THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Elisabeta-Emilia HALMAGHI

“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania
emmahalmaghi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions, as organizations that “provide education”, are those that generate and transfer knowledge to society through teaching and research activities. Viewed as open systems, higher education institutions influence and, in turn, are influenced by their external environment. In the case of military institutions of higher education, the particularities of the military environment determine the appearance of specific characteristics of the external environment.

KEYWORDS: influence of the external environment, military and civilian higher education institutions, macro-environment, micro-environment

1. Introduction

The concept of “organization environment” is a complex concept that considers how its exogenous and endogenous components help to understand how organizations, as open systems, function. Organizations are considered the way in which certain needs of society, as an environment in which organizations are established and develop, are met. In the literature, the environment of an organization is encountered under the following phrases: “external environment”, “environment”, “external environment”.

2. Methodology

The paper addresses the issue of the external environment of military and civilian higher education institutions. Based on the literature and their own observations,

the definitions of the external environment of the two types of higher education institutions, the characteristics of the microenvironment and the categories of factors influencing the macroenvironment of military and civilian higher education institutions (hereinafter MCHEI) are presented and analyzed.

3. Military and Civilian Higher Education Institutions External Environment – An Important Factor in Military and Civilian Higher Education Institutions Development

Higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as HEI), in their capacity as “educational organizations” (Government of Romania, Ministry of Education, 2020) are those that “provide the necessary means for the continuous

realization of an organizational framework conducive to the development of culture, education and knowledge as basic foundations of society” (Oprean, 2002, pp. 8-9). HEI, as organizations, are perceived as “*complex social systems*”, being “*made up of elements that must act concretely to achieve organizational efficiency*” (Neagu & Udrescu, 2008, p. 26). To do this, it must have increased possibilities to integrate organizational variables, members of the organization, the appropriate ability to respond to the action of the external environment. The proper functioning of IIS, viewed as an open system, is based on the management team's knowledge of the factors through which the environment interacts and is interdependent with HEI.

In the case of the MCHEI, the role of the external environment is particularly important, and the influence on the MCHEI can be direct or indirect. As with organizations, detailed knowledge of the external environment of an MCHEI is difficult, if not impossible. This is because “*the external environment represents a subjective reality*” (Muscalu, Iancu, & Halmaghi, 2016, p. 135), the components of

the external environment being numerous, complex, dynamic, unpredictable and, in some situations, disruptive for the activity within MCHEI.

In the literature for the concept of “*external environment of an organization*” we do not find a unitary approach because changes that affect the external environment have effects in the medium and long term. In general, the definitions highlight the fact that “*the external environment expresses the set of heterogeneous conditions that exert direct or indirect influence on the way the organization operates, constituting the manifestation framework capable of capturing the convergent and divergent evolutions between its components that can favor or to hinder the conduct of its actions*” (Cornescu, Mihăilescu, & Stanciu, 2003, p. 63). Starting from the definitions of the external environment of an organization in the literature, in Table no. 1 we defined the external environment of military higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as MHEI) and civilian ones (hereinafter referred to as CHEI).

Table no. 1
Definition of the external environment of MHEI and CHEI

MHEI	CHEI
In our opinion, the external environment of an MHEI comprises the set of institutions and other external components that, in the long run, directly or indirectly influence the achievement of objectives and its evolution over time.	In our opinion, the external environment of an CHEI includes all its external elements that, in the long run, have a direct or indirect influence on the activity, performance and obtaining the resources necessary to achieve the set objectives.

(Source: Author)

MCHEI and the external environment influence each other: MCHEI influences the environment through its activities, and the external environment influences MCHEI acting within it.

In our opinion, the characteristics of the external environment of the MCHEI are:

a) uniqueness – each MCHEI has its external, individualized, unrepeatable environment;

b) dynamism – the external environment of the MCHEI is particularly dynamic due to the changes suffered by the elements that compose it;

c) adaptability – due to the influences that MCHEI exerts on the external environment, their adaptation to the external environment is active;

d) sensitivity to influence – the entire activity carried out in the MCHEI is determined by the external environment, which, in turn, is influenced by the MCHEI by size, volume of activities, position held among the other MCHEI. This characteristic generates for each MCHEI, the possibility to identify the opportunities and the way to capitalize on them, but also the weaknesses of the external environment and the ways to correct them.

