

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN MOROCCO THROUGH TIME: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In consulting the research of many specialists in management science, it has been noted over the years that human resources (HR) have become increasingly valued in firms. Not only has the role and importance of HR changed, but it has become a strategic asset. This makes HR and Human resource management (HRM) even more important. Long regarded as a support activity for other firm's functions, HRM is now a strategic tool that enables any firm to stand out from its competitors. The evolution of mentalities, technological development and past mistakes has enabled HRM to become an extremely important area in organizations. In fact, in recent years, there seems to be a growing consensus among the pioneers of the HRM discipline that HRM is now an essential element in achieving key organizational objectives. HRM has been a focus of scientific debate in management science for some years. It remains a relatively young discipline among the different branches of management.

In order to gain a better understanding of current HRM theories and practices, it is interesting to define the main concepts and to look at the main phases of its history. In order to provide an objective, clear and synthetic vision, we have relied on a structured and thorough review of the literature by consulting the main books, scientific publications, reports, theses and specialized magazines in the field.

Keywords: Human Resources Management (HRM), Strategic Human Resources Management, HRM Practices.

INTRODUCTION

By consulting the research of many specialists in management sciences, it has been noted over the years that human resources (HR) are increasingly valued in firm. Not only has the role and importance of HR changed, but it has become a strategic asset. This makes HR and HR Management (HRM) even more important. Long regarded as a support activity for other firm functions, HRM is now a strategic tool that allows any firm to stand out from its competitors. The evolution of mentalities, technological development and past mistakes has allowed HRM to become an extremely important area in organizations. In fact, in recent years, the pioneers of the HRM discipline seem to be increasingly in agreement that HRM is now an essential element in achieving key organizational objectives. For some years now, HRM has been of interest to scientific debates in management science. It remains a relatively young discipline among the different branches of management. In order to gain a better understanding of current HRM theories and practices, it is interesting to define the main concepts and to look at the main phases of its history. In order to provide an objective, clear and synthetic vision, we have relied on a structured and thorough literature review by consulting the main books, scientific publications, reports, theses and magazines specialized in the field.

Human Resources Management

HRM is considered a vast and often ill-defined field of research. Indeed, in order to remedy possible ambiguities or confusions, we will give particular importance to its definition. HRM is a firm function that has taken on considerable importance in recent years in view of the changes in the external environment. Although it seems to be well established among the core activities of the firm, its definition remains a delicate task. In this research, it is not our intention to make a list or inventory of all the definitions of HRM, but we will list some of them to help us better circumscribe it. As Schuler & Tarique (2007) pointed out, the term HRM is considered an « umbrella term » used in different senses and in different contexts. The concept was first used in 1817 by Springer, an American economist, to reveal in accounting terms the cost of using Human. HRM is first and foremost management, i.e. designing, conducting and controlling a decision-making process (Le Gall, 2018). According to the Larousse dictionary, the word management means: action or manner of managing, administering, directing, and organizing. This implies that any firm must determine a management strategy by integrating a Human Resources component for its development, regardless of its size. According to Marciano (1995), the term “*HR*” was created by Peter Ferdinand Drucker in his book entitled “*The practice of management*”. According to this author, there were three types of management: firm management, executive management and personnel and work management. It was therefore while studying personnel management that the concept of “*HR*” emerged. The association of the concepts “Management” and “*HR*” is not self-evident and raises questions such as: Can we talk about human “*resources*” in the same way as technical, financial and material resources? Can these resources be managed in the same way as a stock portfolio?; this question by considering that the HR concept has a positive side and a restrictive one: « it certainly has a positive side: to recognize that human are a resource is to admit that they have a value, a cost or a price. But it is also restrictive in that energy, raw materials, machines and the human who produce or use them cannot be put on the same level ». The restrictive side of HRM is no longer adapted to today's and tomorrow's requirements. By consulting the specialized HRM literature, several authors and researchers have taken an interest in the subject in an attempt to define HRM clearly. Garand (1992), suggests that HRM is “*the set of activities implemented by firms in order to acquire, maintain, train and effectively use individuals who are doing or likely to do productive work; the key element of this definition is effectiveness and the perspective considered is that of the organization*”. In their latest research, Belanger (1988) formulated a definition combining several activities and practices, currently considered in HRM studies in a firm: “*HRM is the set of activities for acquiring, developing and retaining HR, aimed at providing work organizations with a productive, stable and satisfied workforce*”.

