

Digitalization in Human Resources Management: A Conceptual Study on Hotel Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The widespread use of information and communication technologies and the increase in their areas of application have led to major changes in the tourism industry in terms of supply and demand. Digitalization is present in the tourism sector as in any other sector. The aim of this study is to reveal the current situation of digitalization in the Human Resources Management (HRM) department of hotel companies and its contributions to the functioning of the department. For this reason, the limitation of studies on digital HRM and the fact that it can shed light on future studies reveals the original value of this research. In this context, the research firstly introduces the process of digitalization of HRM, which is the subject of the research, reviews the relevant literature and discusses the research issues within a conceptual framework. Secondary data source analysis was the preferred research method. Previous research in the related field was analyzed. As a result of the findings of the research, the evolving and growing technological environment was evaluated in relation to the tourism industry. In previous studies, it has been seen that the contribution of digitalization in hotel businesses is great. It is suggested that digitalization is necessary for the development of HRM, and at the same time it is recommended that hotel businesses should increase their adaptation to the digitalization process through various training to be given to their employees.

Keywords: Human Resources Management, Digital Transformation, Tourism, Hotel Management, HRM
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İnsan Kaynakları Yönetiminde Dijitalleşme: Otel İşletmeleri Üzerine Kavramsal Bir İnceleme

ÖZET

Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin yaygınlaşması ve uygulama alanlarının artması, turizm sektöründe arz ve talep açısından büyük değişimlere yol açmıştır. Dijitalleşme her sektörde olduğu gibi turizm sektöründe de mevcuttur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, otel işletmelerinin İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi (İKY) departmanında dijitalleşmenin mevcut durumunu ve departmanın işleyişine katkılarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu nedenle dijital İKY konusunda yapılan çalışmaların sınırlılığı ve ileride yapılacak çalışmalara ışık tutabilecek olması bu araştırmanın özgün değerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırmada öncelikle araştırmaya konu olan İKY'nin dijitalleşme süreci tanıtılmakta, ilgili literatür gözden geçirilmekte ve araştırma konuları kavramsal bir çerçevede tartışılmaktadır. Araştırma yöntemi olarak ikincil veri kaynaklarının analizi tercih edilmiştir. İlgili alanda daha önce yapılmış araştırmalar incelenmiştir. Araştırma bulguları sonucunda, gelişen ve büyüyen teknolojik ortam turizm sektörü ile ilişkili olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Önceki çalışmalarda otel işletmelerinde dijitalleşmenin katkısının büyük olduğu görülmüştür. İKY'nin gelişimi için dijitalleşmenin gerekli olduğu, aynı zamanda otel işletmelerinin çalışanlarına verecekleri çeşitli eğitimlerle dijitalleşme sürecine adaptasyonlarını artırmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi, Dijital Dönüşüm, Turizm, Otel İşletmeleri, İKY.
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Introduction

Digitalization in human resource management (HRM) has become an important issue with the impact of technological developments. Digitalization provides many benefits such as customer satisfaction, efficiency, competitive advantage and sustainability in the tourism industry. Hotel businesses benefit from the opportunities offered by digitalization in many departments. Human resources management department is one of them. In terms of HRM, they are trying to improve their internal practices day by day.

The tourism industry is becoming more and more important today. The job opportunities and foreign exchange earnings provided by tourism are considered important especially for developing countries. HRM plays a very important role for tourism businesses (Akova et al., 2015). As technological developments have started to make innovative contributions to every sector, the concept of digitalization in HRM also comes to the fore. Information technologies are rapidly transforming the field of HRM in organizations (Zavyalova et al., 2022). Technological developments have led to an unprecedented revolution in the hospitality and tourism industries (Law et al., 2014; Buhalis, 2019). As a result of many developments from the past to the present, the organizational structure inevitably changes, job descriptions and requirements are redefined, and the roles and characteristics of human resources are differentiated. New business models require employees to use digital technologies, automation systems and internet platforms to collect data and adapt to digital business processes to remain competitive (Demir et al., 2023; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2014).