The external environment consists of microenvironment (specific external

environment) and macroenvironment (general environment).

In general, the microenvironment of an organization is composed of “*external factors with immediate action, which directly influence and affect the organization and over which it has a relative influence and power of control*” (Ranf, 2019, p. 24; Dumitrașcu & Pascu, 2005, p. 20). In our opinion, the microenvironment of an MCHEI is, with small exceptions, identical to the microenvironment of an organization. In Table no. 2 we present what are, in our opinion, the characteristics of the elements of the MHEI and CHEI microenvironment.

Table no. 2

Elements and characteristics of MHEI and CHEI microenvironment elements

The element of the microenvironment	Characteristics of the elements of a microenvironment:	
	MHEI	CHEI
<p><i>Providers</i></p> <p>provides the necessary resources to carry out the activity in optimal conditions</p>	<p>A. which ensures that candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) military high schools – most of the candidates come from this environment; b) civilian high schools – some of the graduates of these high schools want to pursue a military career; c) CHEI – a small number of graduates are pursuing a military career. 	<p>A. which ensures that candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) civil high schools – most candidates come from these high schools; b) military high schools – a small number of graduates are oriented towards civilian faculties; c) other CHEI – graduates who want to have more specializations; d) MHEI – graduates who also follow CHEI; e) other states of the world.
	<p>B. which ensures the smooth running of the institution's activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) companies that provide food for students; b) utility companies; c) the economic agents that provide the fuel; d) banking institutions. 	<p>B. which ensures the smooth running of the institution's activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) utility companies; b) the companies that provide the raw materials for the student canteens; c) banking institutions; d) companies that provide fuel; e) economic agents that, in partnerships, provide students with the opportunity to do the internship.

The element of the microenvironment	Characteristics of the elements of a microenvironment:	
	MHEI	CHEI
<i>Intermediate</i> role in promoting, “selling” and distributing educational products to future candidates	Taking into account the specifics of the military environment and the “final consumer” is the Ministry of National Defense and / or other beneficiaries of the system of defense, public order and national security, the following may be considered intermediaries: a) the web page of the institution; b) social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and media; c) advertising agencies (if the IISM concludes an advertising contract to promote the offer of schooling outside the military environment).	a) the web page of the institution; b) social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and media; c) advertising agencies; d) marketing agencies; e) human resources recruitment companies – help graduates find a job.
<i>Customers</i> the most important component	Ministry of National Defense and / or other beneficiaries of the system of defense, public order and national security	Employers (labor market).
<i>Competitors</i> HEI that disputes the same “customers” or provides the same educational services	There are no competitors for MHEI because each military academy specializes in a category of forces, and civilian higher education only trains future officers whose specialization is not found in any MHEI.	Other MHEI and / or CHEI in the country and foreign countries.
<i>Public institutions</i> institutions with an impact on achieving the objectives of the MCHEI	a) institutions of local and governmental state administration; b) banking institutions; c) the media.	a) institutions of local and governmental state administration; b) banking institutions; c) mass media; d) citizens’ associations – in exceptional situations.

(Source: Author)

In conclusion, in the case of MCHEI, certain specific characteristics appear, which are due to certain constraints of the military environment:

a) a civilian candidate must meet certain recruitment conditions, general and specific (age, psychological skills, sports

skills, etc.) (General Directorate of Human Resources Management, 2021);

b) the number of places for girls is limited;

c) for each category of forces there is only one MHEI, the places are limited and therefore the competition is higher than in the case of CHEI.

The macro-environment occupies an important place in the orientation of the IISMC's activity *“through the elements of the micro-environment, exerting its influence over a wide and long-term area”* (Cornescu, Mihăilescu, & Stanciu, 2003, p. 67).

MCHEI are dynamic systems that take from the external environment the resources they need in teaching, research or training activities. The results of the use of resources can be observed in the knowledge and skills acquired by the graduates of the respective institutions. This knowledge and skills, through the activities carried out by

graduates at work, are transferred to the external environment.

The activities carried out within the MCHEI are influenced by the same categories of factors that influence the activity of any organization: demographic, economic, socio-cultural, management, political, legal, ecological, technical and technological. (Hatch, 2018, pp. 72-75; Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2008, pp. 65-74; Neagu & Udrescu, 2008, pp. 26-32.) These effects are short, medium or long term. In Table no. 3 we present how, in our opinion, the categories of factors influence the MCHEI macroenvironment.

