CASE STUDY: THE APPROACH OF MILITARY UNIT COMMAND WITH THE QUALITY MODEL OF THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Abstract: Nowadays, many organizations try to ensure the best result with the minimum necessary sources by following the practices of the propulsion of self-valuation throughout the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) approach, within the frame of a Strategic Planning. The self-valuation criterions of the EFQM, can also be implemented in military units. The case of the EFQM self-valuation criterions’ implementation in a military Unit is examined in this study. It is tried a critical analysis of the case, by examining the following practice of its Commander within the context that his activities are emerged. Then, a particular proposal which concerns the implementation of the planning that follows the Johnson and Scholes (1993) model, is presented. The various manifestations and meanings of the self-valuation criterions and the useful tool of the Strategic Planning are revealed. Moreover, the characteristics of the leader-Commander are presented, so that the unit can meet the standards of the desired final state. The demand of active Commanders with vision, who can inspire the personnel by the proper guidance and the ability to convince them to follow the procedures, is the conclusion that comes out of the proposal. By carrying out a continuous self-valuation, within the frame of the EFQM criterions, and then, following the necessary actions, the improvement can be achieved. The personnel and the potential of its progress, the stuff maintenance, the facilities’ improvement, the exploration of the environment, in order recourses can be found, are the crucial factors so that actions can be taken over, which will target to the exploitation of the unit’s potentials, the reduction of the threats and the weaknesses’ change into potentials. Commanding and leading skills are necessary with the simultaneous participation of all bodies in the various procedures. Yet, unpredictable
situations, limitations and moral dilemmas may appear, making thus difficult Strategic Planning’s implementation.

**Keywords**: EFQM, Strategic Planning, Total Quality Management, Commander, Military Unit.

1. Introduction

Today, we are faced with a constant evolution and the world is experiencing a constant change where the only certainty that prevails is uncertainty (Handy, 1995). The existence and survival of both the individual and the organization depends on their ability to adapt quickly and to keep up with the rapid pace of change. Those who do not want or do not have the required skills to respond to change will probably not be able to function properly (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002). Many organizations, in the struggle for survival, have been led to find solutions by adopting practices and concepts that have ensured them to achieve the best possible result with the minimum required resources. One of these practices that is currently widely used in the designated successful organizations is, among other things, the promotion and interpretation of the value of self-assessment on the basis of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) approach in the context of strategic planning implementation (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002).

West-Burnham (1994) defines strategic planning as the process that requires an extended time horizon in which vision and values translate into significant, measurable and practical results. Fidler (1989) gives a clear definition of this design. Specifically, it defines it as the process of creating and selecting a particular strategy in order to acquire the ability to respond to future events and to design how to implement it. The importance of implementing strategic planning in educational organizations is increasingly recognizable. Research into school effectiveness and improvement shows that the quality of leadership consistent with effective management and rapid adaptation through strategic planning are critical variables in distinguishing between quality and non-quality organizations (Sammons et al., 1997).

Quality is the cornerstone of Total Quality Management (TQM) and is considered as a continuous and formative process, which focuses on improving the quality and efficiency of services provided to customers (Pashiardis, 2008a). Recognizing the
potential for increased competitive advantage brought about by the implementation of the TQM, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) was established in 1988 by 14 leading companies in Europe. An important element of the EFQM approach is the promotion of self-evaluation as the central point of activity of organizations in order to increase their capacity for continuous improvement of results. The adoption of the self-assessment process is considered to have positive results in a wide range of activities of the organizations. In particular, self-assessment provides an accurate and structured approach to the development and progress of the organization, an assessment based on facts and not on individual perceptions and the means to achieve consistency in the directions of the organization and unanimity as to its needs.

The military units of the Armed Forces, as organizations, even in the context of changes and possible economic crisis that the country to which these military units belong may experience, must not only survive but continue to be effective. They must implement the appropriate strategic planning in order to meet the requirements of the newly created framework for quality and accountability, and self-assessment, as an important element of the EFQM approach, is a comprehensive and systematic tool for for methodical reporting of activities and tracking of opportunities and weaknesses to achieve improvement based on planned progress moves, which are monitored in relation to the progress being made.