It is thought that the tourism industry in Türkiye may enter a highly competitive environment in the new period due to many reasons such as increasing interest in tourism, the emergence of new types of tourism, the strengthening of international tourism movements and the economic situation (Akbaba & Günlü, 2011). In today's world where competition has increased significantly, businesses need to gain sustainable competitive advantage to survive. Companies should take the necessary steps not only by examining their own processes, but also by considering the external environment and especially the actions of their competitors (Kaya et al., 2021). It is known that the number of accommodation businesses has been increasing in recent years and therefore they need more resources. The hospitality industry necessarily involves personal contact with customers. Therefore, digital development in hotels represents a solution to improve operational processes, but it also means changing talent recruitment and retention policies (Crespi-Vallbona & Noguer-Juncà, 2023). HRM, which provides tourism businesses with a significant competitive advantage, has undergone a different transformation with the impact of developing technology. The tourism industry, where automation is almost non-existent, takes on a different structure with digital human resources applications. In this context, it can be said that digital human resources applications put the HRM functions of future tourism businesses into an important change (Göktaş & Bulgan, 2017).

Today, the structure of human resources can change with globalization and increasing competition conditions (Atay, 2016). Innovation in hotels can affect both technological tools and applications and organizational structure and thus human resources planning (Demir et al., 2023). Depending on this situation, there may be changes in thinking in HRM through technological developments. In this study, the potential effects of digitalization, which affects and improves all areas of life today, on HRM are examined. The study, which is handled with the tourism paradigm, is based on the HRM field of hotel businesses. In the first section, the concept of HRM, its historical development, importance, purpose, principles, and functions are explained and the place and importance of HRM in hotel businesses are discussed. In the second part, the concept of

digital transformation is explained and in the last part, digital transformation in HRM is discussed. The conclusion and recommendations section were created with the information obtained through secondary sources.

Literature Review

Human Resources Management (HRM)

From a scientific point of view, it can be said that HRM emerged with the industrial revolution. The changes experienced during the industrial revolution revealed the need for human capital as well as physical capital in the management of organizations. With mechanization, new and different forms of production were developed in the industry and the sustainability of large companies was increased (Saatçioğlu & Yıldırım, 2022). In accommodation businesses, human resources are composed of managers who have the authority and responsibility to make decisions and employees who are in the position of implementing the decisions made. When considered as a whole, HRM can be defined as the department responsible for organizing and conducting activities that will mobilize human resources in the most effective and efficient way to achieve the strategic results of the organization (Akıncı, 2011). Historically, HRM is the oldest advanced management function, preceding other functions such as finance, accounting, and marketing. Although it has not been recorded, the actual management of human resources has undoubtedly taken place since ancient times (Deadrick & Stone, 2014). The necessity of management activities stems from the tendency of people to live together and produce some results since ancient times. Therefore, it is possible to follow the historical development of HRM from the beginning to the present day. The Industrial Revolution, which emerged in England in the second half of the 18th century and spread to Europe and America in the 19th and 20th centuries, is an extremely important event in terms of the development of management thought (Benligiray, 2020). The United States of America (USA) can be considered as the only reference in the historical development of the emergence and institutionalization of HRM in the world. Although it is a common view that the concept of HRM spread from the USA to other countries, the historical development of this term in other countries is different (Eroğlu, 2016). With the phenomenon of globalization, the transition phase to HRM enters the development process after World War II (Atay, 2016). It has been determined that theoretical development research in the field of HRM continues and the industrial revolution is often used as a starting point. It is accepted that the theoretical and practical models, concepts, and techniques in this field were mainly developed by US and European authors (Alanlı, 2022).

One of the main objectives of HRM can be described as the development, improvement, and dissemination of the HRM system in line with the determined strategies of the enterprise, as it can be used in an integrated structure. It is possible to say that the most important resource that an organization needs to achieve its goals is people. No matter how strong the financial resources of an organization are, if the human resources are insufficient, the success of the organization will be at a low level (Baysal & Göktaş, 2018).

The objectives of HRM can be considered as social, organizational, functional, and personal (Atay, 2016). Employees within an enterprise constitute the human resources of that enterprise. HRM aims to increase productivity and achieve the goals of the business by optimizing the productivity of employees (Pelit & Çetin, 2020). HRM can make a limited contribution to organizational success by fulfilling traditional functional and administrative roles. For an organization to achieve its goals, human resources must be managed with a strategic approach (Benligiray, 2020). An effective HRM should be able to provide recommendations to reduce

the variables between supply and demand (Temizkan, 2016). The HRM department in businesses undertakes important tasks in the working lives of all employees from recruitment to retirement. HRM fulfills various functions for employees to work effectively and efficiently (Akoğlan Kozak, 2009). Figure 1 shows the functions of HRM.