1. HR procurement: workforce planning, job descriptions, recruitment, selection and induction.
2. HR development: provision of additional knowledge and skills to enhance performance or take on new responsibilities.
3. HR retention: compensation, benefits, job evaluation, salary structure, negotiation and administration of labour relations, discipline.

Marciano (1995), in his portrait of the origins of HRM, concluded that there are three main families of definitions of HRM, depending on its evolution (Aït Razouk, 2007): The first family: HRM is mainly a form of union avoidance and a subtle form of employer control. For this current, employees and the firm can have no common interests;

The second family: HRM is synonymous with “*personnel management*”, the existence of a set of practices that can make better use of employees; the third family, supported and championed, HRM is a management function that aims, among other things, to ensure the understanding, retention, development, use and integration of HR in the workplace. It positions employees as a valuable organizational resource and not as an expense.

Another definition is that proposed by Igalens & Roussel (1998). For these authors, HRM is the set of activities aimed at developing the collective efficiency of the employees who work for the firm. Since effectiveness is the extent to which objectives are achieved, HRM's mission is to lead the development of HR in order to achieve the firm's objectives. HRM defines HR strategies and resources, organizational operating methods and support logistics in order to develop the skills needed to achieve the firm's objectives. In his definition Pigeyre (2006) states that “*HRM aims to provide the firm with the HR it needs to achieve its objectives in a timely manner*”. HRM, from a managerial perspective, comes to focus on how and where it can contribute to the performance of the firm. As Galambaud (1994) points out, in the expression HRM, it is the word management that is most important. This notion of management refers to a rationalization of practices that concern employees (Pigeyre, 2006). According to Schuler & Tarique (2007), HRM is “*the set of activities that aim to manage the talents and energies of individuals in order to contribute to the achievement of the mission, vision, strategy and organizational objectives*” (Comeau-Vallée, 2009). For their part, St-Onge et al. (2004), define HRM as “*a variable set of practices that aim to help the organization to solve effectively, efficiently and equitably the problems associated with the presence of human in an organization*”. For these authors, HRM is a management function in the same way as other firm functions. According to this definition, in order to study HRM it is necessary to look at the practices implemented in a firm. As for Martory & Crozet (2016) and Soulez (2017), HRM can be defined as “*the management of human at work in organizations*”. Another definition is the one presented by Cadin et al. (2012): « HRM is the set of activities that enable an organization to have the HR corresponding to its needs in quantity and quality ». The International Labour Organization (ILO) has defined HRM as: « The part of management which is responsible for giving advice in a general way on all matters relating to the human factor in the firm and in particular for carrying out certain administrative tasks relating to employment, working conditions and the well-being of the personnel of the firm ». In a definition adopted by the RHEP (Epistemological and prospective reflection group in HRM), HRM is « a social science discipline consisting of creating and mobilizing various types of knowledge useful to the actors and necessary to apprehend, understand, negotiate and attempt to resolve problems related to the regulation of work in organizations » (Cadin & Guérin, 2015). According to Le Louarn & Wils (2001), quoted by Pottiez (2011) « HRM is an attempt to control individual or collective performance in order to contribute to organizational effectiveness ». They note that HRM is achieved through the implementation of the three P: Policies, Processes and Practices. A policy is a general statement of the firm's intention. A process is a set of interrelated activities designed to achieve a concrete result. A practice is a way in which the firm does things.

For Dietrich & Pigeyre (2011) HRM consists of: Management practices or HRM practices, which are a way of doing business (Louarn & Wils 2001); rules and standards (HRM tools, legal rules, collective agreements); Different actors (internally: management, HR department, managers, staff representatives and externally: public authorities, unions, consultants); Management policies (determined by corporate strategies according to external and

internal contexts). For Sekiou (2001), HRM consists of measures (policies, procedures, etc.) and activities (recruitment, etc.) involving HR and aimed at efficiency and performance text.

HRM through Time: Historical Overview

In our review of the literature, we found that leading HRM researchers and authors agree and assert that HRM has undergone very important developments. It has moved from logic of minimizing the impact of HRM on performance, to logic of integrating human variables to improve firm's performance (Cornet et al., 2015). According to authors such as Marciano (1995); Langbert & Friedman (2002); Savall & Zardet (2001) and Peretti (2017), the focus on human resources has changed considerably over the centuries, so that several historical periods can be distinguished with regard to this evolution.