1.1. Subject - Significance - Purpose - Methodology

The self-assessment of a Military Unit within the EFQM Quality Model is the problem of the present work, the purpose of which is to critically approach the existing practices used by the Command of the Military Unit based on the evaluation criteria of the Business Excellence Model EFQM, and then, the submission of a specific proposal in order to make the necessary corrective actions and to implement appropriate strategic planning to achieve excellent results. In order to achieve the above purpose, the events in a hypothetical military unit will be examined, taking into account the context in which it operates in relation to the development of strategic planning in the context of the self-assessment process as an important element of the EFQM approach. The working hypothesis is declarative and receives the following wording: «The Military Unit, whose Commander conducts continuous self-assessment according to the self-assessment criteria
of the EFQM, in the context of strategic planning, presents a continuous improvement of its results and functionality».

The resulting research questions are relevant and descriptive and are worded as follows:

a. How does the improvement of a military unit relate to a Commander that conducts continuous self-assessment according to the EFQM self-assessment criteria, in the context of implementing strategic planning?

b. What actions should be taken by the Commander of the Unit for continuous improvement of the Organization?

c. What are the evaluation parameters for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the military unit?

Regarding the methodology followed, the work was carried out through the bibliographic review, using bibliographic references directly related to the aim and questions of the work, and a connection was made with concepts and bibliography from secondary sources dealing with the topic of the work.

2. Case Study: Scope of functionality of the Military Unit

A new commander has been appointed in a military mechanized unit, in which 50% of the executives are capable and willing, 20% incompetent but willing, 20% capable but reluctant and 10% incompetent and reluctant. Also the Unit is staffed with 50% of the predicted power. Out of the total of 10 Officers, the percentages of ability and willingness range to the aforementioned levels. In addition, 2 Officers have postgraduate degrees related to crisis management, human resource management and New Technologies in education. With regard to the facilities, they are aged and do not constitute a suitable living environment for the hoplites serving their term, whose socio-economic level is moderate to low. In addition, the socio-educational level of the professional hoplites (PR.HO)1 is moderate. However, a small number of (PR.HO), are university graduates (5%) and a number of them have skills for performing manual tasks in addition to their specialty. Also 35% come from the area where the Unit is located.

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1 The term professional hoplite (PR.HO), means a hoplite who is classified to meet the needs of the Armed Forces in junior executives, in order to fill positions of operational and technical specialties, which require significant training and specialization. They serve in the armed forces, are paid by the state and enjoy similar privileges as non-commissioned officers of the armed forces who have graduated from military schools.
With regard to the military material of the Unit, this is unsustainable, in some main categories it is missing and in several corresponding ones it is redundant.

The vision of the new commander is to create those conditions that will make the Unit a strong deterrent to any future enemy who wants to plot the territorial integrity in the area of responsibility of the Unit. To do this, he decided to prepare an action plan promoting a series of actions to achieve it. Part of these actions was to modify the strict disciplinary rules by which the Unit operated, to withdraw all penalties for staff and to emphasize the strengthening of positive behavior. In this way he believed that the staff would learn to follow the rules of operation of the Unit and there would be the desired results.

However, four months after the implementation of the above plan, a large number of Officers of the Unit declare themselves clearly dissatisfied, since their staff, not only is not disciplined, but creates difficulties in the training and in the general operation of the Unit. Due to the growing deterioration of the situation and the uncertainty, the officers of the Unit drafted an anonymous written letter and submitted it to the Commander of the Brigade, to which the Unit belongs, and report the situation and highlight their intense concern as they feel they feel that they are doing their job with great difficulty. However, there were a small number of Officers who did not participate in the drafting of the letter as they did not face particular discipline problems in their Companies and believed that the new discipline plan could work satisfactorily.