Figure 1. Functions of Human Resources Management Source (Kambur & Yıldırım, 2023)

When the HRM unit and HRM functions are evaluated, it can be argued that the necessity is even greater in companies operating in the tourism industry, which is closely linked to the human factor. Accordingly, all companies should strive to ensure that this unit fulfills all its duties in the best way possible, rather than ensuring that HRM exists only as a unit name within their organization (Pelit & Ak, 2018).

Human Resources Management in Hotel Management

While competitive factors such as technological resources and product diversity can be imitated, the qualities of human resources such as skills, equipment and behavior are difficult to imitate. For this very reason, HRM continues to gain importance day by day due to the critical importance of human resources. Changes in technology have been reflected in the tourism industry as a new formation and tourism variables have been affected by these developments (Erol, 2021). In businesses, the number of employees leaving the job increases, the emotional state of employees is negatively affected, the desire and motivation to work decreases, work accidents increase, and serious problems may occur in the business (Baysal & Göktaş, 2018). When evaluated in terms of overcoming all these processes, the role of HRM can show itself here. Although the human factor plays a very important role in the success of an organization, it is possible to say that it is more important especially in service sectors such as hotels (Ammirato et al., 2023). The fact that the human factor is so important in the hospitality sector has necessitated the existence of a separate unit related to this field within the organization. In hotel businesses, this department is called personnel management, and in recent years, personnel management has gradually been replaced by HRM (Erdem, 2004).

For human resources to work effectively and efficiently in hotel businesses, certain functions need to be fulfilled. These are generally; workforce planning, job analysis, finding human resources, selection and placement, recruitment and training, motivation, performance evaluation, salary policy, discipline, and dynamics of labor relations. Since the job of the employees in hotel businesses is to provide the best service to the customers, to satisfy them and to meet their expectations, it is necessary for the employees to love their job, to want excellence and success in human relations (Özdemir & Akpınar, 2002). An educated HRM is required for the staff to be successful. For this reason, HRM can be among the departments of great importance for hotel businesses (Senarathne et al., 2020). As a function in the field of business administration, HRM is of great importance in strategic, operational, behavioral and legal terms (Benligiray, 2020). Determining the qualifications and abilities of employees, directing them to work in groups, encouraging them to behave in the most appropriate way for themselves and the company is the assurance of human resources management. Maximizing the contribution of employees, especially in trainings, ensures their integration into their businesses and increases their satisfaction. In this case, investing in people is not consumption but capital expenditure for the company. Therefore, HRM is an important part of the overall planning and strategy of the organization (Ünal, 2002).

Digital Transformation

One of the concepts that entered our lives with the emergence of transistors is the concept of digital or, in other words, digital. The origin of the word is French and according to TDK, it is explained as the electronic display of data on a screen (Cançelik, 2021). In the 18th century, with the Industrial Revolution, the world entered the process of digital transformation, and many societies benefit from this transformation. One of the areas where digital transformation is effective is the tourism industry, and this transformation has enabled tourists to transfer what they experience during their tourism movements and travels to the digital world (Güncan, 2021). Digitalization should not be perceived only as an approach to using technology or automation. On the contrary, it transforms the dysfunctional into new processes and applications due to its impact on organizational expectations, needs and behaviors, inter-business and tourism industry cooperation, and new forms of technological development (Demir et al., 2023). Digitalization has been identified as one of the main trends changing society and business in the near and long-term future (Kaya & Yıldızhan, 2022).

It is seen that the digital transformation has passed through different phases and reached today, and the technological change in each phase is not limited to the industrial revolution but has also transformed tourism by affecting social life at various levels. (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). Due to these changes in tourism, it is understood that the concept of virtual tourism has come to the agenda and is becoming increasingly important (Güncan, 2021). It reveals the structural and transformational revolution of business networks that encourage practices strengthened by the adoption of innovative technologies (Buhalis et al., 2022).

