

## AN EVALUATION ON THE PERSONNEL SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THIRD PARTY LOGISTICS COMPANIES IN TURKEY: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Didem ÖZER ÇAYLAN\*  
Ramazan ÖZKAN YILDIZ\*\*

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to evaluate the current and new criteria for selecting human resources in Turkish logistics companies. Research methodology includes the semi structured interview technique with seven open ended questions. Respondents are twenty four representatives of Turkish logistics companies from Istanbul, Izmir and Mersin.

Research findings indicate that the knowledge, experience, language (especially English), team working abilities, relationship management and communication skills are still significant and valid criteria and also they are directly related to the job. In addition to those qualifications, study shows that personnel in the third party logistics companies must have cultural awareness, easy adaptation to changes, analytical and innovative thinking, and acquisition of competency-focused logistics education.

This paper has the potential to contribute to evaluating the importance of main and new criteria when selecting personnel to third party logistics companies and considering the “knowledge- skill-attitude- competency” perspective of human resource management in logistics industry. In addition, the study findings might give new qualitative and quantitative research questions to academicians about selection and recruitment process of the logistics companies.

**Key Terms:** Third Party Logistics Company, Personnel Selection Criteria, Semi Structured Interview

## TÜRKİYE’DEKİ ÜÇÜNCÜ TARAF LOJİSTİK İŞLETMELERİN PERSONEL SEÇİM KRİTERLERİ ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’deki lojistik işletmelerinin iş gücü seçimi için mevcut ve yeni kriterlerin değerlendirilmesini yapmaktır. Araştırma yöntemi yedi adet açık uçlu sorudan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniğini içermektedir. Katılımcılar, İstanbul, İzmir ve Mersin’de bulunan Lojistik işletmelerinden alanında uzman 24 temsilcidir.

Araştırma bulguları; bilgi, deneyim, dil (özellikle İngilizce), takım çalışması, ilişki yönetimi ve iletişim becerilerinin hala önemli ve geçerli kriterler olduğunu ve aynı zamanda iş ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu niteliklere ek olarak, çalışma üçüncü taraf lojistik işletmelerinin personellerinin; kültürel farkındalık değişikliklere kolay uyum, analitik ve yenilikçi düşünme ve yetkinlik - odaklı lojistik eğitime sahip olmaları gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Bu çalışmanın, üçüncü taraf lojistik işletmelerinde personel seçimi sırasında önemli olan temel ve yeni kriterleri, insan kaynakları yönetiminin lojistik sektörü içerisinde "bilgi - beceri – tutum – yetkinlik" perspektifinde ele alması açısından katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir. İlave olarak çalışma bulguları akademisyenlere lojistik işletmelerinin seçme ve yerleştirme süreçleri ile ilgili yeni nitel ve nicel araştırma soruları verebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Üçüncü Taraf Lojistik İşletmesi, Personel Seçim Kriterleri, Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme

\* Asst. Prof. Dr. Dokuz Eylül University, Maritime Faculty, Department of Maritime Business Administration Tınaztepe Campus, 35160 Buca, Izmir, Turkey, E-mail: didem.ozer@deu.edu.tr

\*\* Res. Asst., Dokuz Eylül University, Maritime Faculty, Department of Maritime Business Administration, Tınaztepe Campus, 35160 Buca, Izmir, Turkey, E-mail: ramazanozkan\_yildiz@hotmail.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's international and competitive business world, sustainable competitive advantage is the vital factor for success of the companies. The human resources have a significant role to develop this kind of competitive advantage through using workforce efficiently and effectively. Qualified workforce is a competitive power for international companies and the ability of those companies to effectively compete in the global marketplace is contingent on identifying and selecting an adequate number of qualified personnel.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to evaluate the current criteria of selecting human resources in Turkish logistics companies, and (2) to find out new personnel selection criteria. To reach these objectives, first of all, logistics and third party logistics companies were defined. And then, human resource management and personnel selection of the logistics companies were explained making the best possible use of the literature survey. After the literature review to reach the objectives, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted through representatives of certain logistics companies. The results of the interview questions were evaluated thoroughly. Those results provide valuable information to students, logistics educators, recruitment companies, candidates for logistics positions and logistics company owners/managers. Each related group may benefit from the study considering the current and new selection criteria from the viewpoint of the "knowledge- skill- attitude- competency" perspective of human resource management.

## 2. LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT AND THIRD PARTY LOGISTICS COMPANIES

Logistics management is a part of the supply chain management; plans, implements, and controls the efficient, effective forward and reverses flow and storage of goods, services and related information between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet customers' requirements (CSCMP, 2015). It is about

getting things to where they need to be, but is much broader than transportation (Long, 2003). Logistics means mainly the organized movement of goods, services, and sometimes people (Wood, et al., 2002; 1). Logistics is critical to the success of every organization. Once considered as important, behind-the-scenes operational activity, logistics is now recognized as a strategic tool for creating customer value and loyalty (CLM, 1998).

