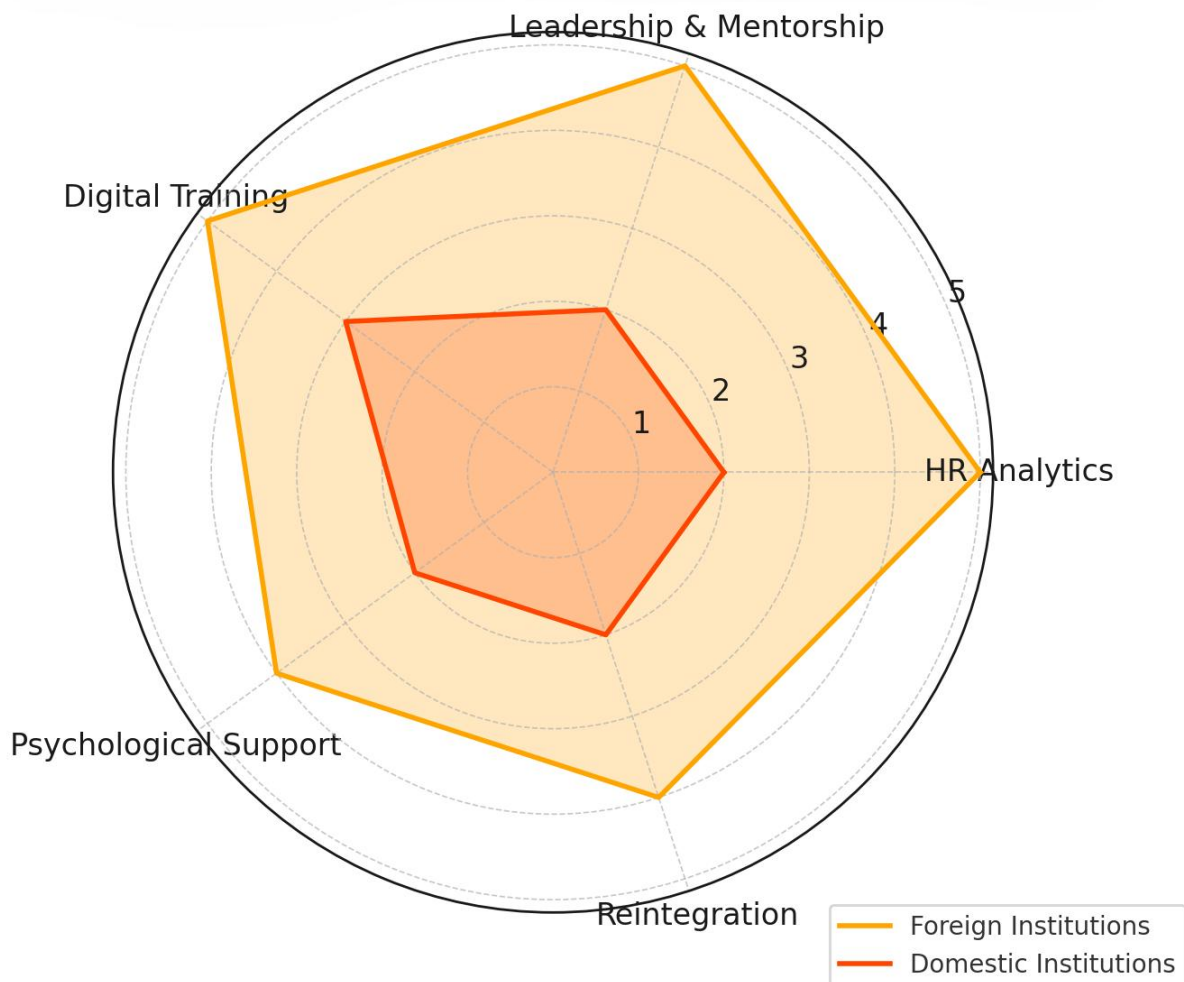


Chart clearly illustrates the differences in the implementation of key HR practices between foreign and domestic security institutions. It is evident that foreign institutions exhibit a higher degree of development across all analyzed areas, while domestic institutions demonstrate particularly low levels in the domains of HR analytics, leadership, and mental health.

## 4.4 Results and Discussion

### 4.4.1 Limitations and challenges of domestic institutions

Despite certain advances, domestic security institutions still predominantly rely on traditional HR approaches. The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia (MUP) has made progress through specialization of personnel and the development of institutions for basic and advanced police training; however, the digitalization of training and the introduction of adaptive learning are still in the initial stages (MUP, 2023). Additionally, performance evaluations are mostly based on qualitative methods, without the use of advanced HR

analytics, which hampers strategic planning.

The Security-Information Agency (BIA), due to its closed and highly confidential nature, is limited in the transparency of HR policies, which may reduce opportunities for the introduction of externally validated tools and open developmental programs. Likewise, the Serbian Armed Forces invests in professionalization through career paths and international training, but challenges remain regarding the insufficiently developed support system for psychological health, as well as the slow transition of military personnel to the civilian sector (Mitrović & Vuković, 2020).