The Pre-Industrial and Industrial Period

The American professors Langbert & Friedman (2002), in their retrospective of the history of HRM, go back to the 17th and 18th centuries in a first stage which they identify as the pre-industrial period. In this period, although there were some laws and rules about the treatment of individuals, servitude and slavery were commonplace and existing laws were routinely broken and violated. This is a period when the freedom of the employer is unlimited and production methods are manual and artisanal. Most products were produced in small factories or in the employer's house (home). Historians mention manifestations of practices and modes of human management as early as antiquity, through implicit or explicit organizational rules and systems of sanctions and rewards erected in all communities (Bouchez, 1999). They add that according to Bouchez (1999), these practices and modes of personnel management are very old and this through the different civilizations that humanity has known. These civilizations have mainly directed human effort towards objectives they considered important in building their communities. During this period, the HR function did not exist, it was the owner who assumed all the responsibilities, i.e. hiring, firing and remuneration.

In his book, Peretti (2017) states that the HR function no longer exists in this period and those testimonies are rare. It is through a few novels that it is possible to discover examples of HRM practices: Victor Hugo (*Les Misérables*), la comtesse de Ségur (*La Fortune de Gaspard*), Hector Malot (*Sans famille*), Emile Zola (*Au Bonheur des dames*). Among other things, they described practices of hiring, firing, training, promotion and social works.

With the industrial revolution, emerging in the second half of the 18th century (1750), the increase of productivity and the encouragement of new standards of quality of life were considered as the axes of a new economist ideology. This was the end of slavery and the birth of modern management practices (Langbert & Friedman, 2002). The introduction of machinery sharpened the distinction between employers (owners) and employees and led to marked changes in social patterns and working conditions (Jamrog & Overholt, 2004).

This industrial revolution led to a gradual shift from a system of artisanal and agricultural production to manufacturing and mass production. According to the personal and paternalistic relationships that characterized this model of craft production are giving way to wage workers perceived by employers as a commodity whose cost must be minimized (Pozzebon et al., 2007).

Faced with the working conditions imposed on them, employees of the same specialization banded together and organized themselves against the employers' abuses (Jamrog & Overholt, 2004). As employers became aware of the social problems generated by industrialization, they decided to offer support to their employees in dealing with their personal

problems. It was at this point that the position of 'welfare secretary' or 'social secretary' emerged. Its main role was to manage and control all employees, while discouraging the formation of trade unions (Marciano, 1995; Bouchez, 1999). It appears as the first specialized HRM department. Function of the Personnel was often carried out by the bosses themselves and sometimes by a representative, either the factory manager or secretary, if the workforce was large (Peretti, 2017). This period, rich in changes and evolutions, saw the birth of some schools and currents of thought that have had a clear impact on the evolution of HRM, helping to map out its components in companies.

Despite the differences between these schools of thought, the main aim was to find ways of making the most of the human resources in the organization.

After the Industrial Revolution: The Schools and Approaches that Shaped HRM

The evolution of HRM is strongly linked to changes in the economic environment of organizations. It developed gradually from the 19th century to the present day. Throughout this period, several currents and approaches have emerged in response to the characteristics of both the internal and external environment of work organizations (Bernard, 2009; Gagnon & Arcand, 2012; Pigeyre, 2006), thus influencing HRM. Historians have shown that HRM practices preceded the HR function. *“The 19th century is the century of the Personnel function without Personnel department; the 20th century was the century of the Personnel function with a Personnel department”* (Igalens, 2006; Peretti, 2017). HRM has evolved according to managerial ideas and theories that convey a 'good' way of managing work (Pigeyre, 2006). Most HRM textbooks include the five approaches that have shaped HRM (St-Onge et al., 2004; Bernard, 2009; Arcand, 2006).

