

THE STRATEGIC APPROACH IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND A RESEARCH ABOUT INFLUENCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES ON HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES¹

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ABSTRACT

The main object of this article, is to search the strategic approach in Human Resources Management (HRM) and to present the results of a research about the influences of environmental variables on human resources policies. In the first part of the article, main knowledge about strategic approach in HRM which was taken from literature will be present and in the second part we will discuss the results of a research which was implemented in march-april 2007 in Black Sea Region. Data for research was received from 58 multiple size enterprises.

Key Words: Human resources management, strategic approach, human resources policy, environmental variables.

JEL Classification: M12, M19

İNSAN KAYNAKLARI YÖNETİMİ'NDE STRATEJİK YAKLAŞIM VE ÇEVRESEL DEĞİŞKENLERİN İNSAN KAYNAKLARI POLİTİKALARININ OLUŞUMUNA ETKİLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR UYGULAMA

ÖZET

Bu makalenin temel amacı, İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi'nde (İKY) stratejik yaklaşımı araştırmak ve çevresel değişkenlerin insan kaynakları politikaları üzerindeki etkileri hakkında bir alan araştırmasının sonuçlarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu makalenin ilk bölümünde, insan kaynaklarında stratejik yaklaşımla İngilizce yazından alınan ilgili temel bilgi sunulmuştur, ikinci bölümde mart-nisan 2007'de Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde gerçekleştirilen bir araştırmanın sonuçları ortaya konulmuştur. Araştırma için çeşitli büyüklükte 58 işletmeden elde edilen veriler kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan kaynakları yönetimi, stratejik yaklaşım, insan kaynakları politikası, çevresel değişkenler

JEL Sınıflandırması: M12, M19

¹ This article was presented in 15th National Management and Organization Congress, at May 25-27, 2007.

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1. Introduction

Strategic approach in Human resources management (HRM) aims to integrated strategic management of the firm by making human resources functions a part of business strategy, by integrating all activities related to human capital with all functions of the firm. For this purpose it's most important influence on HRM is to facilitate improving strategy which is top management's job by evaluating internal and external factors which continuously change.

2. Strategic Approach in Human Resource Management

2.1. What makes Human Resources "Strategic"?

There are many views about definition of Strategic HRM. A general definition from the literature is that; Strategic HRM is all activities which influences individual's behaviours about to identify and to provide firm's needs (Martel ve Carroll, 1995:254; Wright ve McMahan, 1992: 297-298).

A general Strategic HRM definition includes these characteristics: A long-term focus, to link HRM and strategy processes; and expectations about organizational benefits which effective HRM policies will create. Top management, like HRM professionals, can take a role in transforming HRM to a more strategic orientation, however, the degree of this role is not clear at this point (Martel ve Carroll, 1995:254).

Strategic HRM is related to provide this: "Human Resource Management is totally integrated with strategic planning. HRM policies are in harmony both with policy fields and hierarchy. Line managers accept HRM policies and they use it as a part of their daily work (Wright ve McMahan, 1992: 297-298).

2.2. Key Relationships in Strategic Human Resource Management Models

There are five key aspects that any Strategic Human Resource Management model should include. These are :

- External environment: It is the element that provide opportunities and that determine limits to Strategic HRM which must operate in an organization.
- Internal environment: It is the organizational context (conditions and environment) that includes structure and culture which, organization operate in.
- Business strategy: It is the general strategic purposes of the organization which have influence on Strategic HRM and which is influenced by Strategic HRM.
- Strategic Human Resources Management: It includes both HR strategy and individual implementations.

- Results : It is some knowledge about the results of Strategic HRM (Truss ve Gratton, 1994: 669).

Strategic aspect of HRM consists of four elements:

- To use planning,
- A consistent approach on designing and managing personnel systems which is based on employment policy and personnel strategy and supported by a philosophy.
- To integrate HR practices and policies with some clear strategies and to provide a harmony between them.
- To perceive people in the organization a strategic source to gain competitive advantage (Mabey ve Salaman, 1995: 36).

3. Methodology

Methodology of field research includes the followings. Field research was implemented in 58 firms, in Middle and East Black Sea Region, in march 2007. Research was realised with an survey instrument which was completed with a face to face talk with firm managers. With this aim we visited almost 90 firms which we determined in the beginning steps of process, and we received responds from 58 of them which are suitable to evaluate.