#### **4.4.2 Innovations in the Application of Modern HR Practices**

Comparative analysis shows that foreign security institutions have significantly advanced in the integration of modern HR technologies, with a particular emphasis on HR analytics, digital training, and personalized development programs. The FBI, through sophisticated tools for predictive personnel analysis, successfully integrates quantitative methods into talent management, enabling proactive decision-making in areas such as training, mobility, and succession (U.S. GAO, 2021). Similarly, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) adopt advanced psychometric and simulation methods that enable precise personnel selection with high operational capability and adaptive potential (Ben-Shalom et al., 2018).

The NATO model stands out in the field of international cooperation and standardization of educational doctrines, particularly through the DEEP program, which promotes interoperability through the education of military and security personnel (NATO, 2023). This strategy contributes in the long term to collective security and the accelerated transfer of knowledge among member states.

#### **4.4.3 Potential for improvement**

Identified challenges in domestic institutions highlight the need for a systemic reform of SHRM processes. The application of HR analytics and digital tools would enable the tracking and analysis of key employee competencies, as well as the creation of flexible development pathways. The introduction of program solutions such as Talent Management Systems (TMS) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) could transform the educational and personnel approach in security systems.

Furthermore, leadership must be seen as a key competency not only among senior officers but also at the operational level. Mentorship programs and an organizational culture based on the exchange of experience contribute to long-term stability and efficiency.

One of the key findings is the necessity for systemic psychological support. In contrast to foreign institutions, which have clearly defined protocols for burnout prevention and stress management, domestic institutions have yet to establish sustainable and accessible mechanisms in this area. Finally, the reintegration of personnel after service must be a strategic priority, as the lack of such programs often results in the loss of valuable competencies and social marginalization of former members.

#### **4.4.4 Recommendations for improvement**

- **Introduction of HR Analytics and Artificial Intelligence** - The application of HR analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) is a critical step toward the professionalization

and modernization of human resources in security structures. By utilizing predictive algorithms and big data analysis, institutions can proactively identify candidate profiles with the highest potential for success, both in operational and strategic roles. This enables personalized selection, more accurate succession planning, and a more objective evaluation of employees (Marler & Boudreau, 2017).

Additionally, AI tools can help identify the risks of personnel turnover, analyze employee satisfaction factors, and optimize internal training and development processes. This technological foundation allows for faster, evidence-based decision-making, thereby increasing operational efficiency and institutional resilience.

- **Leadership Development through Continuous Education** - Leadership development is essential for maintaining the functionality and authority of security systems. Introducing modular educational programs focused on leadership skills enables systematic building of professional authority, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and communication abilities. These programs should be tailored to different levels of hierarchy ranging from operational to managerial personnel to foster a culture of continuous learning and responsible leadership.

Mentorship approaches, based on the transfer of knowledge from more experienced employees, contribute to the stabilization of organizational knowledge, improvement of intergenerational cooperation, and strengthening of employee cohesion. Special emphasis should be placed on developing female leaders and members of vulnerable groups to enhance inclusivity and representation within security structures.

- **Stress and Mental Health Management** - The security sector is exposed to high levels of stress, operational pressure, and emotional exhaustion, which can lead to burnout syndrome, depression, and even professional dysfunction. Incorporating structured psychological support into everyday work processes is becoming a necessity rather than a privilege. This includes the availability of counseling, crisis teams, and resilience training, which help employees maintain psychological balance in high-risk environments (Ivandekić & Mirković, 2023).

Additionally, training leaders to recognize symptoms of psychological strain in their colleagues and react proactively contributes to the humanization of the work environment. In the long term, such measures not only protect mental health but also enhance overall operational readiness and reduce costs associated with absenteeism, mistakes, and employee turnover.

- **Support for Personnel Transition After Service** - The period following the completion of service represents a particularly sensitive transitional moment for former members of security structures. The introduction of institutionalized reintegration programs, including career counseling, psychological support, and systematic retraining, represents best practices recognized in international frameworks (OECD, 2021).

These programs contribute to social stability, economic security, and the preservation of veterans' dignity. Additionally, reintegrated personnel can become a valuable resource in civilian structures, particularly in areas such as security, crisis management, education, and advisory services. Active collaboration between government institutions, the labor market, and civil society organizations is crucial for the successful implementation of these policies.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In an era when security challenges are transforming from conventional to hybrid, digital, and transnational threats, strategic human resource management (SHRM) ceases to be an operational option and becomes a strategic necessity. Human capital is no longer merely a means to accomplish operational tasks it is the foundation of institutional resilience, organizational flexibility, and long-term security stability.

This paper has shown that SHRM in security structures must be proactive, data-driven, and value-based. The comparative analysis of foreign and domestic examples has highlighted the gap between traditional, reactive personnel approaches and advanced management models that integrate digital solutions, empathetic leadership, and systemic attention to employee mental health. Institutions like the FBI and IDF already apply tools that enable performance prediction, stress management, and personalized education, while domestic structures are just beginning this modernization journey.

Without a paradigm shift in personnel management, domestic security institutions risk stagnation and reduced resilience in confronting crises. The professionalization of the HR function, strengthening leadership at all levels, the implementation of HR analytics, and systemic support for employees are not just reforms but conditions for survival and relevance in the modern security environment.

Ultimately, only a strategy that treats human resources as strategic capital not as a cost or technical resource can build a security system that is resilient, responsible, and capable of addressing the complexities of the 21st century. SHRM in the security sector is not merely a management method it is a manifestation of institutional vision, ethics, and strength.

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