The Classical School or the Scientific or Technical Approach

In the 20th century, with the emergence of industrial society (marked by the rural exodus, the presence of a large, essentially working-class, unskilled and under-performing workforce), the model based on tradition and custom gradually gave way to a rationalist model, supported by the development of science and technology (Peretti & Peretti, 1998). Taylor, Fayol and Weber are the main precursors and founders of this school. Their aim was to find a unique, universal solution to the problems encountered by firms in managing their activities in order to improve productivity. For Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) in his work *“The Principles of Scientific Management”* systematized his thinking, now known as Taylorism, which is associated with the mechanistic model. He associated problems with the human factor arising from inadequate production methods. At that time, the use of the principles of scientific management was intended to find a better way of achieving the best possible output. Science provided the answers, thus excluding the contribution of employees. This study resulted in the formulation of optimal solutions for organizing, parceling and performing tasks (One Best Way). On the basis of this orchestration, an optimal selection of employees is made according to their qualifications or abilities, so that everyone finds his or her place in the organization (the right man in the right place). A performance reward system is introduced according to the quantities produced (a fair day's pay for a fair day's work) (Moulette et al., 2019). Management practices are realigned and Taylor's scientific approach to work becomes a reference model for most organizations (Moulette et al., 2019). It was with the contributions of Taylor, the development of the size of organizations, the development of social law and increasing unionization etc. that the first positions dealing specifically with HRM were created and the HR function came into being (Peretti 2017, Peretti & Peretti, 1998; Jamrog & Overholt 2004). This was also the case from the

moment when the head of the firm was no longer in a position to manage all the staff allocated to him (Peretti 2017; Peretti & Peretti, 1998). Authors such as Peretti & Peretti (1998), see that it was the position of social secretary that evolved into a Personnel department in 1912, the reference date for the birth of the HR function. Its role focused mainly on job analysis and classification, development, training and selection of employees. Fayol, on the other hand, was mainly interested in the problems of company management and launched the foundations of administrative theory (Cadin & Guérin, 2015). According to him, the optimal functioning of a company is dictated by 14 principles: Division of labour, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of management, clarity of hierarchy, stability of Personnel, initiative, order, fairness, equitable remuneration system, centralization, subordination of particular interests to the general interest, union of personnel (Moulette et al., 2019). Max Weber, on the other hand, is at the origin of the definition of 'ideal types'. The ideal type that allows the optimal organization to be put in place is described as a bureaucratic system: the hierarchical structure and skills of each job are clearly defined, remuneration is fixed and depends on responsibilities and hierarchical level, discipline is strict, the person does not own his or her job, written rules anticipate all situations (Moulette et al., 2019; Cadin & Guérin 2015).

This school of thought brings together currents of thought with different preoccupations but marked by the same approach to the organization, namely the search for rationality. (Productive rationality: Taylor; Administrative rationality: Fayol; Structural rationality: Weber). The objective of this school is to find and define rules for optimal management of the firm. Scientific Management Theory and bureaucracy are two notions particularly used in the work of this school (Moulette et al., 2019). According to this perspective, the HR function is limited to the level of rules or methods to be developed in order to achieve the desired results (St-onge et al., 2004; cited by Bernard (2009). For Taylor, there is one right way to manage human. It must be mechanistic, because: first, employees are selected according to specified skills and are therefore interchangeable to fill precisely described positions; second, the only legitimate power emanates from property rights which set the related prerogatives and obligations, within the framework of a well-organized hierarchy; and third, the mainspring of action (motivation) resides in the calculative reasoning of individuals in the service of their sole self-interest (Peretti, 2017). To accompany a Scientific Management Theory, Taylor prescribes a number of HRM practices: recruitment, training and compensation. For this school of thought, the human dimension fades away in favour of optimizing production, which is considered to be the primary goal. Before Taylorism, the employee was a man who had the knowledge on the basis of which the employer recruited him; and the firm was considered a group of human. But with Taylorism, it is the management specialists who know that the firm becomes an organization whose cog is the workstation (Galambaud, 1994). Ford's work, influenced by the principles of Scientific Management Theory (Taylor), in turn contributed to the evolution of the Personnel function. They propose an operational model that achieves mass production through assembly line work. The availability of a skilled workforce in large numbers is one of the necessities of this model. However, in a phase that has seen a labour crisis, firms have drawn heavily on journeymen, the female population and immigrant workers, who are low-skilled (Peretti & Peretti, 1998; Peretti 2017). This current has been widely criticized for their utopian search for an ideal and universal model, their vision considered very mechanistic of human, the links with the environment are neglected, the ignorance of the interactions between individuals and the organization, etc. This has led to the emergence of new approaches based on sociology and psychology

The School of Human Relations or the Psychological Approach

The school of human relations is an intellectual movement which appeared in the 1930s and which was concerned with the study of organizations. It originated with the work of E. Mayo (mainly his two works: *“The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization”*, 1933 and *“The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization”*, 1945), which included experiments carried out at Hawthorne in the workshops of the Western Electric Company, and the work of Kurt Lewin (Galambaud, 1994). This school led to a reversal of the mechanistic approach of the classical school (Pesqueux, 2015). The crisis of 1929 called into question the foundations and theories of the classical rationalist school, which were applied on a large scale (dehumanization of work which reduced human to the state of a machine, performance-based pay, infernal pace, etc.). Considered as simple theories, the failure of their application (significant absenteeism and a rise in harsh social conflicts, etc.) led to the emergence of a second current, that of human relations (Cadin & Guérin, 2015; Peretti, 2013). The latter emphasizes the human being in its reflection. It restores his dignity and gives work a more human meaning. The principle is to consider employees as important values to the organization, which should be managed by HRM practices in order to provide a strategic competitive advantage to firms (Comeau-Vallée, 2009).