In this study, we focus on environmental factors which have influences on the process of determining human resource policies. The variables which we search their affects on HR policies includes : Changes in the international economy, changes in technology, changes in the national economy, national culture/traditions, industry/sector characteristics, legislation/regulation, actions of unions, actions of competitors, organizational mission/purpose, organizational strategy/objectives, actions of corporate headquarters, size of the organization, structure of the organization, history/traditions/past practice, priorities of top management, priorities of line managers, issues of power and politics, impact of HRM theory, research and writings, impact of education and training in HRM, impact of professional organizations, impact of an overall HRM strategy, and HRM staff's experiences in other organizations. We used Kane and Palmer's scale which they created in Australia in 1995.

We used SPSS statistical package programme for analyses of data. In the field research process we determined values of answers to survey from 1 to 5. In the first step of the evaluation we calculated the means and standard deviations. With the calculation of means and standard deviations we recognized the importance level of human resources management strategies on policies and implementations of HRM. We separated variables into three groups with respect to their means in order to determine whether HRM strategy reduces other factors influences or not. The

variables which have means between 3.5 – 5 are determined as the first group; the variables which have means between 2.51 – 3.49 are determined as the second group; and the variables which have means between 0 – 2,5 are determined as the third group. One way variance analyse (ANOVA) was used in other factors level of influence on HRM, in order to determine these three group's differentiation. We presented in what scale, an effective HRM strategy reduces other factors influences. The correlation between external factors and internal factors were searched. The correlation between organization's mission, organization's strategy and HRM strategy. The scale ranges from 1= no impact through to 5= great impact. The influences which are 3 or above represent high influences.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics About Influences On HRM

	Influences on HRM	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Standard Error
1.	Changes in the international economy	2,8276	1,4526	2,1101	0,19074
2.	Changes in technology	3,1379	1,4073	1,9806	0,18479
3.	Changes in the national economy	3,5172	1,3277	1,7628	0,17434
4.	National culture/traditions	2,6207	1,2680	1,6079	0,16650
5.	Industry/sector characteristics	3,5345	1,1427	1,3058	0,15005
6.	Legislation/regulation	4,000	0,9176	0,8421	0,12050
7.	Actions of unions	1,5690	1,0448	1,0916	0,13719
8.	Actions of competitors	3,1724	1,3395	1,7943	0,17589
9.	Organizational mission/purpose	3,9310	0,9887	0,9776	0,12983
10.	Organizational strategy/objectives	4,0690	0,9340	0,8723	0,12264
11.	Actions of corporate headquarters (if applicable)	4,2414	1,0312	1,0635	0,13541
12.	Size of the organization	4,2241	0,6500	0,4225	0,08536
13.	Structure of the organization	3,9138	1,0308	1,0626	0,13535
14.	History/traditions/past practice	3,1207	1,2852	1,6518	0,16876
15.	Priorities of top management	3,9310	1,1060	1,2232	0,14522
16.	Priorities of line managers	3,1897	1,3436	1,8055	0,17644
17.	Issues of power and politics	2,5172	1,4538	2,1137	0,19090
18.	Impact of HRM theory, research and writings	2,5172	1,2737	1,6225	0,16725
19.	Impact of education and training in HRM	2,8966	1,4227	2,0242	0,18682
20.	Impact of professional organisations	2,3621	1,3979	1,9543	0,18356
21.	Impact of an overall HRM strategy	2,8276	1,2444	1,5487	0,16341
22.	HRM staff's experiences in other organizations.	2,6552	1,2780	1,6333	0,16782

Results of Anova Tests

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Groups About Influences on HRM Strategy

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95%Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1,00	9	3,9291	0,25855	0,08618	3,7304	4,1278	3,52	4,24
2,00	11	2,8621	0,26251	0,07915	2,6857	3,0384	2,52	3,19
3,00	2	1,9646	0,56222	0,39755	-3,08668	7,0159	1,57	2,36
Total	22	3,2170	0,71137	0,15166	2,9016	3,5324	1,57	4,24

In first group there are nine variables which have means between 5.00 – 3.5. Mean of these nine variables is 3.929, standard deviation is 0.258. There are eleven variables in second group and their mean is 2.862, and standard deviation is 0.262. There are two variables in third group and their mean is 1.946 and standard deviation is 0.562.