The letter states that the Commander decided to implement the specific action plan, which he presented at a staff meeting. When some executives reacted and expressed their reservations, the commander took care to reassure them, telling them that staff should learn to discipline calmly or to discipline themselves and not to discipline with voices and punishments.

The Commander of the Brigade called the Commander of the Unit to his office and informed him of the letter in question. The Unit Commander, although aware that some Officers were having problems with the new action plan, did not believe that things had taken on such serious dimensions. He also stated that various executives approached him on a personal level in his office, telling him various
issues they faced from the new discipline plan and he tried to reassure them and help them with various suggestions (eg to motivate their staff etc).

«It is a matter of time before the results of this strategic planning are seen in the Unit», the Unit Commander said confidently to his superior Commander. «And I will make sure that this strategic planning succeeds». However, the Commander of the Brigade pointed out that the Unit must be in one way or another at the desired levels of discipline and functionality and the responsibility lies solely with the Unit Commander.

3. Critical Analysis

The vision of the new Commander of the Military Unit is to create those conditions that will make the Unit a strong deterrent to any future enemy who wants to plot the territorial integrity in the area of responsibility of the Unit. This vision is part of the targeting for the Armed Forces. However, it does not seem to clarify what are the conditions that will make the Unit a strong deterrent, it does not take care to make clear the mission of the Unit to the staff, which is formulated in the Table of Organization and Material of this Unit. The mission, according to Dobson & Starkey (1994), should include the organization’s core objectives, core beliefs, and values that should be shared, meaning that they can influence strategy. In addition, the following should be defined:

- a. who are the main stakeholders in the organization,
- b. what are the guidelines for stakeholders to achieve the desired attitude and behavior,
- c. what is the level of service and quality it aims for.

The Commander, in the framework of his action plan, took actions in order to modify the strict disciplinary rules with which the Unit operated with the previous Commander, to withdraw the penalties for the staff and to emphasize the strengthening of the positive behavior. However, the above actions do not include the leader’s guidelines, the key stakeholders in the whole process and the desired final situation. Also, the mission statement and in fact its written expression is a strategic activity at the planning level for the whole Organization and is a task for the Commander to consult with the other members of the Organization (Clayton,
1994). However, this activity does not seem to be part of the his actions. Consequently, it seems that the important role played by the Companies’ Commanders and the Directors of the Offices in the Military Unit, is not recognized as the form of command is not participatory. According to Clayton (1994), the process of achieving a participatory management style is a crucial task for the good of the Organization and the manager in exercising his leadership role should give meaning to the work of those associated with the Organization so that they can see what can be achieved and how they can work towards the desired situation.

The Commander fails to transform the ordinary life of the Unit into a challenge. He does not give ways to achieve his objective goals to the new executives and does not take advantage of their dynamic presence as it does not take into account the young of their age and consequently their desire to offer work to the military Unit. There is also no clear timetable for achieving long-term and short-term goals. The result is obvious and after four months from the time of implementation of the plan, the dissatisfaction of the Officers is manifested since the staff shows delinquent behaviors disrupting the operation and discipline of the Unit. The fundamental purpose of strategic planning is to examine and analyze the environment in which the Organization operates, to anticipate future situations and then to develop the means and resources to cope with and deal with these situations (Whipp, 1998). Therefore, strategic decisions evolve from analysis through planning to the achievement of objectives and make necessary the ability to predict future situations concerning the environment of the Organization. The requirement to develop the Organization’s capacity for effective planning and influence in and around it becomes imperative. The degree of development of the specific capacity ensures the corresponding achievement of the planned results. Consequently, the success of strategic planning in an Organization is based on the analysis of the present situation and at the same time on the analysis of possible future situations (Bush & Coleman, 2000). This design presupposes that the Commanders of the Military Units have the required skill to control the environment and not to be controlled by it. From the development of the situation it is understood that the Commander of this specific military Unit, did not identify the initial situation of the Unit, did not involve all the staff in the
events of the Unit, did not take into account their socio-economic and educational level, did not predict the possibility of creating situations such as which, that has now become a reality, did not utilize the dynamics of capable and willing executives as he did not develop their sense of «belonging» to the Unit through practices such as their involvement in the decision-making process (Holmes & Davies, 1994). Middlewood (1998) suggests the existence of nine levels that show the relationship between vision and daily functions on the one hand and the ratio of probabilities to change on the other. The levels related to the undertaken action plans and regular revisions, according to him, need constant adjustment. The Commander did not take any action to quickly adapt to the negatively evolving situation as he did not express any concern and did not inspire the Officers to take action by giving them the appropriate guidelines.

