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Exploring the outcomes of Electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM)?

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Abstract

In this descriptive study the aim was to explore the perspectives about e-HRM, their perspectives for choosing the applications for the system, their observed organizational outcomes of HR managers in the leading companies in Turkey. The result of the in-depth interviews with HR specialist from service industry, showed that time management, easy acquiring and access to personal data, and reduce administration costs was the primary motivator for electronic human resource applications. E-HRM reduced organizational costs, improved better and faster communication between manager and employees, reduced the processing time for e-HR usage in organizations. However, interviews showed that e-learning/ e-training is not very effective for organizations.

Keywords: E-HRM, Operational E-HRM, Relational E-HRM, Transformational E-HRM, E-HRM Outcomes

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Keywords: E-hrm, qualitative method,interview,service industry

1. Introduction

Nowadays, thanks to globalization and recent developments in the information and communication technology, the world has already became more complex, dynamic and uncertain. Organizations can find themselves in never ending competitions with respect to customers with high expectations in performance, quality and low cost (Nivlouei, 2014). Therefore, under these highly competing market demands they usually seek for novel strategies, which can make them distinctive from their rivals. For this reason human resources became crucial factor in order to achieve their goals (Som, 2008).

Human resources managers, besides their responsibilities such as finding for the right person for the right position, recruitment, improving overall performance of employees, they are assigned with new responsibilities such as responding to increased competition for globally mobile talents, changing in both workforce attitudes and composition, shifting in the employer/worker relationship and additionally adapting rapid advances in technologies for HR process.

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Also, an increasing number of researchers state that e-HRM is becoming common and may lead to remarkable changes in the organizational cores (Hopkins & Markham, 2003; Ruël et al., 2004; Strohmeier, 2007; Marler & Fisher, 2010; Dulebohn & Marler, 2005; Ruël & Kaap, 2012; Kaur, 2013; Strohmeier & Kabst, 2014; Nivlouei, 2014). In Turkey, nationwide studies involving the concept and process of e-HRM are not only scares but also not directly related with the applicability in the current market. In this study our aim was to explore the perspectives about e-HRM, their perspectives for choosing the applications for the system, their observed organizational outcomes of HR managers in the leading companies in Turkey. This descriptive study can therefore be regarded as preliminary version of a more comprehensive study, which will involve higher number of organizations.

2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

2.1. What is E-HRM?

Untill 1980s, the “Human Resource Management” (HRM) in the form of “Personnel Management” in a strict sense, involved certain policy formation processes in the working environment including the recruitment, performance appraisal, promotion or assignment, along with work discipline, administration of health issues; identification of fundamental principles; decision making and implementation. Since 2000’s HRM in the form of “Strategic Human Resource Management” is considered to be an important strategic partner for the formation of targeted values. Nowadays, with the effective utilization of technology, the organizations transform and rearrange their workflow processes from industrial to informational age (Ensher; Nielson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Therefore HRM has been subject to the transformational process of electronic human resource management. In parallel to the developments in information technologies, the electronic human resource management (e-HRM) has become a subject within the academic literature since 1995 (Strohmeier, 2007). In addition to e-HRM, it can be seen there are various terms such as virtual HRM (e.g., Lepak & Snell, 1998), web-based HR, business-to- employee (B2E) (e.g., Huang, Jin, & Yang, 2004), computer-based human resource management systems (CHRIS) (Ruel; Boundarouk & Looise, 2004; Strohmeier, 2007) which are used for the same phenomenon.

In this vein, Huselid, Jackson and Schuler (1997:171) defined the strategic human resources practices as the design and implementation of a set of internally consistent policies and practices that help to achieve the company targets and supply the human capital. In that respect, the main role of SHRM practices can be identified as the attainment of efficient and effective benefits from the organizations’ knowledge and human resource capabilities. Ruel and colleagues (2004) describe e-HRM as a method of implementation of various HRM strategy, policy and practices within organizations by means of mindful and direct support and use of web-based technology channels. E-HRM can be also distinguished as the tition of information technology for supporting and networking at least two (individual and/or collective) actors in their shared performance of HR tasks (Strohmeier , 2007).

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives of E-HRM

When looked at the literature (e.g. Marler & Fisher, 2013; Ruel & Kaap, 2012; Strohmeier, 2007), it can be seen that there is still no grand or integrative multi-level theory of e-HRM. It can be observed that the major theoretical framework of these studies emerges as (1) The contingency theory, (2) The resource-based view theory; (3) Transaction cost theory (4) New institutional theory. Lawrance and Lorsh’s (1967) contingency theory stipulates that organizations are influenced by their environment. Therefore, the success of the organization depends on the extent to which it shapes its internal structuring by taking into account the limitations imposed by their environment (Lawrance & Lorsh, 1967). In other words, it has to be “fit” between “micro” and “macro” environmental factors or variables and organizational structure in such a way that the ideal outcome is obtained (Ruel & Kaap, 2012:265).

The resource-based view contents that human resources are the most valuable resources of companies in gaining competitive advantage as they are valuable, unique, inimitable, and imperfectly substitutable (Barney, 1991). Following this approach, e-HRM practices such as e-recruiting, e-learning etc. can be seen as activities that help the firm to meet these objectives. Transaction cost theory explains institutional arrangements due to their cost effectiveness. Hence, the complex, partially outsourced, partially decentralized, and partially delegated structures of e-HRM can be explained by their ability to save costs (Lepak & Snell, 1998). In the HRM field, institutional theory has been used to shed light on HRM practices and the factors that influence them (Heikkila, 2013). According to the institutional theory, regardless of

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