Chapter 52
E–HRM in Turkey:
A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is about the role of electronic Human Resource Management (E-HRM) in Turkey. E-HRM can be briefly defined as the planning, implementation and application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individuals or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities. New knowledge economy increased competition throughout the world and living in an age of massive technological evolution is changing the nature of business; especially e-business. E-business is challenging current HRM policies and functions as it uses internet technology to drive organizational performance. This study attempts to investigate several specific and critical points that will contribute to a better understanding of E-HRM by illustrating how it is used by a Turkish firm in the health sector. In this sense, the authors' findings will try to exemplify how an E-HRM policy is realized. Our aim is to provide a model for the implementation of E-HRM in other companies.

INTRODUCTION

During the past ten years, emerging factors such as globalization, rapid technological developments and limited resources have created a new competitive landscape for all businesses. These developments forced companies to adopt several strategies to survive and to excel in their environment. Obviously, competition and attempts to increase market

share between organizations play an important role in the business world. Today information is such an important competitive tool for businesses that a new era has begun known as "The Information Age" or "The New Economy".

Turkey is adapting economically and culturally to a web-based economy, seeing this as essential to its candidacy for the European Union. Although it has been observed that the human factor is among the leading strategic advantages of successful firms' in Turkey, "traditional personnel management" is still

resisting change. Therefore, issues pertaining to human resources are under increasing investigation by academics, as well as by business people. In Turkey the beginning of academic research into human resource management dates back to the 1970s, to early studies of personnel management. In the 1980s, the transition from personnel management to human resource management has influenced academic study in Turkey in all relevant areas of the subject. The changes observed in these years were not limited to a change from personnel management to HRM. Rather, there is the much more important issue of change within the above mentioned transition stemming from the strategic role ascribed to HRM (Gurol *et al*, 2003). Following this evolutionary process, at present, academic interest in E-HRM has increased. This interest stems from E-HRM's role in cost reduction development of HR services helping to improve strategic planning. Furthermore E-HRM is seen as a driving force for companies growing both regionally and in labor force. It is becoming a prerequisite for the competitive success of any firm. Using the internet theoretically makes your labor pool global rather than local. You can use information technology to do all the routine HR administrative work automatically at any time, at anywhere.

BACKGROUND

As mentioned in the introduction part, living in age of massive technological evolution is changing the nature of business. This new business structure is named as electronic business(e-business) and can be defined as the overall business strategy that redefines the old business models and uses digital media and network technology to optimize customer value delivery (Karakanian, 2000, 1) which causes certain innovative changes in business life. These computer based innovative changes are especially found in customer relations, marketing, inventory control, and/or human resource management and are clearly affecting the way in which business is conducted.

The new mechanism introduced by e-business utilizes Internet-based computing, which supports the open flow of information between systems. For this purpose, e-business uses business portals (established over the Internet) to interact with customers (Mitchell, 2001).

Information systems have also been applied to HRM for decades. However, the way of using information systems and the way of processing information for HRM have evolved and dramatically improved over the last decade. As a result human resource management has also gone through a change process, especially in terms of HRM policies and functions.

Moving from this point on, Strohmeier (2007) has defined electronic human resource management (E-HRM) as "the planning, implementation and application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities." (p.20)

According to Ulrich (2007; 2009) human resource managers take place in the strategy designation process with the top managers. As one of the strategic partners, the HR manager derives benefit from Electronic Human Resource Management Systems (EHRMS), which is an important tool in E-HRM, to disseminate and execute the strategy within the organization. E-HRM has gained use of technology as it enables employees to manage much of their own HR administrative work. They can take care of many routine transactions whenever they wish, because automated systems don't keep office hours. In addition to their former operational role, HR professionals can also act as a competency manager by arranging the right people to the right positions in the right time with their new strategic architecture role.

With the use of IT for HRM purposes there will be more time left for strategic decision-making, as a result of a decrease in manually performed administrative tasks. Also as a result of the im-

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