From the development of the situation and from what is written in the letter, the dissatisfaction of the Officers is presented in the face of the Commander. The Commander’s obsession with this action plan and the way he handles the situation, shows the lack of communication in the military unit. Effective communication is an important factor between the various individuals, who make up an organization and play a specific role in the survival and achievement of the goals of that organization. According to Humble (1971), proper communication encourages the acceptance of organizational goals and thus increases motivation, helps control, as duties, powers and responsibilities are clarified, and thus it is possible to control the behavior and performance of employees. If there is any ambiguity in these matters, it is difficult to impossible, to isolate and identify the sources of the problems and consequently to take corrective action. In addition, it helps to create high morale. Communication allows the expression of emotions and the satisfaction of social needs. It can also help prevent resentment and alleviate negative emotions. However, the Commander in this case, limited himself to just listening to the executives’ positions and did not take further steps for explanations, modes of operation and feedback, in order to arouse the interest of the executives and help them to adopt the quality of the attempted change. There was also a lack of communication with the Commander-in-chief (Commander of the Brigade). There should be a continuous interaction between the Unit Commander and the Commander of
the Brigade with the right attitudes and behaviors in order to achieve collaboration through teamwork and focus on the range of the Organization’s priorities (MacGilchrist, 1995). The Commander, while correctly placing the staff at the center of the whole process (Pashiardis, 2008), ignores the factor of the external environment - attitude of the Chief Commander - and does not correctly apply the procedures of two-way communication for change as the examination of beliefs to achieve appropriate approach, are key factors in promoting change through the proposed strategic planning action plan (Matsagouras, 2000).

It is noteworthy that the Unit Commander did not carry out the appropriate analysis in order to identify the dynamics given to his project by the attitude of some Officers (albeit in a limited number) regarding their belief in the increased efficiency of the new discipline plan and the new perspective acquired by the Unit.

4. The Aspects of the EFQM Model in the context of the implementation of Strategic Planning for Military Unit

The new Commander in the specific Military Unit should evaluate and analyze the previous and current situation and the mission of the organization. The main goal is for the Commander to be perceived as the factor that can create a positive environment, lead a collaborative planning, evaluate staff and make every effort to create an effective Unit where all staff will offer maximum skills for the successful execution of the mission. Strategic planning will be based on the model of Johnson & Scholes (1993) which consists of three dominant elements in a triangular shape and each of them consists of three fields. The dominant elements are strategic analysis, strategic selection and strategic implementation. However, in order to maintain or enhance the successful course of the organization, it must be constantly reviewed and self-evaluated, improving the mode of operation and aiming at better performance as measured by the results. The nine Evaluation Criteria of the Business Excellence Model are:

a. Leadership
b. Policy and Strategy
4.1. Environmental analysis

A more complete understanding of the organization’s strategic position requires tracing the environmental factors that are likely to have an effect in the future. The external and internal environment of the Unit will be analyzed through PEST and SWOT analyzes. In this way the environment, resources and culture are examined respectively (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002).