The study of the emotional, affective and relational dimensions of work situations are the basis of the management models or modes advocated by this current. One of the causes considered important by this current for increases in performance was the development of relationships between researchers and workers (individually or in groups), which leads to a change in their attitude towards their work. The importance of the psychosociological component, the analysis of the needs and motivating factors of employees, democratic and participative management, considered as the main contributions of the researchers of this current, allowed the place and role of HR in the firm to evolve (Moulette et al., 2019; Peretti & Peretti 1998, Peretti, 2017). It is thanks to this current, that HR has an important place in the choice of the future of organizations. It emphasised the impact of the human factor on performance (Herzberg, 1957; McGregor, 1960; Trist, 1963). This current supported the principle that improving the working conditions of employees was the justification for improving production. Their work, considered more humanistic, was supported to the detriment of scientific work management (Aït Razouk, 2007). Mayo's 'Hawthorne Effect' experiment, which states that any change in the work environment, whether it is an improvement or deterioration, results in a greater efficiency of the workers. Two explanations and two elements that make sense for HRM are thus highlighted: The fact that researchers are interested in their work provides them with a motivation to be more efficient: importance of psych sociological factors; There are informal norms of production within each group, which distinguishes the role of groups for the management of human. At the end of the 1950s, thanks to the contributions of the proponents of this current (Likert, MacGregor, Maslaw and Herzberg), the Personnel function improved in organizations. They developed new ideas based on the importance of motivation, psychological health of the worker, satisfaction of staff needs, communications, participation of workers in the life of the organization, holidays, retirement, etc. (J. Fombonne, 2001) quoted by Peretti (2017). During this period, management of Personnel became much more qualitative, with the arrival of psychosociologists at the head of HR functions. This was the great era of the progressive questioning of the Taylorian model and the domination of motivation seminars. With the importance and concern for human, the name *“Personnel Department”* changed to *“Human Relations Department”*, emphasising the importance of moving from quantitative to qualitative aspects. From that moment on, several HRM practices were implemented in firms in order to from this point onwards, a number of HRM practices were implemented in firms in order to meet

these new needs for employee development and fulfilment. A change that has allowed the position of function of the personnel specialist to regain ground from that of industrial relations specialist (Pozzebon et al., 2007).

Despite the interesting and important contributions of this school of thought, it has been criticized for its focus on the moral side at the expense of the material side. This focus has had some negative effects on the productivity and performance of organizations. Because satisfying the unlimited needs of employees is an unattainable goal. Sometimes the satisfaction of some needs is in contradiction with the goals and purposes of the organization. During this period, the researchers of this current, related and interested in the behaviour of individuals, the interrelations between groups and the global phenomenon of the organization. In addition, this trend has allowed the gradual abandonment of supervision methods based on intimidation and the fear of losing one's job by more positive methods oriented towards the installation of a climate of justice and mutual respect (St-onge et al., 2004; Bernard, 2009).

The Institutional, Legal and Political Approach

Identified as an approach to labour relations, it developed as a result of the imbalance of power between employers and employees, the authoritarianism of managers and the economic insecurity experienced by employees. The establishment of legal rules by the state and collective bargaining were favoured. According to Peretti (2017), it was after the First World War that the state began to intervene in economic life, through the introduction of laws and regulations organizing labour relations. These included, in particular, laws on weekly leave (1906), collective bargaining and working hours (1919), social insurance (1928, 1930), etc. Firms became aware of the need to maintain good relations and to prevent or manage conflicts, in response to the upsurge of a unionization movement. Welfare departments were transformed into "*Personnel departments*" with the aim of administering employees' rights and dealing with issues of pay, selection, training, appraisal and communication with unions. The development and growth of HRM has been accompanied by the complexity of social and labour law, which has accelerated in a very interesting way with the adoption of laws on the creation of works councils, social security, staff representatives, the minimum wage, etc. Consequently, in order to adapt to these laws and regulations, firms are recruiting lawyers for the position of Personnel manager. Peretti (2017) sees that, according to the requirements imposed by this period, personnel managers have to professionalize themselves in different areas, such as: training, remuneration, qualification, collective bargaining, etc. It was between 1945 and 1965 that the creation of associations for the sharing of information and experiences on personnel issues affirmed the Personnel function (Peretti, 2017). At that time, HRM was a range of juxtaposed activities, without reference to an overall vision. According to this stream of research, HRM is considered as an isolated activity without taking into account an overall vision (St-Onge et al., 2004; Bernard, 2009).

