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**UNIT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: EFFECTIVENESS,
COHESION, READINESS**

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Abstract:

Unit performance management and unit level of readiness are one of the most important issues in a military organization. It helps the unit identify where it is in the process of achieving its goals, what challenges and barriers it faces, as well as review short-term and long-term plans, thereby increasing the unit's effectiveness and making it more effective.

Unit performance management is directly related to its effectiveness, cohesion, readiness. The main point of the paper is to analyze the importance of unit performance and determine interconnection between the unit performance and effectiveness, cohesion and readiness also identify most common unit performance management systems and analyze how they are employed. To achieve the goal set in the thesis, the paper discusses the following issues: unit performance management meaning in military system, defining role of performance management a unit effectiveness context, types of cohesion and performance management influence of unit cohesion, unit readiness assessment tools and performance management importance, in the paper will be reviewed: various sources on the issue that was raised, also the paper will propose definitions of the most common unit performance management systems and some practical examples of what kind of roles they are playing in the military organization development.

As a result of the paper, it was determined that unit performance management holds an irreplaceable place in unit effectiveness, cohesion, readiness. It can be said, that unit performance management and measuring organizational effectiveness play key role in the development of organization and the achievement of its goals.

Keywords:*management; performance; cohesion; readiness; challenges; effectiveness.*

Introduction

An organization is a group of people whose activities are consciously coordinated to achieve a common goal, or in most cases, several interrelated goals. Throughout the history of its functioning, the organization has constantly strived to become more effective than it is today. To this end, they develop strategies and subsequently implement all procedures according to this strategy, determine short-term and long-term action plans, introduce various effective tools through which they can evaluate their achievements, identify weaknesses, reveal shortcomings and subsequently take care of their development. In addition, along with all this, it is vitally important that employee involvement in all the above processes is high. For an organization to be successful over the long term, it must be both effective and efficient. In the words of Peter Drucker, a renowned management researcher, effectiveness is achieved when an organization is "doing the right things," while efficiency is achieved when an organization is "doing things right."

In the military context, Unit Performance Management involves the systematic evaluation and enhancement of a unit's capability to accomplish assigned missions. It focuses on three core dimensions: **operational effectiveness**, **cohesion**, and **readiness**. **Operational effectiveness** measures how well a unit performs its mission tasks, often influenced by leadership, doctrine, and mission planning (Shamir et al., 2000). **Cohesion**, both task and social, strengthens trust and



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collaboration among personnel, contributing directly to morale and combat performance (Griffith, 2002). **Readiness** assesses a unit’s ability to deploy and operate effectively, accounting for personnel strength, training levels, equipment status, and logistical support (Castro & McGurk, 2007).

Unit Performance Management is challenged by high operational tempo, resource constraints, and dynamic combat environments. Therefore, it relies on integrated performance metrics, feedback mechanisms, and regular assessments to maintain high standards and adaptability. Unit performance management involves assessing, monitoring, and improving the performance of a unit (such as a team, department, or business division) within an organization. Various types or approaches to unit performance management are recognized, often depending on the context (e.g., corporate, military, public sector). Unit performance management is relevant and of special importance for every military system and for the effectiveness of the defence forces, in general. Unit performance management is related to processes such as career and professional development, effectiveness, cohesion, readiness, motivation. Accordingly, the theme unit performance management: effectiveness, cohesion, readiness is always relevant and essentially important for defence forces.

3. Defining role of performance management a unit effectiveness context

Unit effectiveness refers to the ability of a team, department, or operational group (a “unit”) within an organization to achieve its intended goals efficiently and consistently. It encompasses both the outcomes produced by the unit and the processes used to produce them, including performance quality, resource utilization, teamwork, adaptability, and alignment with organizational objectives. In military and organizational contexts, Siebold (2007) describes unit effectiveness as a combination of performance outcomes and cohesion factors, stating that effectiveness is not only about executing tasks, but also about maintaining the readiness, morale, and resilience of the team.

The U.S. Army defines unit effectiveness as “the extent to which a unit accomplishes its mission while maintaining the well-being and discipline of its personnel” (U.S. Army, 2012). This comprehensive definition includes both objective performance and subjective elements such as morale and leadership quality.

Performance management is a continuous process that ensures individual and team goals align with an organization’s strategic objectives. In the context of unit effectiveness, it plays a critical role in driving efficiency, accountability, and improvement within a specific functional or operational unit (e.g., a department, team, or division).

In a unit effectiveness context, performance management acts as the engine that connects individual contributions to broader organizational success. It ensures that a unit operates efficiently, meets its targets, and continuously improves through structured goal setting, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms.

Performance management is a strategic and integrated process that aligns individual and team objectives with the broader goals of an organization. In the context of unit effectiveness, performance management plays a pivotal role in shaping operational efficiency, enhancing workforce engagement, and ensuring goal alignment within departments or functional areas. At its core, performance management involves setting clear expectations, monitoring progress, offering regular feedback, and enabling continuous improvement (AIHR, 2023).