Logistics companies are also third party logistics service providers that create value for their customers- especially for manufacturing companies. Third-party logistics is simply the use of an outside company to perform all logistics activities or part of the firm's materials management and product distribution function (Simchi-Levi, et al. 2000).

Third party logistics services are multiple distribution activities provided by an external party, assuming no ownership of inventory, to accomplish related functions that are not desired to be rendered and/or managed by the purchasing organization (Sink, et al. 1996). A relationship between a shipper and third party which, compared with basic services, has more customized offerings, encompasses a broader number of service functions and is characterized by a longer-term, more mutually beneficial relationship (Murphy and Poist, 1998; Papadapoulou, 2001).

Third party logistics service providers are also in the international industry. International means that it deals with transactions involving individuals or firms in more than one nation (Wood, et al., 2002; 1). All the procedures, regulations, relations and applications related with the logistics take place in the international trade market. Differences in this international market make the logistics processes difficult to manage. At this time, logistics companies start to give more importance to human resource management.

### **3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN LOGISTICS INDUSTRY**

Logistics management activities typically include inbound and outbound transportation management, fleet management, warehousing, materials handling, order

fulfillment, logistics network design, inventory management, supply/demand planning, and management of third party logistics services providers. To varying degrees, the logistics function also includes sourcing and procurement, production planning and scheduling, packaging and assembly, and customer service. It is involved in all levels of planning and execution- strategic, operational and tactical. Logistics management is an integrating function, which coordinates and optimizes all logistics activities, as well as integrates logistics activities with other functions including marketing, sales manufacturing, finance, and information technology (CSCMP, 2015). In this complex and international industry, it is obvious that well-educated, qualified and also experienced personnel are a need for logistics companies to sustain their commercial life and gain competitive advantage.

Barney and Wright (1998) suggest that “particular attention should be given to the human capital resources within organizations that are necessary for the supply chain to function effectively and achieve competitive advantage”. With the similar thoughts, Keller and Ozment (2009) states that “considering the significance of transportation and logistics to domestic and global economies, and to the execution of supply chain strategies across industries, research pertaining to personnel in the discipline continues to increase in importance”.

The way the third party logistics service providers manage the relationship to its customers and handle effects on the total network of relationships will be of basic importance for their strategic edge on the market. To develop skills, competencies, and gain scale/scope advantages that are superior to customers will be necessary in order to add customer value (Hertz and Alfredsson, 2003:139). The skills and knowledge of individual employees can be leveraged to increase the ability to efficiently and effectively produce market offerings and enhance firm performance. The “*people dimension*” is especially pertinent for the logistics companies to achieve most of its objectives (Hunt, 2000; van Hoek, et al. 2002; Hashim, 2013). Focusing on this dimension, Chun and Yanping (2006:797) states that “the logistics industry has its own features, so, it’s necessary to combine the peculiarity of the industry while establishing competency model in the logistics enterprises and identify that the human resource is the important resource to achieve the competitive advantages for the logistics

enterprises whatever to do with the operational system, operational process, customers services, sales, they are all done by *<people>*”.

The employers indicate that communications and analytical skills are a requirement for all occupation categories across all sub-functions. Other common skill requirements include technology, interpersonal and customer service skills. But, a review of the major human resources challenges in the 3PL sector reveals a limited pool of skilled employees and the need to develop skill sets to cope with emerging technologies and a global marketplace (CLSC, 2005). In addition, the sector must overcome a general lack of awareness and understanding of the supply chain sector and its occupations (Haas, et al., 2002). In order for the sector to attract, develop and retain the talent it requires, it must compete for attention in an environment where other sectors and industries have already, or are about to, initiate awareness and recruitment campaigns to address their talent shortage (CLSC, 2005).

#### **4. PERSONNEL SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THIRD PARTY LOGISTICS COMPANIES**

Human resource researchers and managers need to devote attention to supply chain management, because, increasingly, opportunities for competitive advantage rest in managing people within and between firms in supply chain relationships (Ketchen and Hult, 2007; Fisher, et al, 2010:813). Globalization, lead time reductions, customer orientation, and outsourcing are some major changes contributing to this attention in logistics. Integration of the supply chain has also become an important way for logistics companies to gain competitive advantage. As a result, the role of logistics providers is changing both in content and in complexity. New firms from different fields are entering the market competing with the traditional transport and warehousing firms. This situation raises the importance of personnel selection of logistics companies (Hertz and Alfredsson, 2003). And also, the growth of logistics outsourcing, the level of competition within the 3PL industry and the high demand for

qualified logistics talent each, impact the hiring process and create a challenging recruiting environment (Gibson and Cook, 2001).

The logistics industry covers a wide range of industry sectors and jobs. The industry provides transport and services to all industry sectors including mining, fishing, forestry, agriculture, processing, manufacturing, warehousing, retailing, tourism and construction. Logistics jobs can be found in all sizes of business ranging from small to medium enterprises through to large multi-national and transnational companies (Griffith University, 2013). In this wide range of industry, each company has its own unique personality and culture; “fit” can be difficult to achieve. Additionally, skills needed change over time. This is certainly true within logistics (Myers, et al. 2004). Earlier research on logistics skill requirements classified skills into three broad categories: business skills, logistics skills, and management skills (Murphy and Poist, 1991; Murphy and Poist, 2007; Thai, et al., 2011:554). Both the business and logistics skills dealt with functional knowledge, i.e., knowledge of transportation, information systems, finance, marketing, etc. Therefore, the recruiting is taken very seriously by logistics companies. They look for competent college graduates who possess (Johnson, et al., 1999):

- A bachelor’s degree in transportation, logistics, engineering, or a related discipline.
- Strong human relations and communications skills, since contact with people in a variety of occupations are an integral part of the program.
- The ability to make decisions quickly and independently.
- The desire to build a successful career in one of the challenging areas.

Employees also identify another set of skills that they feel they require in order to be successful in their jobs. These skills and knowledge include (OSU SCMRG, 2003): Financial planning, forecasting, cost analysis, knowledge of international business practices, knowledge of laws and regulations, knowledge of logistics functions and the supply chain, mechanical skills, optimization of workflow, knowledge of transportation, general management and business, languages.

According to report of AGCAS (2012) skills that employers look for in the logistics and transport sector include; good communication (written and verbal);

teamwork skills; analytical problem solving skills; ability to multitask; ability to work under pressure; customer service skills; people management skills; good organizational and planning skills. From the broader perspective, managerial capabilities listed by Dischinger, et al. (2006) such as people skills, social skills, coordination, change management, communication, decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, time management, and cultural skills are important for supply chain professionals. They believe that a true SCM professional must have skills and capabilities in the five areas: (1) functional, (2) technical, (3) leadership, (4) global management, and (5) experience and credibility.

Additionally, logistics training is valuable for individuals who hope to work for logistics companies because it gives them a better understanding of customer's needs. Logistics companies also desired new employees to understand inventory modeling and control, distribution resource planning, materials requirements planning, electronic data interchange, and bar-coding systems (Johnson, et al., 1999).

## **5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Selection and hiring decisions are often made based upon different knowledge, skills, and abilities (Cochran, et al, 2003) required for a specific job. Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are assumed to be predictors of success on the job. Personnel decisions are also frequently based upon training and experience evaluations (McDaniel, et al, 1988; Myers, et al. 2004). The complete practitioner of business logistics and supply chain management needs skills and competencies, as SCM requires coordination skills and ability to adapt to special situations (Gammelgaard and Larson, 2001). All these make it imperative that certain criteria should be pursued while making decisions in selecting and hiring personnel. Those decision criteria for personnel selection define the motivation of this research.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the current and new criteria for logistics companies in Turkey for personnel selection and hiring as well as their perspectives about human resources management. The semi-structured interview technique has been chosen as a methodology. This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that allows a respondent the time and scope to

talk about their opinions on a particular subject (Sociology Central, 2015; RAND, 2009:67). Newton (2010) states the following reasons to choose interviewing methods: a) It provides the opportunity to generate rich data; b) Language used by participants is considered essential in gaining insight into their perceptions and values; c) Contextual and relational aspects are seen as significant in understanding others' perceptions; d) Data generated can be analyzed in different ways. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) focuses on the advantage of the question type in the method and explains that “the inclusion of open-ended questions to follow relevant topics that may stray from the interview guide does, however, still provide the opportunity for identifying new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand”

Seven open-ended questions have been developed within the framework of what third party logistics providers in Turkey basically deal with. In order to assess these questions, a semi- structured interview has been conducted. A questionnaire consisting of those questions regarding the current and new criteria for selecting personnel for Turkish third party logistics firms have been used. The questions have been developed from the information gained from secondary data sources. A nominal scale including “Yes”, “No ” or “unable to comment” has been used for each question. In addition to those short answers, a blank space has been allowed for the participants in order to explain their opinions in the case of either “agreement” or “disagreement” with the related question. The questionnaire has been tested with the three of the participants in December, 2014. After that, tested interview questionnaire was sent to respondents through the e-mails and their answers were received between January and September, 2015.

Twenty-four individual participants from twenty-two logistics companies based in Istanbul, Izmir and Mersin have agreed to get involved in the research process. The selection criteria for involving the participants (who, because of their position, activities or responsibilities have a good understanding of the problem to be explored) in the process have been: having an active career in third-party logistics industry for at least one year; having a managerial role within the third-party logistics firm, being an easy access and being willing to participate such a semi-structure interview study. Eight of the respondents involved were top managers, six of them were human



resources representatives and the others were from managers of their sales and operation departments. Three of them have over ten year-experience. Six companies for which the participants work were founded after the year 2010. Seven companies have over one hundred personnel and the others have below that number.(See Table 1).

**Table 1. Profile of Respondents**

	Title of the Respondents	Experience of the Respondents (Years)	Companies' Foundation year	Companies' Head Office in Turkey	No. of Personnel in the Company
1	CO-FOUNDER	14	2002	İSTANBUL	13
2	CO-OWNER	8	2008	İZMİR	26
3	GENERAL MANAGER	3	2012	İSTANBUL	16
4	GENERAL MANAGER	7	2009	İZMİR	40
5	GENERAL MANAGER	17	2011	İSTANBUL	61
6	GENERAL MANAGER	6	2009	İSTANBUL	7
7	GENERAL MANAGER	11	2007	İZMİR	11
8	İZMİR BRANCH MANAGER	2	N/A	İSTANBUL	140
9	PROCESS DEVELOPMENT AND HR MANAGER	5	2011	İZMİR	25
10	HR MANAGER	12	2011	İZMİR	1200
11	HR MANAGER	10	2002	MERSİN	150
12	HR GENERALIST	4	2013	İSTANBUL	500
13	HR SPECIALIST	3	1990	İSTANBUL	90
14	HR MANAGER	13	1990	İSTANBUL	90
15	SALES MANAGER	3	N/A	İZMİR	50
16	PROJECT AND MARKETING CHIEF	3	1998	İSTANBUL	3500
17	SALES REPRESENTATIVE	3	2009	İSTANBUL	25
18	MARKETING VISE MANAGER	5	2008	İSTANBUL	35
19	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	4,5	1999	İZMİR	30
20	SALES MANAGER	3	2013	İSTANBUL	20
21	DISTRICT SALES MANAGER	3	1995	İZMİR	750
22	MARBLE OPERATION EXPERT	2	1943	İSTANBUL	300
23	SHIP OPERATION MANAGER	3	N/A	İZMİR	60
24	AIR CARGO OPERATION MANAGER	4	2011	İSTANBUL	120

## 6. THE EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The results collected through the interview have been studied in three parts as indicated in Table 2 through Table 8:

- 1) Number of short answers,
- 2) Content analysis of the key terms that the participants focused on, and

3) Related comments that were important to explain the question in a wide range.

**Table 2. Results of the First Question**

Question 1: Do you think that the <i>international nature of logistics</i> industry increases the importance given to human resources?		Key Terms that the respondents focused on.
Number of Short answers		
Yes	21	- Language
No	2	- Investment in education
No Comment	1	- Communication skills
Total Comments	23	- Versatility
		- Attitudes of the candidates
		- Standardization
		- Different cultures

In the first part of the semi-structured interview, there is a consensus about the effect of the international nature of logistics industry on the increased importance to human resources. Language, investment in education and communication skills was cited more times than all the other key terms summed together. When considering the relevant literature, this result is not unexpected. However, it is also important that versatility, standardization, attitudes of candidates and different cultures are frequently pointed out by respondents. Some of these key terms are reflected through the following excerpts from the answers of the respondents:

- Versatility: “.....*due to the interconnected phases as a result of the nature of the work, all employees are affected by the work of one another and they have to know, understand and learn the entire process from A to Z.....*”
- Education: “.....*Employees who are open to development become competent and wanted in their areas regardless of their level of education. From this perspective, employees have a huge impact on the success in logistics industry.....*” and “....*As the area of activity of our industry and the level of its importance cannot be conveyed sufficiently at, for example, high school career days, the employees have information only after they begin working in the industry.....*”
- Attitudes of the candidates: “.....*That logistics school graduates always want to see themselves at manager positions or top levels in the office is the reason of the shortage of intermediate staff..... The frequent change of job and the resulting*

*inability to make long-term career planning both by the employees and the companies are indicators that we are still an unsettled industry....”*

- Communication Skills: “.....*International communication requires competent and experienced personnel.....”*
- Cultural Differences: “....*Logistics sector includes customers and branches from different countries and cultures. So, the qualified personnel is important in this international area.....”*
- Standardization: “..... *Doing the logistics business at the international level brings the standardization together.....”*
- Language: “.....*I believe that people working in this sector must have adequate level of foreign language and good communication skills.....”*

**Table 3. Results of the Second Question**

Question 2: Do you think that the <i>human resources infrastructure</i> of logistics companies in Turkey is sufficient?		
Number of Short answers		Key terms that the respondents focused on.
Yes	2	- The effect of institutionalism
No	19	- Having a Human Resources department
No Comment	3	- The adequacy of education institutes and universities
Total Comments	21	- Investment in education
		- Experiential learning
		- Language

The responses to the second question of the semi-structured interview reveal that the respondents involved believed that the human resources infrastructure of logistics companies in Turkey is insufficient. Most cited answers focus on “the effect of institutionalism” and “having a Human Resources department”. They think that infrastructure is related with the <organization>. Participants also comment that the construction of the HR infrastructure depends on the pursuit of effective learning, the investment in education and adequacy of the education institutions and universities. Some excerpts from the statements are as follows:

- The effect of institutionalism: “.....*School graduates first prefer bigger companies, and they overlook and hence miss the opportunity to learn more at small and medium-sized companies and make progress. Of course they prefer bigger companies due to such reasons as small but safe and fully paid insurance etc.....”* and

“.... Logistics companies in Turkey are still at the stage of disclaiming their “transportation company” identity. The speed of developing human resources of these companies which are trying to complete institutional transformation not only in human resources but in all functions is slower than the pace of change in the logistics industry....” In addition, “.....Human Resources are managed by persons with necessary qualifications in more institutionalized companies, but in small and medium size companies the departments are headed by persons with no HR capabilities; for this reason I do not think that human resources infrastructure of logistics companies in Turkey is sufficient.....”

- Having a Human Resources department: “.....We do not see many human resources departments in the forwarder industry. This is because there are very few education institutions which train expert personnel, and the managers want to make final decision about the employee to recruit. Other works traditionally done by human resources departments are usually undertaken by accounting departments or manager assistants....”
- The adequacy of education institutions and universities: “..... Inadequacy of the education institutions and universities points out the insufficiency of human resources infrastructure in logistics....”
- Experiential learning: “....experiential learning process of students is insufficient and a lack of practical information accordingly....”
- Language: “.....most of the students have very limited ability to use language....”

**Table 4. Results of the Third Question**

Question 3: Does the <i>specialization</i> (textile transportation, cold chain etc.) of logistics companies affect decisions in selecting employees?		Key Terms that the respondents focused on.
Number of Short answers		
Yes	18	- Field specific competencies - Type of cargo and also services - Geographical differences - Need for foreign language - Niche markets - Know- how
No	4	
No Comment	2	
Total Comments	22	

The results of the responses to the third question in the interview reveal that field-specific competencies, cargo types and geographical differences are cited by all

the company members involved. And there are some answers explaining the disagreement of the respondents. But most of the participants agree that the specialization is an effective criterion when selecting personnel. Some extracts from the relevant responses are as follows:

- Geographical differences: “...*Not for all employees, but this is an important criterion for choosing key employees. For example, seeking Arabic as a second language in the employees of companies which dominantly transport to Middle Eastern countries....*”
- Types of Cargo and also Services: “.... *Recruiting employees in the industry is mostly concentrated on the type of service on which the candidate is specialized instead of the type of cargo carried. Such as road, air, and sea, railroad or project transportation...*”
- Know-how: “....*In our company, education, capability, personal trait, communication skill and experience of the candidates are taken into consideration first....*”
- Need for foreign language: “.....*if not possible to find specialized personnel, we choose personnel who work with us in the long term, have one or more foreign language and highly educated.....*”
- Niche market: “.....*textile transportation, cold chain, etc. still a niche market for logistics sector. So, the qualified personnel is a need for those markets.....*”

**Table 5. Results of the Fourth Question**

<b>Question 4:</b> Do you think that the first criterion that logistics companies give importance in choosing employees is the level of <i>foreign language</i> ?		
<b>Number of Short answers</b>		<b>Key Terms that the respondents focused on.</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient language training</li> <li>- National /International market</li> <li>- Customer relations/ communication</li> <li>- Second foreign language</li> <li>- Language: more important than sector experience</li> </ul>
No	2	
<i>No Comment</i>	0	
Total Comments	24	

The language problem is pointed out through the responses to the first three questions. In the responses to the fourth question, there is also a consensus about the

importance of foreign language, especially English. The other comments to this question appear to illustrate that the respondents have understood the importance of the foreign language because of the customer relations and communication skills. Those comments that the respondents made about the fourth question are as follows;

- Insufficient language training: “.....*We see that the level of foreign language of candidates graduated from logistics departments is not sufficient.....*” and “.....*Indeed, we offer the recent graduates of logistics departments to work with us. But the fact that their foreign language is not sufficient urges us to employ candidates graduated from different departments with better foreign language competency.....*”
- National /International market: “.....*More precisely, in international logistics companies, level of foreign language is an important criterion, but in national logistics companies this is not seen as a critical factor.....*”
- Customer relations/ communication: “.....*Foreign language is an employment criterion which is needed by every company. The international area of business of logistics industry and high level of relations with foreign countries makes seeking foreign language knowledge imperative.....*”
- Second foreign language: “.....*because of the geographical differences, second foreign language is vital for competitive and international companies....*” and “.....*English is a must but people who have more than one foreign language are one step further than the other candidates....*”

**Table 6. Results of the Fifth Question**

<b>Question 5:</b> Do you think that the <i>experience</i> of candidates in logistics industry is no more a criterion for recruiting?		
<b>Number of Short answers</b>		<b>Key terms that the respondents focused on.</b>
Yes	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience is important when thinking competition, time and risk</li> <li>- On the job/ in-company training</li> <li>- Specialization</li> <li>- Experience versus education</li> <li>- Importance of time on duty</li> <li>- Differences between the positions and titles</li> </ul>
<b>No</b>	<b>20</b>	
<i>No Comment</i>	<i>1</i>	
Total Comments	23	

Twenty of the respondents agree that the experience of candidates is still valid criterion for recruiting. One of the reasons behind this consensus is competition in the

market, time and risk for company sustainability. Some other comments that probably best illustrate the importance of the experience are as follows;

- On the job/ in-company training : “.....*Shortage of specialized employees in the industry and wage policies of the companies increased recruiting <personnel for training on the job> but companies will always be in need of <experienced staff> and especially for some positions this will be a very critical criterion.....*”
- Specialization: “..... *Logistics is a branch of business which is “case” based, where experience is considered important and networking transferred with experience is greatly used. For this reason, industry-specific experience of candidates, especially product or market specialization, is still important as a decision-making criterion.....*” and “..... *Although the opposite is expected under normal conditions, due to the tendency to employ low-cost employees, an environment has been created in the market where experienced staff is not given the value that they deserve.....*”
- Experience versus education: “.....*Experience is always important in our industry. However, if you are graduated from a university which offers logistics education, you have higher chances of starting work even if you have little experience.....*”
- Differences between the positions and titles: “..... *In logistics sector, every position and title requires different levels of education and experience....*”

**Table 7. Results of the Sixth Question**

Question 6: Do you think that the schools which candidates are graduated from and their <i>level of education</i> is a secondary important criterion considered by logistics companies during recruiting?		Key terms that the respondents focused on.
Number of Short answers		
Yes	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diploma: Indicator for the ability to success</li> <li>- First of all, experience and personality of the candidate</li> <li>- The statement “ to be trained”</li> <li>- Differences in job positions</li> <li>- Untutored personnel versus educated personnel</li> </ul>
<b>No</b>	<b>13</b>	
<i>No Comment</i>	5	
Total Comments	19	

The analysis of the responses to the sixth question shows that some of the respondents agree that “the schools which candidates are graduated from and their

level of education is a secondary important criterion” while some do not. It can be stated that this question has reached the partial consensus. Some of these contradictory comments are as follows:

- Indicator for the ability to success: “.....Schools that the candidate is graduated from and their level of education give considerable opinion about the capability of the candidate. I think that these parameters should never be given the backseat in the recruiting process.....”
- Experience and personality: “.....Experience and personality suitable for the industry are much more important factors than the school of graduation.....”
- Statement <to be trained>: “.....I agree that everyone who can speak English and have an interest in logistics industry, and can express themselves is employed for training.....”
- Differences in job positions: “....Every company gives importance to level of education. But positions and titles differentiate the degree of importance to graduation....”
- Untutored versus educated personnel: “.... Well educated personnel and professionals takes places of untutored logistics professionals. So, the level of education does not have secondary importance....”

**Table 8. Results of the Seventh Question**

Question 7: Do you think that planning, organization, team work, human resources, creativity, diction and appearance are among the most important characteristics sought in candidates? Would you add any other qualifications?		
Number of Short answers		Key Terms that the respondents focused on.
Yes, I Agree	20	- Team working
No, I disagree	4	- Communication skills
No Comment	0	- Technical knowledge and skills
Total Comments	24	- Difficulties when evaluating the applications
		- Creativity / talented candidates
		- Position- specific criteria

Almost all the comments made about this question agree on two points: 1) recruitment criteria is important in accordance with the title and position of the job, and 2) it is difficult to find all the qualifications at the same candidate. Besides, most



of the responses focus on “team working”, “communication skills” and “technical knowledge and skills”. Some of the excerpts from the responses as follow:

- Difficulties when evaluating the applications: “.....*These qualifications are certainly among the reasons for preference and they have to be found in every employee, but due to the weaknesses in correct measurement techniques or professional HR evaluation processes real results are seen more clearly after employment.....*”
- Creativity / talented candidates: “.....*Qualifications along with creativity are among the basic qualifications which are sought for almost every position. From time to time, creativity can give advantage to the candidate even in very routine works.....*”
- Position- specific criteria: “.....*Different personal characteristics are needed depending on the position. A personal trait needed for a position may create problem for another task.....*”

The second part of the question asked for the criteria that the respondents would add as new. Those are; (1) Analytical thinking, (2) high motivation, (3) compliance with corporate culture, (4) tendency to working hard, (5) keeping peace at work, (6) preventing the disruption of work, (7) protecting the profitability of company. Analysis of the responses to the last question of the semi-structured interview reveals the attitudes of the candidates that the companies take into account.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Logistics activities performed by third party logistics companies in the global and competitive world include: transporting, warehousing, managing inventory, packaging, materials handling, and managing logistics information. This paper attempts to illustrate the importance of human resources in this logistics industry and to evaluate the current personnel selection criteria for third party logistics companies in Turkey and their comments about the new qualifications that are important for the future selection decisions. To reach the objectives, a series of semi-structured interviews are used as a research methodology. The study reflects the valuable

comments from 24 respondents of different managerial positions in 22 logistics companies.

Review of the current subjected literature reveals that; language, knowledge, investment in education, experience, relationship management and communication skills are key criteria in the perspective of personnel selection in logistics firms. The findings gathered through the interviews support this fact. In addition, those criteria are directly related to the job descriptions and responsibilities. There are some other concepts also that have come up with the research related with the subject and these are as follows; versatility, standardization, institutionalism, experiential learning, attitude, field specific competencies, talent and cultural differences.

The consensus obtained with the research that the human resources infrastructure of logistics companies in Turkey is insufficient and universities play key role about logistics human resources infrastructure of Turkey.

Furthermore, specialization, experience and especially English language competency are vital criterion when selecting personnel because the sector is very competitive and the firms must stand against the market with quick responds. The results of this research carried out through 3PL representatives suggest that personnel in the logistics companies must have cultural awareness, easy adaptation to changes, analytical and innovative thinking, and competency focused logistics education.

“Right person for the right job” concept is very important for logistics companies during their selection processes. In that issue by implementing a job analysis, the job descriptions of the logistics personnel can be generated and that will be a considerable contribution to the sector and it will be a wise addition to the literature.

In this study, there are some limitations related with the semi-structured interview method. It only evaluates the qualitative comments from the logistics industry. Future studies could include empirical researches, data collection methods for quantitative results and also case studies. Further researches could also explore;

- The recruitment process of personnel from different positions, titles and departments.
- Linkages between the cultural differences and recruitment decisions.

- Relation between national and international dimensions of personnel selection.
- Measurement of consistency from the point of job advertises to results of the selection process.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to thank the respondents of the semi-structured interview and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions to improve the quality of the paper. In addition, the authors would like to extend their sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Mustafa KALKAN, who have willingly helped them out with his valuable comments and guidance.

## REFERENCES

- AGCAS- The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (2012) Industry insight-Transport and logistics, [www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/pdfs/sectors/Transport\\_and\\_logistics\\_2012.pdf](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/pdfs/sectors/Transport_and_logistics_2012.pdf), UK. (20.11.2015)
- Ahn, Y. and McLean, G. N. (2008) Competencies for Port and Logistics Personnel: An Application of Regional Human Resource Development, Asia Pacific Education Review, Vol.9, No.4, 542-551, Education Research Institute, Korea.
- Barney, J. B., and Wright, P. M. (1998). On becoming a strategic partner: The role of human resources in gaining competitive advantage. *Human Resource Management*, 37(1), 31–46.
- Chun, Y. and Yanping,, L. (2006) The study on the Human Resource Management of the Logistics Enterprises Based On the Competency Model, International Conference on Management and Supply Chain, Pp. 795-801, Orient Academic Forum, Sydney – Australia, ISBN : 0-646-46423-X
- CLM-Council of Logistics Management (1998) Careers in Logistics. Booklet, Illinois, USA.  
<http://academic.rcc.edu/logisticsmanagement/PDF/Careers%20In%20Logistics%20by%20CSCMP.pdf> (15.12.2015)
- CLSC-Canadian Logistics Skills Committee (2005), Strategic Human Resources Study of The Supply Chain Sector Final Report-2005,

[http://www.supplychaincanada.org/assets/CLSC\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.supplychaincanada.org/assets/CLSC_full_report.pdf),  
Ontario – Canada. (10.12.2015)

Cochran, C.C., Carter, G.W. and Dorsey, D.W. (2003) Identifying Career Paths: A Review Of The Literature, Technical Report No. 435, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Minnesota – USA

Cohen, D and Crabtree B. (2006) Qualitative Research Guidelines Project. July 2006.  
<http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html> (11.11.2015)

Cooke, F.L., Shen J. and McBride, A. (2005), Outsourcing HR as a Competitive Strategy? A Literature Review and an Assessment of Implications. Human Resource Management, 44, 4, 413–432.

CSCMP-Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (2015) CSCMP’s Definition of Logistics Management, <https://cscmp.org/about-us/supply-chain-management-definitions>, (25.12.2015)

Dischinger, J., Closs, D. J., McCulloch, E., Speier, C., Grenoble W., and Marshall, D. (2006), The Emerging Supply Chain Management Profession, Supply Chain Management Review, 1st January 2006, [www.scmr.com](http://www.scmr.com)

Fisher, S.L., Graham M.E., Vachon, S. and Vereewcke, A. (2010) Guest Editor’s Note : Don’t Miss The Boat : Research On HRM and Supply Chains, Human Resource Management , Vol .49, No.5, Pp. 813-828, Wiley Online Library, Wiley Periodicals, DOI: 10.1002/hrm.20386.

Gammelgaard, B. and Larson, P.D. (2001) Logistics Skills and Competencies for Supply Chain Management, Journal of Business Logistics, Vol.22, No.2, Pp. 27-50, Wiley Online Library, Wiley Periodicals.

Gibson B. J. and Cook, R.L.(2001), Hiring practices in US third-party logistics firms, International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, Vol. 31 Iss 10 pp. 714 – 732.

Griffith University (2013) Career options: Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Careers and Employment Service, [https://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/507148/Logisitcs.pdf](https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/507148/Logisitcs.pdf), Brisbane – Australia. (12.12.2015)

Haas, R., Falkner K. and Tighe. S. (2002). Canadian Transportation Education and Training Needs: A University Perspective. Ottawa: Transportation

Association of Canada's Transportation Education and Training Workshop. University of Waterloo, Ontario – Canada.

- Hashim, F. (2013) The critical review on human resource competencies of third party logistic (3PL) companies by service users. In: 2nd International Conference on Technology, Management, Business and Entrepreneurship-2013 (ICTMBE 2013), 4-5 December 2013, Melaka, Malaysia.
- Hertz, S. and Alfredsson, M. (2003), Strategic Development of Third Party Logistics Providers, *Journal of Industrial Marketing Management*, 32, pp: 139-149. Elsevier Science, North-Holland.
- Hunt, S.D. (2000), *A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competences, Productivity, Economic Growth*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., p. 187.
- Johnson, J.C., Wood D. F., Wardlow D. and Murphy P.R. (1999) *Contemporary Logistics 7th Edition*, New Jersey – USA: Prentice-Hall.
- Keller, S. B. Ozment, J. (2009), Research on personnel issues published in leading logistics journals, *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, Vol. 20, Iss 3, pp. 378 – 407. DOI 10.1108/ 09574090911002832
- Ketchen, D. J., and Hult, G. T. M. (2007). Bridging organization theory and supply chain management: The case of best value supply chains. *Journal of Operations Management*, 25(2), 573–580.
- Long, D. (2003) *International Logistics: Global Supply Chain Management*, New York City – USA: Springer.
- McDaniel, M. A., Schmidt, F.L. and Hunter, J.E. (1988), Job Experience Correlates of Job Performance, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 73, No. 2, pp. 327-330.
- Murphy, P.R. and Poist R.F. (1991), Skill Requirements of Senior-Level Logistics Executives: An Empirical Assessment, *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 73-94.
- Murphy, P.R. and Poist, R.F. (1998). Third-Party Logistics Usage: An Assessment of Propositions Based on Previous Research, *Transportation Journal*, Summer, pp. 26-35.

- Murphy P.R. and Poist, R.F. (2007) Skill requirements of senior-level logisticians: a longitudinal assessment, *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, Vol.12, No.6, Pp. 423-431, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley – UK, DOI : 10.1108/13598540710826353
- Myers, M.B., Griffith, D.A., Daugherty, P.J. and Lusch, R.F. (2004) Maximizing The Human Capital Equation In Logistics: Education, Experience, And Skills, *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol.25, No.1, Pp. 211-232, Wiley Online Library, Wiley Periodicals
- Newton, Nigel (2010) The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews, Exploring Qualitative Methods. [https://www.academia.edu/1561689/The\\_use\\_of\\_semi-structured\\_interviews\\_in\\_qualitative\\_research\\_strengths\\_and\\_weaknesses](https://www.academia.edu/1561689/The_use_of_semi-structured_interviews_in_qualitative_research_strengths_and_weaknesses) (25.12.2015)
- OSU SCMRG- Ohio State University’s Supply Chain Management Research Group (2003) Survey of Career Patterns in Logistics-2003, Ohio State University, Ohio - USA
- Papadapoulou, C. (2001) Investigating the Direct Application of Chaos Theory to Detect, Analyze and Anticipate High-Level Variability in the Logistics Demand of Third Party Logistics, PhD Thesis, Department of Business and Management, [http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5905/1/2001\\_papadapoulouphd.pdf](http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5905/1/2001_papadapoulouphd.pdf), University of Glasgow, Glasgow – UK, (12.12.2015).
- RAND, (2009) Data Collection Methods: Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups. Training Manuel. [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical\\_reports/2009/RAND\\_TR718.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2009/RAND_TR718.pdf), National Defense Research Institute.
- Simchi-Levi, D., Kaminsky, P. and Simchi-Levi, E., (2000) Designing and Managing The Supply Chain: Concepts, Strategies, and Case Studies, Boston – USA: McGraw – Hill.
- Sink, H.L., Langley, C.J. and Gibson, B.J. (1996). Buyer Observations of the US Third-Party Logistics Market, *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, Vol. 26, No.3, pp. 38- 46.
- Sociology Central (2015) Focused (Semi-Structured) Interview. Sociologic Research Skills. <http://www.sociology.org.uk/methfi.pdf> (15.12.2015)

- Thai, V.V. Cahoon, S. and Tran H.T. (2011) Skill requirements for logistics professionals: findings and implications, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Vol. 23, No.4, Pp.553-574, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley – UK, DOI: 10.1108/13555851111165084
- Van Hoek, R.I., Chatham, R. and Wilding R. (2002), Managers in Supply Chain Management, the Critical Dimension, Supply Chain Management: An International Journal, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 119-125.
- Wood, D.F., Barone, A., Murphy, P., Wardlow, D. (2002) International Logistics, New York – USA: American Management Association.