The Systemic Approach

This approach considers the organization as an open system, i.e. a set of elements articulated according to a common objective and in dynamic relations with each other and with the environment. It requires a study and analysis of the components of the environment that have an impact on HRM, as well as on the organization's objectives. Indeed, HRM is considered a sub-system of the firm. It is obliged to pursue objectives in line with those of the overall system (St-Onge et al., 2004; Bernard, 2009).

The Strategic Approach

With a very interesting evolution of regulations (Enrichment of the labour code), technological changes, an uncertain and invisible environment, international competition, etc., organizations must adapt to these changes, which has profoundly modified the challenges of HRM (Peretti, 2017). According to the latter, it was in the 1980s that the personnel function was transformed into the HR function. The change of name is a change of perspective and practices. The traditional conception of Personnel as a source of cost that must be minimized gave way to the conception of Personnel as a source whose use must be optimized'. The Personnel department, managed by a "*personnel manager*", gradually gave way in firms, from the 1980s onwards, to a "*human resources department*", headed by a "*human resources director*" (HRD). This change from a personnel function to an HR function is essentially due to the economic crisis, which is pushing firms to review the unproductive organization of work in order to adapt to an open and increasingly international economy (Soulez, 2017). For their part, Ait-Razouk & Bayad (2010), state that traditionally, the HR function has been concerned with essentially administrative HR management. Its main mission and vision is to control HR to minimize its costs. Proponents of strategic human resource management (SHRM), including Becker & Huselid (2006), Guérin & Wils (2006); Wright & McMahan (2011) do not agree with this view of HRM. For them, the human resource is a resource to be invested in by mobilizing a set of HRM practices in order to improve firm performance. As part of the analysis of the strategic role of HRM, the journal Human Resource Management devoted a special issue in 1997 to identify the main challenges for HRM in the 21st century. The idea defended and supported by all authors is that HRM is undergoing a transformation from an administrative to a strategic role (Peretti, 2017). There is a growing body of empirical research that supports the belief that HRM is a valuable source of sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. Indeed, it is thanks to this research that HRM is currently being formed and strengthened. A review of the HRM literature shows an increase in research in this direction: understanding and especially measuring the strategic role of HRM. According to Marciano (1995) and Schmidt et al. (2004), the term strategic human resource management (SHRM) was introduced in the 1980s, to distinguish it from traditional HRM or personnel management. As many authors and researchers point out, the strategic role of HRM is not a matter of chance. It is the result of a movement of environmental changes (political, technological, sociological and economic), which have an impact on the growing importance given to the various social actors that make up organizations (Arcand, 2001). This approach is characterized by the integration of a set of activities selected according to the achievement of results. It is a process of formulating and implementing the appropriate means to achieve an organization's goals and mission in a highly competitive environment. For HRM, this approach generally refers to a concern with the harmonization of HRM practices in organizations that are managed in a strategic approach (Peretti, 2017). The overall objective of the organization is achieved by a set of activities including HR (St-Onge et al. (2004; Bernard, 2009; Arcand, 2006). In the 2000s, according to Peretti (2017), HRM is asserting itself as a business partner to the firm, particularly in a more difficult economic climate. Lawler et al. (2004) confirm through their study that becoming a strategic partner is an imperative that has emerged over the last ten years and that it is now a must for any HR function aiming for performance. Its role is to anticipate and advise leaders and managers on HR solutions in response to business challenges (Peretti 2017). Priority is then given to the business by adjusting resources and skills to the firm's needs. However, in the context of the crisis of the 2000s, the HR function, as a business partner, showed its limits. This led to the revaluation of an HR function

that was closer to the employees, “*HR of proximity*”, considered as an orientation focused on human and the development of their talents (Peretti 2017). By the 2010s and given the importance of human capital in the competitiveness of firms, the mission of the HR function has expanded, becoming both a business partner and a human partner.