One of the primary roles of performance management in enhancing unit effectiveness is goal alignment. Through structured planning and communication, performance management ensures that



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the objectives of a unit are tightly linked to organizational strategies, helping to focus efforts and resources in the right direction (SAP, n.d.).

Additionally, performance management fosters accountability by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and performance standards for employees.

Lastly, performance data collected through these systems supports evidence-based decision-making. Managers can assess trends, pinpoint bottlenecks, and allocate resources more efficiently, thereby reinforcing unit effectiveness (MDPI, 2024).

1.1 . Types of Cohesion and performance management influence of unit cohesion

Cohesion refers to the strength of the bonds, unity, and commitment among members of a group or team. It reflects the extent to which individuals are attracted to the group and motivated to remain part of it, work collaboratively, and pursue shared goals. Cohesion can influence performance, satisfaction, communication, and resilience within both civilian and military organizations.

Cohesion is a critical element in team and unit effectiveness, reflecting the strength of the bonds that hold members together. Scholars generally recognize three major types of cohesion: **task cohesion, social cohesion, and collective cohesion**. These dimensions interact to support group stability, performance, and resilience.

Task cohesion refers to the shared commitment of team members to achieve common goals or complete assigned tasks. It is rooted in a clear understanding of objectives, structured roles, and mutual support to accomplish work-related responsibilities (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985). Teams with high task cohesion tend to be more focused, efficient, and aligned in purpose.

Social cohesion involves the interpersonal relationships and emotional bonds among members. When strong, social cohesion leads to higher trust, communication, and morale, all of which contribute to smoother collaboration and reduced interpersonal conflict (Evans & Dion, 1991). It reflects the degree to which team members enjoy each other’s company and are committed to each other on a personal level.

Collective cohesion, also referred to as group pride or identity cohesion, is the sense of belonging and loyalty that individuals feel toward their team or unit. It is particularly important in high-pressure or hierarchical environments, where group identity reinforces perseverance, loyalty, and morale (Siebold, 2007).

In conclusion, performance management is more than a system of oversight—it is a powerful lever for building cohesion. By addressing the structural, interpersonal, and identity-based dimensions of team dynamics, effective performance management directly contributes to a more unified, resilient, and high-performing unit.

1.2. Unit readiness assessment tools and performance management importance

Unit readiness assessment tools are structured methods and instruments used to evaluate a unit’s preparedness to perform its assigned tasks or missions. These tools help leaders determine whether a team or department has the necessary personnel, equipment, training, and morale to operate effectively. They are especially critical in military, emergency response, and organizational performance contexts.

Categories of Readiness Assessment Tools

- *Personnel Readiness Tools*
- *Training Readiness Tools*
- *Equipment and Logistics Readiness Tools*
- *Operational or Mission Readiness Tools*



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Readiness tools serve both diagnostic and planning functions. They Identify capability gaps, Inform resource allocation and training needs, provide accountability for preparedness, Support decision-making during crisis planning or operational deployment (GAO, 2016).

Unit readiness assessment and performance management are deeply interconnected processes that together ensure an organization’s or unit’s capacity to achieve its objectives under both routine and critical conditions. While readiness assessments focus on evaluating a unit’s capability to execute its missions, performance management ensures that the individuals and teams within the unit are continuously improving, aligned with strategic goals, and prepared to meet evolving demands. Unit readiness assessment is a structured evaluation of a unit’s personnel, training, equipment, and mission capability. It answers the question: Is the unit prepared to perform its tasks? (U.S. Department of the Army, 2011). On the other hand, performance management refers to the continuous process of setting expectations, monitoring progress, providing feedback, and developing individuals to improve overall outcomes (Armstrong, 2020). The synergy between the two lies in their mutual focus on capability, efficiency, and accountability.

Readiness assessments often reveal performance gaps—such as untrained personnel, equipment deficiencies, or poor leadership—that performance management systems must address. For example, a Unit Status Report (USR) indicating low training readiness will trigger targeted performance management interventions, such as revised training plans, competency evaluations, or coaching programs (GAO, 2016).

Likewise, a robust performance management system improves readiness by ensuring that team members are trained, motivated, and meeting individual and collective objectives. When leaders actively manage performance through feedback, goal alignment, and development plans, units become more agile and responsive, directly enhancing operational readiness (Weiner, 2009).

In high-stakes environments like the military or emergency services, this interdependency becomes even more critical. Units that regularly assess readiness without linking results to performance management risk stagnation. Conversely, performance systems that ignore readiness outcomes may focus on individual metrics without improving mission capability.

In conclusion, unit readiness and performance management are not isolated systems—they form a continuous feedback loop. Readiness assessments identify needs; performance management addresses them. Together, they enable a cycle of preparedness, improvement, and resilience essential for organizational success.

4. Unit Performance Management Systems

Unit Performance Management (UPM) systems are structured frameworks used to monitor, assess, and enhance the performance of military units. These systems integrate **data collection**, **performance metrics**, and **feedback mechanisms** to support decision-making and improve operational outcomes.

The Most Common UPM Systems:

a. **Mission Essential Task List (METL)-based Systems:** Focus on a unit’s ability to perform critical mission tasks, often integrated with digital training and simulation tools.