4.1.1. PEST analysis

The rapid and continuous changes that take place in society create an uncertain environment and have an impact on the Armed Forces and consequently on the specific Military Unit. Consequently, factors that indirectly affect the Unit and relate to political issues are the effort and the possibility of finding a viable solution following the difficult economic situation that the country has reached. In addition, examining the relations of the country (to which the military unit belongs) with a neighboring state, one finds the manifestation of expansion by the neighboring state with the creation of a Minority Problem in the territory of the country to which the military unit belongs, under the pretext of human rights oppression. The neighboring country has also set as its strategic goal the diversion of the timetable and the flow of developments in the wider region with its central aim to include itself in the process of exploiting the energy reserves located in that region. The growing challenges, the constant infringements and violations, the modernization of the Armed Forces of the neighboring country, make imperative the need to optimize the operational readiness of the armed forces².

² It is noted that the script is hypothetical and was created by the author for the needs of this case study, which is also a hypothesis.
Regarding economic factors in relation to the respective technologies, new needs are created by the introduction of new technologies both in the training and in the general operation of the Companies and Offices of the Military Unit. In addition, the shortage of spare parts, fuel and other materials highlights the urgent need for proper maintenance, streamlining the use of fuel with appropriate combinations of movements of the Unit vehicles on a daily basis and finding resources to meet the maintenance needs of the Unit facilities.

In the sociological field, the explosion of knowledge combined with the need to update it, the existence of new complex and modern weapons systems, the emphasis on Command and Control processes, the constant flow of information on the modern battlefield, the need to adapt to changing situations, creates new requirements for acquiring skills for handling weapons systems, understanding the new battlefield framework and rapidly assessing the situations created for proper decision making. Consequently, the need for the promotion of realistic training in order to make the staff addicted so that they can acquire knowledge and information, perception of the purpose, automation and coordination in their actions with the ultimate objective of their optimal performance. The Procedure Criterion presents the streamlining of processes, the study of the development of innovative services or products. Services are designed based on the needs and expectations of customers, while customer relationships are effectively managed and constantly improved. The Criterion of Employee Outcomes, expands the knowledge and the degree of satisfaction of employees, based on measurements of perceptions and performance indicators (Karagiannis & Fournioti, n.d.).

4.1.2. SWOT analysis

An equally useful tool as the previous analysis is the SWOT analysis as it enables us to track the capabilities, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this military unit. This analysis is presented as follows.

A key element of the assets of an Organization is the human resources (EFQM, n.d.) and the improvement of the executives in the Armed Forces is a continuous, successive and progressive process that is an obligation of every Commander to his current executives.
Table 1

Tracking
Capabilities, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Military Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGNOSIS</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Timely</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Officers with several years in the Unit.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR.HO who are graduates of Higher Scientific Institutions.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR.HO who have skills for performing manual tasks beyond their specialty.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% of the executives come from the area where the Unit is located.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A number of Officers have postgraduate degrees related to crisis management, human resource management and the introduction of new technologies in education.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The young age of most Officers in relation to their experience.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mediocre socio-economic level of PR.HO.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmaintained material.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiquity of facilities.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced quality in education due to lack of realism in several cases.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the degree of involvement of all executives in the events of the Unit.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating conditions for real communication with the Commander-in-Chief of the Brigade to which the military Unit belongs.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The love and interest of the local community for the army.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

注释：我们根据概率，将每一条信息从1（非常不可能）到5（确定）进行排名，根据及时性，1（长期）- 2（中长期）- 3（短期内）以及最后根据效果，+5（期望的）到-5（不期望的）进行排名。
The utilization of the human resources that the Commander has in his Unit is a challenge. In the grid of the aforementioned capabilities, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the Commander is called to face the challenges by making the most of the offered capabilities and opportunities, to turn the weaknesses into possibilities as much as possible and to control the underlying threats (Pashiardis, 1996).

After the assessment of the overall situation through the review of the internal and external environment, the specific mission of the military unit would be demarcated with clear and specific written wording, as it is formulated in the Organization and Material Table of this specific unit. The mission is worded as follows: «In war: To get in touch with the enemy (from short, medium and long distances), to destroy and capture it with fire, movement and impact or to repel its attack with fire, fight from of cluster and counterattacks. In peace: To train its personnel in all phases of operations, in the fight with the motor vehicles, in the survival on the battlefield and in the basic field of material maintenance. To participate in the exercises organized by head formations, in order to maintain the fighting ability to the required degree». This mission is part of the mission of the Armed Forces, and, concerns the targeting of the Armed Forces.