Table no. 3

Categories of factors influencing the MCHEI macroenvironment

Categories of factors influencing the macroenvironment	How the categories of factors influence	
	MHEI	CHEI
<p><i>Demographic</i></p> <p>all the demographic elements that act on the MCHEI</p>	<p>a) the competition on the number of places approved for the admission contest, which will be reflected in the results obtained by the future graduates;</p> <p>b) the level of knowledge of the teachers and auxiliary teaching staff who apply to the competitions for the teaching and auxiliary teaching positions put up for competition;</p> <p>c) the competition for the teaching and auxiliary teaching positions put up for competition.</p>	
<p><i>Economic</i></p> <p>all the economic elements in the environment that have a direct action on the MCHEI</p>	<p>a) the revenues allocated from the state budget;</p> <p>b) practical / field activities carried out during a university year;</p> <p>c) competition for places available for a fee for master's, doctoral and postgraduate university studies.</p>	<p>b) the number of students admitted on fee-paying places;</p> <p>c) increased influence on the labor market / number of jobs available for graduates;</p> <p>d) occupying paid positions in undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs, as well as in postgraduate programs.</p>
<p><i>Social and cultural</i></p> <p>they include the value system, traditions, coexistence norms, behavioral habits and demographic tendencies specific to a geographical area.</p>	<p>a) influences both through the conscious activity of the university community and through the groups that are formed;</p> <p>b) members coming from other geographical areas, must adapt to the specifics of the area in which it is located;</p> <p>c) the particularities of the military environment.</p>	

Categories of factors influencing the macroenvironment	How the categories of factors influence	
	MHEI	CHEI
<p><i>Management</i></p> <p>planning, organizing, coordinating and evaluating the activities carried out</p>	Activities are influenced by hierarchical relationships and military regulations.	The activities are influenced by the management practiced by the members of the management team.
<p><i>Policy</i></p> <p>stimulating or restrictive factor for MCHEI activity</p>	Teaching and research activities are influenced by: a) the internal political climate; b) the general policy of the Government; c) policies / strategies / regulations / laws in the educational field.	
<p><i>Legally</i></p> <p>the legislative institutional system establishes the legal framework for carrying out the MCHEI activity</p>	The activity is carried out in accordance with the national legislation on university education and the one specific to the Ministry of National Defense.	The activity is carried out in accordance with the national legislation on university education.
<p><i>Ecological</i></p> <p>they have a major influence in the activity of the HEI through the dependence on natural resources, as well as through the restrictions imposed by the legislation and the actions of environmental protection.</p>	<p>a) practical activities carried out in the field;</p> <p>b) technical solutions are sought to limit the effects that practical meetings in the field have on the environment.</p>	<p>a) some practical and production applications in their own microfactories.</p>
<p><i>Techniques and technologies</i></p> <p>represented by the endowment of the laboratories, the level and quality of the technologies used, the licenses and patents purchased, the documentation capacity, the innovation capacity, the creative capacity, the quality of the technical-scientific research.</p>	<p>a) some of the technical and technological factors can be assimilated to the existing material base;</p> <p>b) IISMC have research centers, are involved in technological development projects and interdisciplinary research and development, and significant research results are patented;</p>	
	c) research in collaboration with other structures from the Ministry of National Defense and / or beneficiaries.	c) research in collaboration with companies or enterprises.

(Source: Author)

In conclusion, there are also specific MHEI influences in the microenvironment:

a) the places put up for competition for undergraduate studies are budgeted and are filled in full every year, unlike the CHEI where they are budgeted or paid, and there are years when not all of them are filled;

b) managerial activities are influenced by well-established hierarchical relations and military regulations;

c) the activity carried out in MHEI is subject to both the national legislation and the specific legislation of the Ministry of National Defense;

d) the training activities carried out in the field have effects on the environment and therefore solutions are sought to reduce the impact of these activities.

4. Conclusions

In the case of both the microenvironment and the MHEI macroenvironment, certain specific characteristics appear, which are due to the particularities of the military environment.

MCHEIs become competitive and efficient when the rector together with the members of the management team, in making decisions, take into account the existing interdependence between HEI and its external / environmental environment.

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