The METL framework is foundational in U.S. and allied military organizations. Each unit identifies its mission-essential tasks based on higher command directives and operational roles. Performance is assessed through training evaluations, field exercises, and mission simulations. METL enables commanders to prioritize resources and tailor training to real-world requirements.

b. **After Action Review (AAR) Systems:** Provide structured debriefs post-mission to evaluate performance and identify lessons learned.



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AARs are structured debriefings conducted post-mission or training event to assess what occurred, why it happened, and how future performance can improve. AARs promote accountability and learning at the unit level, with a focus on team dynamics, tactics, and leadership.

c. Defence Readiness Reporting System (DRRS): A DoD-wide system that links strategic objectives to unit-level readiness.

Military units utilize readiness reporting tools such as the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) in the U.S., or equivalents like Joint Personnel Administration in the UK, to measure personnel strength, equipment serviceability, and training status. These systems provide real-time data to leadership on a unit's capacity to deploy and sustain operations.

d. Commander's Inspection Programs (CIP)

Many militaries implement CIPs to enforce standards and verify unit compliance with regulations and readiness benchmarks. These inspections often include surprise audits and structured reviews of logistics, administration, and operational capabilities.

e. Performance Appraisal and Leadership Evaluation

Military leadership emphasizes both individual and collective performance. Systems like the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) and Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER) in the U.S. Army assess leadership effectiveness, command climate, and contribution to unit success. These evaluations indirectly reflect unit performance.

3. Mission Essential Task List (METL)-based System

The **Mission Essential Task List (METL)** system is a structured method used by the U.S. Army to align unit training with wartime and operational missions. In practice, commanders develop METLs by analyzing their higher unit's mission, evaluating implied and specified tasks, and selecting those essential for success. This process ensures all levels, from company to division, focus on relevant, mission-driven tasks. Each unit's METL must be validated and approved two levels up in the chain of command.

The system emphasizes a **team approach**, requiring close collaboration between commanders and senior NCOs. It integrates collective, leader, and individual Soldier tasks through a clear hierarchy, linking tasks from squad-level up to brigade-level operations. Resources like training time and equipment are allocated based on these essential tasks.

System's Approach

The METL approach is **mission-focused and scalable**:

- It narrows training to mission-critical tasks.
- It follows a **top-down and bottom-up alignment**, with higher HQ approving subordinate METLs and using them to derive battle tasks.
- It integrates seven Battlefield Operating Systems (e.g., intelligence, maneuver, fire support) to holistically support mission success.
- It uses **task-condition-standard** as a framework for setting and evaluating training objectives.

Ultimately, the METL system serves as a **strategic training blueprint**, ensuring readiness for both traditional warfare and contemporary challenges like terrorism and homeland security.

METL-Based System: Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

1. Mission-Focused Training

METL ensures that training is directly tied to the unit's wartime and operational missions, allowing commanders to focus on the most critical tasks for success.



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2. Structured and Scalable Approach

The system provides a clear, hierarchical structure where each level (company to brigade) aligns its METL with higher headquarters, creating a coherent training and operational framework.

3. Task Integration across All Levels

METL integrates collective, leader, and Soldier tasks, reinforcing unity of effort and ensuring that individual actions support larger mission goals.

4. Flexibility Across Units

METLs are tailored to specific unit missions and locations, allowing adaptability across different operational environments.

5. Supports Resource Allocation

Once METL tasks are identified, commanders can prioritize and allocate limited training resources like ammunition, land, and time more effectively.

Disadvantages

1. Resource Constraints in Execution

While METL development is not limited by resources, actual training is. Units may lack the materials or time needed to achieve proficiency on all selected tasks.

2. Overwhelming Task Load

Units cannot train on every possible task, leading to difficult decisions about prioritization and sometimes a lack of depth in non-METL areas.

3. Approval Delays and Bureaucracy

METLs must be reviewed and approved by two higher levels of command, which can slow down the process and reduce flexibility.

4. Potential Misalignment

Differences in missions and contexts may lead to challenges in aligning METLs across units, especially in joint or coalition operations.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, where environment is always changing every day, increasing the level of readiness and efficiency of the defence forces and its units is a constant challenge for all modern states. Unit Performance Management is critical in military and organizational contexts, encompassing the assessment and optimization of a unit's **effectiveness, cohesion, and readiness**. Also there are key challenges that this issue includes:

- Maintaining readiness amid frequent deployments or organizational restructuring.
- Sustaining unit cohesion in diverse or rapidly assembled teams.
- Evaluating performance accurately in complex and dynamic environments.

The issue discussed in the paper showed us, that unit performance management is strongly linked of unit effectiveness, cohesion and readiness. One of the main challenge is to adopt right strategy and method. Effective unit performance management requires continuous assessment tools, adaptive leadership, and a strong feedback culture to navigate these challenges and maintain mission alignment.

In conclusion, proper functioning of the performance management system, proper employee career management and professional development system are essential for increasing unit effectiveness and readiness levels and are the best way to measure and increase organizational effectiveness.



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