Table 3: Results of ANOVA Test About Differences of Groups of Influences on HRM Strategy

	Sum of Squeres	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Groups	9,087	2	4,543	56,057	0,000
Within Groups	1,540	19	0,081		
Total	10,627	21			

According to F test results in .05 significiance level there is significant difference between groups. For this reason Post Hoc tests were implemented in order to determine which groups are different from each other.

Table 4: Multiple Comparisons (Results of Post Hoc Tests)

	(I) GRUP	(J) GRUP	Mean Dif- ference(I-J)	Standard Error	Significance	95%Confidence Interval	
						Lower B.	Upper B.
Tukey HSD	1,00	2,00	1,0670*	0,12796	0,000	0,7420	1,3921
		3,00	1,9646*	0,22256	0,000	1,3992	2,5300
	2,00	1,00	-1,0670*	0,12796	0,000	-1,3921	-0,7420
		3,00	0,8975*	0,21885	0,002	0,3416	1,4535
	3,00	1,00	-1,9646*	0,22256	0,000	-2,5300	-1,3992
		2,00	-0,8975*	0,21885	0,002	-1,4535	-0,3416

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Each three group is different from each other at .05 significance level.

4. Results And Conclusion

According to results of the research which was implemented in 58 firms, we can search the variables which influences HR policies in three groups. In first group there variables which has means between 3.51 and 5.00. These are: actions of corporate headquarters (4.24), size of the organization (4.22), organizational strategy/objectives (4.06), legislation/regulation (4.00), priorities of top management (3.93), organizational mission/purpose (3.93), structure of the organization (3.91), industry/sector characteristics (3.53), and changes in the national economy (3.51). In second group there are eleven variables which have average and low influences on human resources policies and which have means between 2.51 and 3.49. These are: priorities of line managers (3.18), actions of competitors (3.17), changes in technology (3.13), history/traditions/past practice (3.12), impact of education and training in HRM (2.89), changes in the international economy (2.82), impact of an overall HRM strategy (2.82), HRM staff's experiences in other organizations (2.65), national culture/traditions (2.62), issues of power and politics (2.51), and impact of HRM theory, research and writings (2.51). In third group there two variables which have means between 0 and 2.5 and which have very low or no influences on HRM policies. These are: impact of professional organizations (2.36) and actions of unions (1.56).

General HRM strategy, literature, training and education on this subject has too low influences on HRM policies.

When we search on correlation table we determined these correlations at .01 significance level: Between influence of changes in national economy and influence changes in international economy (.629; .000); between influence of industry/sector characteristics and influence of changes in national economy (.647; .000); between influence of organizational strategy/objectives and influence of organizational mis-

sion/purpose (.917; .000); between influence of structure of organization and influence of size of the organization (.632, .000); between impact of HRM theory, research and writings and impact of power and politics (.573; .000); between impact of education and training in HRM and between impact of HRM theory, research and writings (.698; .000); between impact of overall HRM strategy and impact of organizational mission/purpose (.532; .000); between influence of HRM staff's experiences in other organizations and impact of an overall HRM strategy (.646; .000); there is high, significant and positive correlation.

When we analyse correlation table in order to determine the correlation between internal and external factors we find these results: At .01 significance level there is positive and almost high correlation ; between organizational mission/purpose and changes in technology (.462; .000); and changes in national economy (.455; .000). Also at .01 significance level there is positive and almost high correlation between organizational strategy/objectives and changes in technology (.460; .001); and changes in the national economy (.409; .000). There is positive correlation between actions of corporate headquarters and influence of legislation/regulation at .01 significance level (.352; .07). At .05 significance level; there is significant, positive correlation between influence of size of the organization and influence of organizational mission/purpose (.27; .04) and actions of corporate headquarters (.284; .031); and at .01 significance level between organizational strategy/objectives (.35; .007).

The main finding from this research which was limited with 58 enterprises is the level of influence of general HRM is low and it is not a major factor in the process of determination of HR policies. In the enterprises which are in the research extent, HRM strategy is not effective in the process of determination of HRM policies and the main reason for this; in these enterprises strategic approach is not appropriated in general, or as a overall policy, in their departments and functions.

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