Digital Transformation in Human Resources Management

The presence of technology at every point of our lives can cause sectors to develop and be innovative. This situation emerges as a change that sectors must realize to keep up with developments and for their continuity (Kayran, 2021). Today, with the innovations in internet technology, the widespread use of computers in business life has affected HRM and has been named digital, in other words, electronic HRM (e-HRM) (Bay & Kulak, 2021). Digital transformation of human resources functions can maximize the level of benefit of businesses from new applications (Bayarçelik, 2019). The imperatives brought about by

digitalization- related opportunities such as the use of robots, automation systems, internet-based technologies, virtual-enhanced reality and various applications have made innovation inevitable in all areas within the tourism industry (Demir et al., 2023).

Intranets and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, systems that support the integrated electronic infrastructure provided between processes, departments and functions across organizations, enable businesses to reduce labor costs. Synergy and interoperability increase efficiency, improve responsiveness and enable more informed decisions. This, in turn, enables employees to improve their performance and increases organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005). In the 1990s, in the field of HRM, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, i.e. web-based systems, developed to be used to achieve goals related to recruitment, training, performance, selection and compensation. Internet technology has enabled organizations to attract employees from all over the world and candidates to apply for jobs online. With the increasing use of the internet in the 2000s, organizations started to expand the scope of e-HRM practices (Celep & Afacan Fındıklı, 2018).

In particular, the increase in the use of the internet, mobile applications and social media users has changed working conditions, and companies have started to make efforts to adapt their working methods and legislation and to process their business in a way to adapt to changing and developing conditions. (Kaya & Kaya, 2023). HRM is one of the main management functions that benefit from and adapt to these changes. (Nankervis & Cameron, 2023). Businesses must be innovative and fast to achieve competitive advantage. Digital human resources are a management that is more open to development and faster than traditional HRM (Bayarçelik, 2019). Companies that can quickly take advantage of the opportunities of implemented digital HRM technologies can be in a better position than companies that pay less attention to digitalization (Zavyalova et al., 2022). Thanks to technology, the information needed to improve product quality and customer service has become easily accessible to employees (Saatçioğlu & Yıldırım, 2022).

The digitalization of human resources is mainly driven by the need to ensure that the results obtained are efficient and analytical, rather than reducing the number of employees. With this transformation, things will progress faster and more systematically in electronic environment, thus increasing the satisfaction level of managers and employees. Today, it is seen that HRM functions can be transformed into digital form and integrated into the processes within the organization (Celep & Afacan Fındıklı, 2018). Digitalization is important for HRM and benefits businesses as this technology creates possibilities for designing HRM tools and equipment that were not possible before (Ruël et al., 2004). Jones (1997) attributes the supporting forces for the emergence of Digital HRM to six factors:

Information Technology: Technology enables existing society to evolve into an information society (Atay, 2016). With the increasing complexity and decreasing costs associated with information age technology, digital human resources are becoming an essential part of the future.

Process Re-planning: The criteria for organizations to be ahead of their competitors vary according to their qualified HRM and planned use of resources (Temizkan, 2016). The main business processes within the organization can be re-planned and executed with information technology.

Managing at high speed: Businesses need to be smarter and faster to gain competitive advantage. Digital HR manages smarter and faster than traditional HR.

Networked Organizations: Digital HR services are more available in networked companies than in traditional bureaucratic companies. Businesses are looking for a less bureaucratic and more efficient solution.

Knowledge Workers: Learning Organizations are self-managed knowledge workers. The main purpose of knowledge workers is to minimize costs and capture important business opportunities through knowledge. Digital human resources should include knowledge workers to keep up with the innovations of the age (Güler, 2006).

Globalization: Companies may need to localize their global business strategies to gain competitive advantage. HRM services must be able to gain a competitive advantage if they want to participate on a global scale and provide essential services to their employees.

The fact that human resources management activities can be carried out faster, cheaper and easier with digitalization may be one of the reasons why organizations prefer this approach (Aksoy Uğurlu & Doğan, 2023).

Related Researchs

Amor (2002) noted the growth of extensive networks both within and between partner organizations. The proliferation of the Internet supports communication between employees, units and organizations, as well as with external partners and consumers. Digitalization greatly facilitates business life by making it easier and faster to access and manage a lot of data (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2018). Changes such as different business models, different ways of doing business, new job descriptions and new competencies are observed in the working life of digital transformation (Aksoy Uğurlu & Doğan, 2023). Demir et al. (2023) concluded that the interaction of digital transformation and innovation affects human resources planning and management, therefore, it is very important for hotels to understand digital transformation to ensure the success of HRM. Similarly, Setianingrum et al. (2023), because of their research, determined that digital transformation and technologies have started to be used in HR processes and both HR professionals and other stakeholders are involved in HR processes by using these technologies.