4.2. Strategic choices

A detailed overview of the environment, requires the identification of options, their evaluation in relation to the elements of suitability, achievability and acceptance (Dobson & Starkey, 1994) and in the final phase the selection of these strategies that will be sustainable and applicable regarding the
achievement of desired final state and the time required. Therefore, for the present situation, taking into account the above mentioned factors, the options, strategies and the required time period presented as follows:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unit climate change.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Utilization of experienced educational staff.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In-service (within the Unit) training of executives with proper design and implementation of ROCK DRILL exercises.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Introduction of modern teaching methods</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Promoting cooperation and participation in decision making.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Development of skills and automation of personnel actions in the weapon systems and in the testing of plans of the Unit.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Introduction of trainings in the six-month training program to improve business readiness.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Development of Unit ties with parents of term Hoplites and the local community</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Χρήση και αξιοποίηση νέων τεχνολογιών</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Increasing the prestige of the Unit with sports and other activities with similar suggestions to the Brigade Commander (Brigade to which the Unit belongs).</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Development of links with other military units</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Finding financial resources</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Addiction of staff to the maintenance of equipment and the improvement of facilities.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Implementation of strategies and practices followed

The implementation of the aforementioned strategies requires timely decisions by the Commander and the sequence of specific practices to achieve the objectives. The Commander must play a leading role and act as a role model so that the other staff can be inspired by the vision and share common values and beliefs. With the specific mode of operation and the actions taken, the Commander will be able to

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4 The scale used to determine the required time period is as follows: The short-term strategy corresponds to three months, the medium-term to six months and the long-term to one year. This strategic planning has a time horizon of one year.
activate them, to create in them the conditions for self-generated motivations and to promote the team spirit (Boyett & Finlay, 1993). In addition, with his mode of action and the specific criteria that he will set, he will enable the personnel of the military Unit through participatory processes to make self-determination and to receive through feedback the appropriate actions for corrective actions in order to increase the quality of training and improve their adequacy. The Leadership Criterion provides commitment to the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and makes efforts for each organization to achieve business excellence. Its mission is the development, implementation and improvement of the business management system. It motivates, supports and recognizes business people (Sallis, 1994).

By creating the spirit of the Unit, the satisfaction of the special needs of all the staff will be achieved. In addition, the spirit of the Unit greatly influences the mental mood of the executives during the execution of their work (psychological climate), their enthusiasm (emotions, attitudes), their productivity (completing specific work in a defined time), achieving their goals effectively and generally their entire performance in their tasks. Therefore the creation of the appropriate climate of the Unit is a first priority. In this way, the utilization of the educational potential of the Unit is achieved. Emphasis should be given to Officers who have been in the Unit for years and are aware of its needs. These Officers will participate in the decision-making process and will be active members of the Military Unit. The continuous inflow of information from both the external and the internal environment, require the Unit to evaluate the newly received information and to adopt corrective actions. Therefore, the establishment of a crisis management team is a necessary condition for the Unit to reassess the situation and suggest to the Commander ways to adopt new attitudes and behaviours. In this perpetual process and in this context, the planning of in-service training of executives and continuous self-evaluation procedures are required. The Commander having in mind the parameters of the environment that concerns the origin of the executives and hoplites serving their term as well as their socio-economic level should be cautious regarding the possible presentation of delinquent behaviours. However, with predictability and the crisis management team it is possible to deal with such situations and take appropriate
action in each case. In terms of delinquency, the probability of occurring delinquent behaviours increases when certain risk factors are present (low self-esteem, family dysfunction, lack of Unit spirit, social exclusion, marginalization, etc.). On the contrary, the possibility of delinquent behaviours decreases under the influence of protective factors (promotion of individual and social skills, existence of a Unity spirit, opportunities for creative employment, etc.) (Cole & Cole, 2002).