Today, most managers impose the strategic approach to HRM and stress the need to consider employees as a strategic resource and as a means to compete (Lawler III et al., 2009; Peretti, 2017).

HRM in Morocco, Historical Overview

For the past ten years, Morocco has been living at the pace of major political, economic, social and other changes. These changes have been accompanied by a progressive awareness of HRM and its role. In Morocco, as in almost all Maghreb countries, HRM cannot be described without reference to the various historical events experienced by this country: decolonization, Moroccanization (Action to make Moroccan; (more specifically) action by the government to replace foreign employees with Moroccans.), privatization, opening up and globalization, etc. (Dufour & Golli, 2006; Matmati, 2005).

The establishment of multinational firms as well as the normative work of the State, especially in the field of labour law, has their impact on HRM (Dufour & Golli, 2006). The history of the HR function in Morocco is recent; it appeared with colonization and the introduction of capitalism at the beginning of the last century. Today, it has reached a degree equal to other central functions of the organization (Dufour & Golli, 2006).

In order to fully understand today's HRM, it is necessary to give a brief overview of its evolution. Below are the main and most cited periods marking the evolution of HRM in Morocco:

The Colonial Period

The emergence of HRM in Morocco, and more generally in the Maghreb, dates from the beginning of the last century, with colonization (Dufour & Golli 2006; Matmati 2005). According to Dufour & Golli (2006), Morocco, as is the case for the other Maghreb countries (Tunisia, Algeria), was at the time subject to discrimination in terms of labour legislation, because it was subject to an exceptional “*overseas labour code*” which confirmed a certain discrimination in the workplace between the metropolis and the colonies. Some elements and points that had an impact on the evolution of HRM, mainly the categorical opposition of French employers to the implementation of labour legislation. These authors state that during situations and periods of high demand, the head of the firm had recourse to the corporal, as an interim institution. The corporal's main tasks were recruitment and proximity control. During this first phase, HRM was characterized by three aspects: the workforce flexibility, The systematic opposition of French employers to the introduction of labour legislation, a different way of managing Personnel depending on whether one is dealing with the indigenous or the European working population. It could be said that the working environment was broken down into three categories of employees. There were, at the base, Moroccan workers; there were managers and directors who were exclusively French.

During this period, when the French authorities forbade any creation of Moroccan trade unions, the French workers' unions put pressure on the colonial authorities to recognize certain rights for indigenous workers. In summary, this period is marked by conditions of total

exploitation of the workforce (discrimination, lack of social protection, etc.) and the absence of a dedicated HRM function.

From Independence to the 1990s

Following independence, the right to organize was recognized by the Moroccan constitution and labour legislation (Dufour & Golli 2006). However, in reality, trade union action is appreciated in different ways, depending on the contexts in which it is practised and carried out. In the firms that have been nationalized or nationalized in Morocco and in the public establishments set up after independence, it is largely tolerated and integrated. But it is rejected and fought against in other structures. During this phase, HRM practices resembled those that dominated during the colonial phase, including the practice of circumventing legal constraints, which remained a structural feature of the way these firms operated and were managed.

By the 1950s, the existing multinational firms continued to operate unchanged. For the majority of SMEs transferred to nationals, the transmission and handover was done without any preparation for taking on responsibilities or transferring knowledge or training. For this reason, the majority of these transferred firms have an archaic and rudimentary management. The reports concerning the social aspect were, therefore, marked by a HRM that was obedient to the hierarchy with a totally Taylorian or anachronistic organization and particularly by an absence of dialogue and development of employees' skills. For their part, consider that trade union action, which developed progressively during the 1960s, contributed to the structuring of HRM practices. During this period, they noted a difference and a duality in the HRM practices used, depending on whether the firm was structured and sheltered from the vagaries of the market and competition or not. In the first group (structured firms or welfare companies), HRM is characterized by: The formalization of the personnel administration system, considered and seen as very constraining for the firms concerned. The development of social services to complement those provided by the State in the framework of a global mutualization: medical coverage, pensions, holidays and leisure, different types of aid, etc.