Digital HR involves the performance of human resource management tasks in an organization using Internet technology (Doğan, 2011). In the tourism industry, technology is becoming not only a tool to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness, but also a concept that enhances organizational performance by co-creating customer experiences (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005; Li et al., 2017; Buhalis et al., 2022). To survive, tourism businesses need to focus on the human resources department, which is difficult to imitate, and move from traditional human resources management to digital human resources management (Göktaş & Bulgan, 2017).

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the study is to reveal the current situation of digitalization in the HRM department in hotel businesses and its contributions to the functioning of the department. Within the scope of this purpose, the extent to which the HRM department in hotel businesses benefits from information technologies, the level of digitalization and their contributions to the relevant department, the business and especially the employees were examined. When the relevant literature is examined, it is possible to say that digitalization is taking place more and more in the tourism industry as in every field. Digital transformation provides significant benefits

for businesses and employees. With the developing technology, digital tools are used in the HRM field of hotels. When the digital world is evaluated in terms of the developing and growing technological environment and the tourism industry, it is possible to say that many businesses have a positive perspective on digitalization in terms of the convenience it provides.

As a result of the literature review, it was observed that digital transformation tools are used extensively in HRM departments of hotel businesses (Bay & Kulak, 2021; Senarathne et al., 2020). Augmented reality, virtual reality, mobile applications, cloud computing and online data storage etc. can be considered as examples of these tools (Ülkü & Göktaş, 2021). Thanks to these tools, the work of HRM has become easier, the quality of the work done has increased, and on the other hand, the productivity of employees has increased (Zavyalova et al., 2022). As digital transformation starts in various departments of tourism enterprises and is also seen in the field of HRM, it can bring a new perspective to the management and accordingly, it can bring the functions of the organization to a systematic level and maximize accessibility.

When businesses are evaluated in terms of digital HRM; they are faced with a new management style, and they need to use the digital process in the most efficient way. In the light of various developments over time, HRM in tourism enterprises may need to adapt to developments with an innovative perspective (Gonzalez et al., 2020). It is possible to train employees in line with the training programs to be provided on this subject, and the concept of digitalization can be applied in many areas of the tourism sector. In other words, businesses can prepare their employees for this transformation by transferring digital transformation to the business process with the support of the management. In this context, the role of the human resources management department becomes more important, and it can be suggested that HRM policies should be reorganized in order to easily adapt to this transformation.

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Etik Kurul Kararı ile ilgili beyan

Araştırmanız etik kurul *izni gerektiriyorsa*, aşağıdaki bilgileri doldurunuz.

Lütfen beyanı yaptığınızı belirtmek için kutucuğu işaretleyin.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yazar(lar) Beyanı: Bu çalışmanın yazarı(ları) olarak, insan katılımcıların yer aldığı çalışmalarda gerçekleştirilen tüm prosedürlerin, kurumsal ve/veya ulusal araştırma komitesinin etik standartlarına ve 1964 Helsinki bildirgesine ve daha sonraki değişikliklerine veya karşılaştırılabilir etik standartlara uygun olduğunu beyan ederim(iz).
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Etik kurul kararı veren kurum	_____
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Etik kurul karar tarihi	_____
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Etik kurul karar sayı no	_____
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Araştırmanız etik kurul *izni gerektirmiyorsa*, nedenini aşağıdaki seçeneklerden birini tercih ederek belirtiniz.

Bu çalışmanın yöntemi için etik kurul izni gerekmemektedir.

Bu çalışmadaki veri toplama süreci 1 Ocak 2020 tarihinden önce gerçekleşmiştir.

Yazar Katkısına İlişkin Bilgi

Yazar(lar) beyanı	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bu çalışmadaki bulunan yazarların katkı oranlarının aşağıda belirtilen şekilde olduğunu beyan ederim(iz).
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1. Yazar katkı oranı	%50
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2. Yazar katkı oranı (gerekliyse)	%50
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