The introduction of new technologies in education also creates the need for the introduction of modern teaching methods. Familiarization of trainers with new technologies in order to introduce new teaching methods is vital for harmonization with the practices of modern armies. The approach of new technologies by the trainers will be achieved by attending seminars and in-service training in a reasonable period of two to six months. In-service education can be achieved as long as there are Officers in the Unit who hold postgraduate degrees related to New technologies in education. This action is an innovation and is part of the Criteria of Procedures, which presents the streamlining of processes, the study of the development of innovative services or products. The services are designed based on the needs and expectations of the customers, while the relations with the customers are managed effectively and are constantly improved (Karagiannis & Fournioti, n.d.). In addition, in the context of in-service training of executives, ROCK DRILL exercises will be designed and implemented in order for the personnel to fully understand the mission and the work that must be performed individually, in the context of situations that may occur on the battlefield.

With the above trainings as well as with the planning and introduction of corresponding ones that will be carried out by experienced executives of the Unit, it will be possible to develop skills and automation of personnel actions in the weapons systems and in the testing of plans of the Unit. In this way, the criterion of employee results is met, as it expands the knowledge and the degree of employee satisfaction, based on measurements of perceptions and performance indicators. The results are measurable and are determined by the inspection indicators of the General Inspectorate of the Army.
Maintenance is an important choice of the Commander in the context of the followed strategy. The created economic framework of the country, demands great attention by everyone in the field of maintenance of all kinds of material and facilities of all Military Units. The Commander of this Unit must track the current situation regarding the availability of materials and spare parts, after contacts with the Commanders of the Army Base Factories, in order to provide spare parts, if possible, which are necessary for the operation of the means and vehicles. At the same time, he must inform the head Formation (Brigade) about the deficit, proceeding to the preparation and submission of the required applications for the spare parts as well as the required Reports of Required Expenditures. In addition, he may take advantage of the ability to «use» personnel who can perform manual work to upgrade the facilities of the Unit as well as staff, whose origin is from the area which is the base of the Unit, to make contacts and find resources. With these actions, the Criterion of Cooperation and Resources is highlighted as the rational management and utilization of the organization’s resources are examined, while forms of cooperation with suppliers are developed. Resources can be financial, information, access to materials and storage, technology applications and building infrastructure (Karagiannis & Fournioti, n.d.).

Equally critical criterion is what concerns customer results. The clients of the military unit are considered to be its own personnel and the heads of the Formations, to which this unit belongs. The achievement of a project, the satisfaction of the staff with the provision of moral rewards and the creation of internal incentives as all staff will be actively involved in the activities of the Unit, will gradually lead to optimization of critical results concerning the operational readiness of the Unit and crisis management. An important factor for the active participation of all staff in the events of the Unit is knowledge and information. This will be achieved by gathering all the staff once a week (for example every Friday), at the Unit Entertainment Center or at any suitable large space available to the Unit, where the work done in the previous week will be presented by the Heads of Offices as well as the project planned for next week. In addition, the Commander of the Brigade to which this
Unit belongs will be satisfied as long as the performance indicators set by the General Inspectorate of the Army are met.

A critical threat to the Commander of the Unit, are some of the hoplites serving their term, who present psychological problems. The Commander must, through the interviews, track down the problems of the staff and provide solutions, which is the culmination of quality Management. Sending a letter to the parents as well as the telephone contact with them, will create a good framework of cooperation for better handling of the staff and will make the parents aware and participants in the actions of the Commander. In addition, the intervention of the Unit Doctor, who is an advisor to the Commander, will create conditions for the prevention and avoidance of future unpleasant situations.