Maintaining “*good relations with the social partners*” by developing a culture of negotiation and social dialogue. For the second group, composed mainly of SMEs and certain large family groups (patrimonial firms); HRM has not really changed from that which prevailed during the colonial phase. The creation of the business support association “*National Association of Human Resource Managers and Trainers*” in 1971, which brings together professionals in the HR field and aims to share experiences, disseminate good local or international practices, and build links with similar associations around the world, has been an important and interesting factor of progress for HRM in Morocco (Matmati, 2005). This association has contributed to giving visibility to HRM and the different stakeholders in the HRM process within firms. In summary, this period is marked by the domination of the public sector (Moroccanisation) and the emergence of the private sector as well as the creation of the business support association.

End of the 1990s to the Beginning of This Millennium

During the 1990s, Morocco experienced major changes such as the liberalization and internationalization of the economy (free trade area with the European Union, privatization, pressure of competition, etc.). All these changes have opened up new perspectives for the evolution of HRM. The role of HRM is not only to execute orders and instructions from above, but also to be anticipatory, reactive and expert in solving human problems in the firm. During this period, Morocco has been engaged in a real movement of social re-foundation to encourage firms to reconsider and rethink their HRM practices and trade unions to adopt a more

participatory and less conflictual attitude (Dufour & Golli, 2006). With Morocco's desire to integrate better into the global economy and respect for human rights, this dynamic has given greater importance and legitimacy to the HR function. It is in this period that this function began its real development. The results of surveys conducted by Essaid Bellal (DIORH Cabinet) on the HR function show that Moroccan firms adopt clusters of practices similar to those of European firms (Frimousse & Peretti, 2005). According to (Matmati, 2005), the missions and practices of HRM have evolved rapidly thanks to the profound changes and mutations that the kingdom of Morocco has experienced in recent decades, and also thanks to the contributions of universities, management schools, consulting and auditing firms and professional associations. This development of HRM practices is considered a natural evolution based on an "imported" HRM imposed by the international economic context. A context, with the speed of its evolution, does not leave any chance for the firm which does not establish in its organization, a HRM built on performance. In summary, this period is marked by the acceleration of the internationalization of the Moroccan economy, the awareness of the value of human capital and consequently the development of the HR function. From the 2000s onwards, HRM has undergone considerable development, particularly in large firms (El Adraoui, 2015; Louart & Scouarnec, 2005). According to the published results of a survey carried out by Diorh cabinet in 2004, HR managers are increasingly qualified, 66.3% have a university education and 56% have initial HR training. With regard to HRM practices, some national firms are trying to align themselves with the practices of multinationals, which are generally imported from parent firms located mainly in Europe.

With growth, particularly with the increase in the number of employees, the HR function gradually becomes formalized and it gradually becomes a real HRM carried out by a specialist. Moreover, through this rise in formalism, the HR function is gradually becoming part of a strategic vision. In Morocco, according to the results of a survey carried out in 2012 by the DIORH cabinet, HRM practices have undergone significant development and we are beginning to feel that HR is being taken into account as a key variable in the firm's strategy, and no longer as a factor that generates costs.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, and reading the different definitions, we can see that there is no formal consensus on a single, precise definition. In other words, there is no universal definition of HRM. In the past, when HR was considered an accounting appendix and a production variable that was adjusted according to needs, the HR function was simply a personnel department, mainly in charge of payroll and recruitment, often attached to administrative and financial affairs. From the 1930s onwards, HRM gradually acquired its credentials, notably with the first studies designed to assess the impact of human relations on HR productivity. The integration of the social and human dimension in the firm and the awareness of its effects only really dates from the 20th century and more particularly from the 1960s. Historically, it is the consequence of numerous demands, social movements, labour legislation that will gradually take into account the health and safety of employees, etc. Of course, we cannot exclude a part of budgetary management, particularly by controlling the cost of jobs, training and staff turnover, but the HR function cannot limit its field of intervention and investigation to these accounting concepts alone. Although the last few decades have made it possible to reposition HR in the firm and give it the place it did not have, it is still too timid and considered by some organizations as a necessary evil, not as a performance lever. It is still the poor relation, with managers giving more

priority to commerce, production and finance. Rare are the firms that integrate HR as a strategic lever in its own right. The literature in management sciences recognizes the place and importance of human capital in the acquisition of a sustainable competitive advantage and in the creation of value. It is through HRM that organizations can truly create a powerful tool at their disposal.

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Received: 07-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. ASMJ-23-13093; **Editor assigned:** 09-Jan-2023, PreQC No. ASMJ-23-13093(PQ); **Reviewed:** 18-Jan-2023, QC No. ASMJ-23-13093; **Published:** 25-Jan-2023