Very critical threats to the operational readiness of the Unit are on the one hand the increased number of staff dismissals due to 24-hour service the previous day, resulting in several days missing each month from the Unit and on the other hand the reduced staffing of the Unit. The aforementioned threats are a challenge to be addressed by the Commander. The situation requires the correct planning of actions and the repetition of serious training subjects in order to fill, as far as possible, knowledge gaps in the subjects in question. Keeping a diary by the Company Commanders and working closely with the Unit 3rd Office (this office is responsible to the Unit Commander for organizing and conducting the Unit’s staff training) is a good practice for filling the gaps. However, in addition to training, the lack of staff creates gaps in both the function of the Companies and the Offices of the Unit. The situation requires the Commander to activate and make full use of the skills of all staff. Moreover, he must convince the staff of the criticality of the situation so that there is a full perception and optimization of performance. Activating all staff by becoming responsible for specific actions and beyond their specialty, it is possible to create conditions for normalization of the situation.

The criterion of the impact on the local community, which examines the effects of activities on society as a whole for the organization, based on measurements of perceptions and performance indicators (Pashiardis, 2008b), includes actions such
as organizing sports with other Units, authorities and local associations, the holding of conferences on topics related to the cooperation and contribution of the Army to the local community, etc. In this way, the prestige of the Unit increases and communication channels are created for collaborations and mutual assistance.

However, it is considered important for the whole course of the aforementioned planning, in the intermediate stages to evaluate the results both by the Head of the formation to which the military unit belongs and by the Commander of the military Unit himself, as according to the Model of Business Excellence, the continuous measurement, review and improvement, are important pillars of business excellence (Tzortzakis & Tzortzaki, 2005). The Unit has Officers who are equipped with postgraduate qualifications and have the ability to perform studies with measurable research data. These measurements will be the indicators of the whole action plan and will act feedback to all stakeholders in the whole process.

5. **Summary - Conclusions - Recommendations**

The constant changes that are taking place in the world require rapid action to adapt and keep pace with the pace of change to achieve survival. Achieving the best possible result by using the appropriate means, requires strategic planning so that the Organization is able to respond to future events (Fidler, 1989). Strategic management requires a comprehensive view of the organization that includes all activities in a specific schedule based on the evaluation criteria of the European Foundation for Quality Management, in order to maintain or strengthen the successful course of an Organization through the implementation of appropriate strategic planning. The above study is part of the above finding, as the new conditions that have been created in the country to which the military Unit in question belongs, due to the economic crisis, create difficulties in the function of military Units and the requirement for success of their mission in peace and war is non-negotiable.

In this case study, a critical analysis was attempted regarding the application of the EFQM self-assessment criteria and the Commander’s subsequent strategic planning in relation to the context in which the specific military Unit operates. The
critical view was carried out through the theoretical models of development and implementation of strategic planning and all the subtle aspects that govern it emerged. Then a specific proposal was presented for the strategic planning in this specific Unit in relation to the self-evaluation criteria of EFQM. The proposal was based on the model of Johnson & Scholes (1993). The conclusion drawn from the presentation of the proposal is the requirement for active Commanders to have a vision, to inspire their staff by directing them and persuading them to follow the procedures (Pashiardis, 1993). In the context of the evaluation parameters, the human resources and the possibilities for further development with the required bridges of cooperation in an environment of security and trust, the maintenance of the material, the improvement of the facilities, the exploration of the environment for finding resources and their proper management, are the important pillars for undertaking similar action plans, which will aim at exploiting the possibilities and opportunities of the Organization, reducing the threats and turning the weaknesses into possibilities. Achieving the above goal requires both administrative and leadership skills with the simultaneous participation of all actors in the various processes. However, unforeseen situations, limitations, ethical dilemmas and challenges may arise (for example, ways to deal with delinquent behaviour, inspiration for active participation in all of the Unit’s activities) that make its implementation difficult. Therefore, the adoption of strategic planning that includes actions that make it flexible in the context of ongoing review and self-assessment must be carried out without delay in order to improve the function of the military Unit and address the challenges. The nature of the constraints, the type of ethical dilemmas, the frequency of their presentation and the ways of dealing with them can be objects for further research and study.

References:


