

MANAGERS' VIEWS ON THE RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION CRITERIA OF HEALTH INSTITUTIONS EMPLOYEES: A MODEL PROPOSAL ¹

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ABSTRACT

Human resource recruitment and promotion techniques are among the most significant tools for implementing human resource strategies in labor-intensive businesses, especially in health institutions. The aim of our study was to present a model proposal for recruitment and promotion processes based on the perspectives of managers regarding the criteria applied in health institutions. In this qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with responsible managers, comprising 9 from private and 9 from public health institutions, selected through snowball sampling. The data obtained were analyzed using the N-VIVO program. Following the analysis, three main themes were identified: "Reaching the Candidate," "Recruitment Criteria," and "Promotion Criteria." Under the theme of "The Process of Reaching the Candidate," subcategories included determining staffing needs, reaching the candidate, methods of finding candidates, and methods of selecting candidates. Under "Recruitment Criteria," subcategories encompassed recruitment criteria, advantages, disadvantages, and suggestions. "Promotion Criteria" included subcategories such as promotion criteria, advantages, and disadvantages, with corresponding codes. The study's major theme, categories, and category codes, along with the responses to these codes, were compared to the findings of previous research in the literature. The discussion aimed to reveal the current situation in both private and public hospitals. Overall, both types of hospitals exhibited a lack of institutional image, with human resources functions and procedures falling behind modern human resource management theories and practices. These processes were not organized to meet the demands of hospitals. Additionally, structural and systematic deficiencies were identified in recruitment and promotion processes, indicating a lack of alignment with contemporary human resource practices, except for hospital groups aiming for institutionalization. Based on our study's findings and comparisons, a model proposal was developed for the recruitment and promotion processes in health institutions.

Keywords: Human resources management, health institutions, recruitment, promotion

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SAĞLIK KURUMLARI ÇALIŞANLARININ İŞE ALINMA VE TERFİ KRİTERLERİNDE YÖNETİCİ GÖRÜŞLERİ: BİR MODEL ÖNERİSİ¹

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ÖZ

İnsan kaynakları işe alım ve terfi teknikleri, iş gücü yoğun işletmelerde, özellikle sağlık kurumlarında insan kaynakları stratejilerini uygulamak için en önemli araçlardan biridir. Çalışmamızın amacı, sağlık kurumlarında yöneticilerin uyguladığı kriterler açısından işe alım ve terfi süreçlerine yönelik bir model önerisi sunmaktır. Bu nitel araştırmada, sorumlu yöneticilerle yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakat yapılan yöneticilerin 9'u özel, 9'u kamu sağlık kurumlarından seçilmiştir ve seçim işlemi kar topu örnekleme ile yapılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler N-VIVO programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda üç ana tema belirlenmiştir: "Adaya Ulaşma Süreci", "İşe Alım Kriterleri" ve "Terfi Kriterleri". "Adaya Ulaşma Süreci" teması altında alt kategoriler, personel ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesi, adaya ulaşma, aday bulma yöntemleri ve aday seçme yöntemlerini içermektedir. "İşe Alım Kriterleri" altında, işe alım kriterleri, avantajlar, dezavantajlar ve öneriler gibi alt kategoriler yer almıştır. "Terfi Kriterleri" ise terfi kriterleri, avantajlar ve dezavantajlar gibi alt kategoriler içermektedir ve karşılık gelen kodlarla birlikte sunulmuştur. Çalışmada elde edilen ana tema, kategori ve kategorilere ait kodlar ve bu kodlara ait yanıtlar, literatürde konu ile ilgili daha önce yapılmış çalışmaların bulgularıyla karşılaştırılmıştır. Tartışma sonucu, özel ve kamuya ait hastanelere yönelik mevcut durum ortaya konulmaya çalışılmış ve genel olarak hem kamuya ait hem özel hastanelerin kurumsal bir görüntü çizmediği, mevcut durumda, insan kaynakları işlev ve uygulamalarının, günümüz modern insan kaynakları yönetimi teori ve uygulamalarının gerisinde kaldığı ve hastanelerin ihtiyaçlarına yönelik bir şekilde organize edilmediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. İşe alınma ve terfi süreçlerinde ise temelden yapısal, sistematik eksiklikler saptanmış, kurumsallaşma hedefi taşıyan zincir hastane grupları dışında, insan kaynakları işe alım ve terfi süreçlerine yönelik uygulamada çağın gelişmelerine uyumlu bir yaklaşımın olmadığı görülmüştür. Çalışmamızda elde edilen bulgular ve yapılan karşılaştırmalar sonrası, sağlık kurumlarında işe alım ve terfi süreçlerine yönelik birer model önerisinde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan kaynakları yönetimi, sağlık kurumları, işe alınma ve terfi

MAKALE HAKKINDA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The dizzying pace of societal change and transformation today subjects healthcare institutions to intense and uninterrupted interaction, influenced by both internal environmental dynamics and sectoral/macro-environmental conditions. Factors such as demographic shifts, population aging, the rise of chronic diseases, easier access to information, rapid advancements in health technologies, and increasing public expectations regarding health services have made the management of material and human resources in healthcare institutions more critical than ever. Consequently, health managers face the imperative of rapidly adapting their organizations to environmental changes.

At this juncture, human capital stands out as the most critical and strategic element of modern healthcare institutions. Human Resource Management (HRM) is not merely a unit that technically manages staff recruitment and termination processes; it is also a management philosophy that aims to manage employee competencies, motivation, satisfaction, and performance using a holistic approach to achieve organizational goals in line with the institution's vision. According to Torrington et al. (2014), the concept of HRM is not only a modern name for "personnel management" but also represents a more comprehensive organizational approach that centers on the human element. In other words, HRM offers a long-term and integrated perspective focused on workforce planning, development, direction, and retention to enable organizations to deliver more effective services.

Similarly, David and Stephen (2010) define HRM as a strategic business function parallel to core functions like production, marketing, or finance, which determines how employees are attracted, selected, trained, motivated, and managed within an organization. In this respect, HRM in modern institutions assumes a role that encompasses not only operational processes but also the integration of new technologies, employee career planning, management development processes, job design, and organizational change. As emphasized by Doğan and Demirel (2008), the HR unit is the entity that enables the organization to achieve its objectives by mobilizing its human resources in the most effective and efficient manner, and this function has become a strategic imperative in modern organizations.

In Türkiye, "a healthcare workforce equipped with knowledge and skills and working with high motivation," which was one of the eight core components of the Health Transformation Program (HTP) launched in 2002, demonstrated the importance of professional HRM practices at the official policy level. However, it cannot be claimed that human resources practices have been fully institutionalized in healthcare institutions during the period since the program's inception. Particularly in public hospitals, it is evident that HRM processes do not operate in line with modern management principles, due to factors such as appointment-based systems, centralization, limited performance measurement tools, and low managerial flexibility. While this situation varies from institution to institution in private hospitals, it is observed at varying speeds and levels of maturity.

This study aims to address this gap by presenting the current state of recruitment and promotion processes in healthcare institutions, in line with managers' opinions, and subsequently developing a holistic, applicable model proposal for healthcare institutions based on these findings. The first section of the study outlines the conceptual framework of HRM and its significance for healthcare institutions; the second section presents the research methodology, sample, data collection tools, and findings. The final section discusses the findings in light of the literature and introduces a new system proposal aimed at improving recruitment and promotion processes in healthcare institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The World Health Report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2000 identified human resources as "the most important input of the health system" (Gupta et al., 2003). The dimension, distribution, diversity of human resources within the health system, and the number of health workers possessed by countries are accepted as important indicators of those countries' capacity for delivery and intervention (Kabene et al., 2006). Parallel to this significance, management theories

such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) position human capital as a valuable, inimitable, and sustainable source of competitive advantage for healthcare organizations (Barney, 1991).

Pillai et al. defined health systems as consisting of primary and supporting building blocks. They stated that the success factors linking these blocks comprise fundamental elements such as governance, human resources (HR), HR information systems, medical services, diagnostic services, pharmacy services, financial sustainability, and the speed of health service delivery. Pillai et al. argued that these building blocks must move in a harmonious and interconnected way and proposed that Human Resource Management (HRM) is located at the center and intersection of these factors. Accordingly, HRM constitutes the starting point for all activities within the health system and serves as the triggering mechanism that sets these activities in motion (Pillai et al., 2019).

The direct link between organizational performance and HR practices is emphasized throughout the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) literature, reinforcing this strategic position. Boaden et al. argued that mission statements in healthcare institutions are developed by considering all clinical needs, social services, financial feasibility, personnel, and research demands. They further stressed that evaluating all these demands and expectations creates additional challenges for subsequent implementation. To manage these demands and expectations, they advocated for the identification of highly coordinated and professionally defined human resource dimensions (Boaden et al., 2008).

In their research measuring the effectiveness of HRM practices in healthcare service organizations, Harris et al. found a strong relationship between HRM practices and the performance of healthcare institutions. They concluded that HRM practices have a positive impact on organizational performance and healthcare goals, and also contribute to potential outcomes, such as employee motivation and job satisfaction, which are typical outputs of HRM practices (Harris et al., 2007). These findings are supported by the High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) theory (Guest, 2017), which treats HR practices as a system and focuses on their synergistic interactions.

McDermott and Keating argued that due to the nature of healthcare services, they have a different distribution of employees compared to other sectors. In their study, they stated that HRM is a pragmatic necessity, but hospitals face various difficulties in implementing HRM practices, and focusing on formal HR structures leads to unsuccessful outcomes. They recommended the need to establish a behavior-outcome connection aligned with the strategic management perspective. They noted that such an approach would shift the focus from a managerial-based approach to a foundation based on the institutional, professional role, and contribution of HRM (McDermott & Keating, 2011).

While the role of human resources in the healthcare sector and the factors that affect them are roughly depicted above, current practices and approaches related to HRM in the sector point to several weaknesses. These weaknesses include: reactive and temporary solutions to HR problems, uncertainties about who should share responsibility, the existence of limited 'personnel management' concepts covering all aspects of HRM, and, ultimately, short-term HRM perspectives. These issues are seen as priority and fundamental problems in the field of healthcare human resources (Dussault & Dubois, 2003). With the accelerating pace of digitalization, healthcare institutions face challenges such as infrastructure inadequacy, limited digital literacy, leadership and financial constraints when transitioning to e-HRM (e.g. in HRIS implementation): these hinder smooth adoption and may exacerbate traditional HR management problems (Taher et. al, 2025). Given these issues, it is thought that conducting more specific studies and making predictions about the future of the healthcare sector or contemporary HRM practices in healthcare institutions would be more beneficial.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The adoption of a qualitative model in the research is due to reasons such as alignment with the research purpose, the aim of obtaining qualitative data, the nature of participants' involvement in the study during the research period, and the need for suitable techniques and flexibility to achieve these

goals. This study was approved by Trakya University Faculty of Medicine BAEK (Approval Code: 2018/357; Date: 19/11/2018; Decision No: 19/03).

This research adopts a qualitative research model characterized by a case study approach, utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews for data collection and descriptive analysis for findings. The study sample was compiled using the snowball sampling method, including university hospitals, established state hospitals, and private hospitals located primarily in the Thrace Region, as well as Istanbul and Ankara. Sample Composition The sample selection criteria were driven by the fact that hospitals in Ankara and Istanbul are major players and key consumers of resources in the rapidly growing healthcare sector, coupled with their direct contribution to public health through their social function. The sample included 18 hospital managers across the Thrace, Istanbul, and Ankara provinces. In-depth information was gathered until data saturation was reached (when managers' responses began to repeat themselves) Istanbul: A total of 3 private hospitals (one general service, one affiliated with a leading private university hospital chain, and one belonging to a prominent national and international hospital chain) and 3 public hospitals (two general service, one university institute and training/research hospital). Ankara: Interviews were conducted with responsible managers from 3 different hospitals, including two private hospitals and one public training and research hospital. Data Collection Interviews were planned with one participant designated for human resources recruitment and promotion practices in public hospitals, and one participant (the head of the human resources department) was deemed sufficient for each private sector hospital. The interviews were carried out using the semi-structured in-depth interview technique, where information was collected based on a flexible framework. The study sessions were conducted during the days and hours specified by the relevant person responsible at each location. Research Questions The central research question guiding this study was: "What practices and methods are followed in the recruitment and promotion processes within private and public hospitals?" Based on this core question, the overarching main problem was broken down into a more detailed set of sub-problems. The following open-ended questions were posed to the responsible managers within the scope of the semi-structured interview:

1. What is your current candidate selection method? Current Methods (Recruitment)
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your current candidate selection methods? Evaluation (Recruitment)
3. What do you think should be the alternative candidate selection methods? Future Practices (Recruitment)
4. What are your current promotion criteria? Current Methods (Promotion)
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your current promotion criteria? Evaluation (Promotion)
6. What do you think should be the alternative promotion criteria methods? The results obtained in our study are of a suggestive nature and are limited to the functions of recruitment and promotion. The obtained results can be improved and utilized for new model proposals.

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews conducted according to a predefined schedule and sequence of questions. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording device. Subsequently, the collected data were analyzed and interpreted to arrive at results directly linked to the evidence.

The data, obtained in response to a predetermined set of questions regarding recruitment and promotion practices in both private and public hospitals, were analyzed using the N-VIVO data analysis program. Care was taken to ensure the interview questions were appropriate for the research design. The questions were specifically targeted to address promotion and recruitment practices, focusing on simplicity and clarity while avoiding bias and leading the participants.

Responses to the questions were recorded and transcribed verbatim (word-for-word). During the transcription process, notes were taken, comparisons were made, and initial suggestions were noted. In the subsequent stage, the transcribed information was categorized under the main themes of recruitment and promotion, further establishing sub-categories and codes. This process yielded coding

tables comprising the emerging main themes, categories, sub-categories, and codes, ensuring the accurate extraction and classification of the data. The aim here was to visualize the data and render it simpler and more understandable.

In the final stage, utilizing categorization and visualization techniques, the findings from the research were interpreted. Based on these findings, alongside current practices and interview insights, the ultimate objective was to discover and reveal the embedded truth and subsequently develop a proposal for a new model applicable to public hospitals concerning recruitment and promotion criteria.

IV. RESULTS

In our study, the main themes related to the hiring and promotion criteria determined during the question preparation process were supplemented with the main theme of "Reaching the Candidate" based on the responses we received. Accordingly:

Under the main theme of "Reaching the Candidate", the sub-themes include Personnel Needs Determination, Reaching the Candidate, Candidate Finding Methods, Candidate Selection Methods.

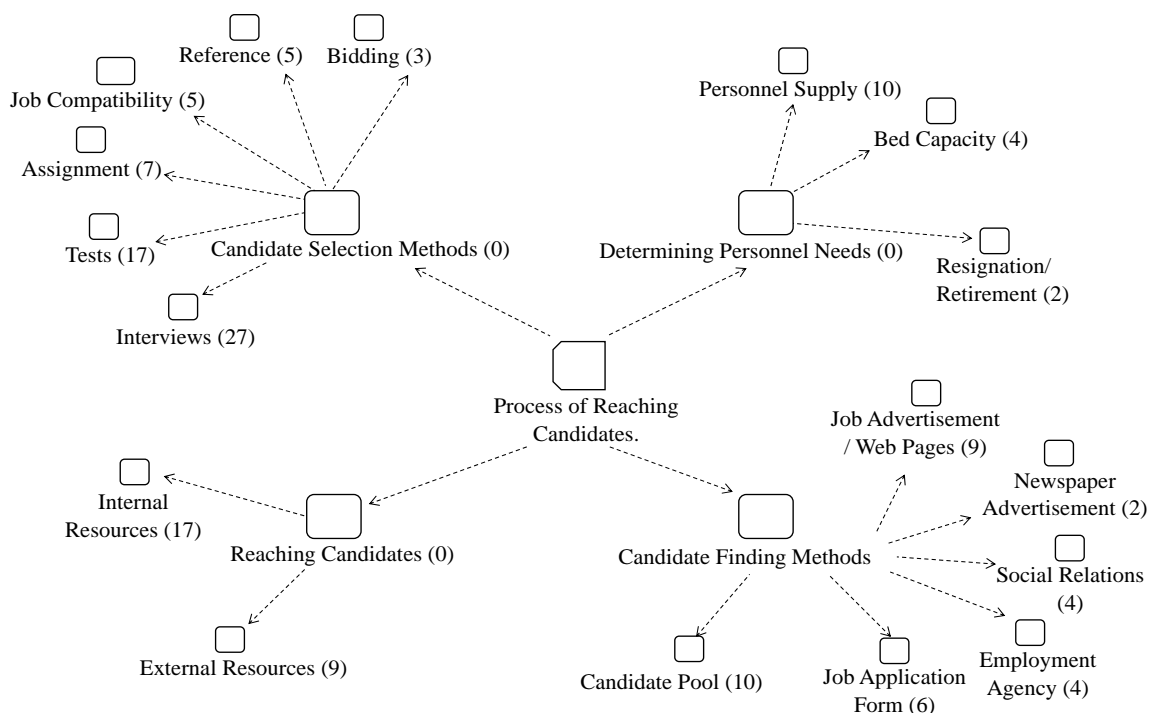
Under the main theme of "Recruitment Criteria", the sub-themes include Recruitment Criteria, Recruitment Advantages, Recruitment Disadvantages and Recruitment Recommendations.

Under the main theme of "Promotion Criteria", the sub-themes include Promotion Criteria, Promotion Advantages, Promotion Disadvantages and Promotion Recommendations.

Theme 1: Statements of Participants Regarding the Process of Reaching the Candidates

In our study, we reached subcategories of determining personnel needs, reaching the candidates, candidate finding methods, and candidate selection methods, as well as codes belonging to these categories, under the main theme of "process of reaching the candidates." This stage is presented as a whole in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Process of Reaching and Selecting Candidates



Looking at the process of reaching and selecting candidates as a whole; In determining personnel needs, it was mentioned that factors such as personnel supply, bed capacity, and resignation/retirement are taken into account;

As methods of reaching the candidates, internal resources are emphasized, while external resources are used secondarily;

As candidate finding methods, the emphasis is on the candidate pool, and other factors such as job advertisements/websites, job application forms, social relationships, Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), or newspaper advertisements are also used;

As candidate selection methods, it is observed that the interview method is mostly used, and various professional and personality tests are applied to candidates along with interviews. In addition to these, it has been found that the participants emphasize factors such as appointment in practice, job compatibility, and references as a candidate selection method.

Illustrative Participant Quotes

Below are sample quotes from participants, reflecting key findings regarding recruitment practices in Turkish healthcare institutions:

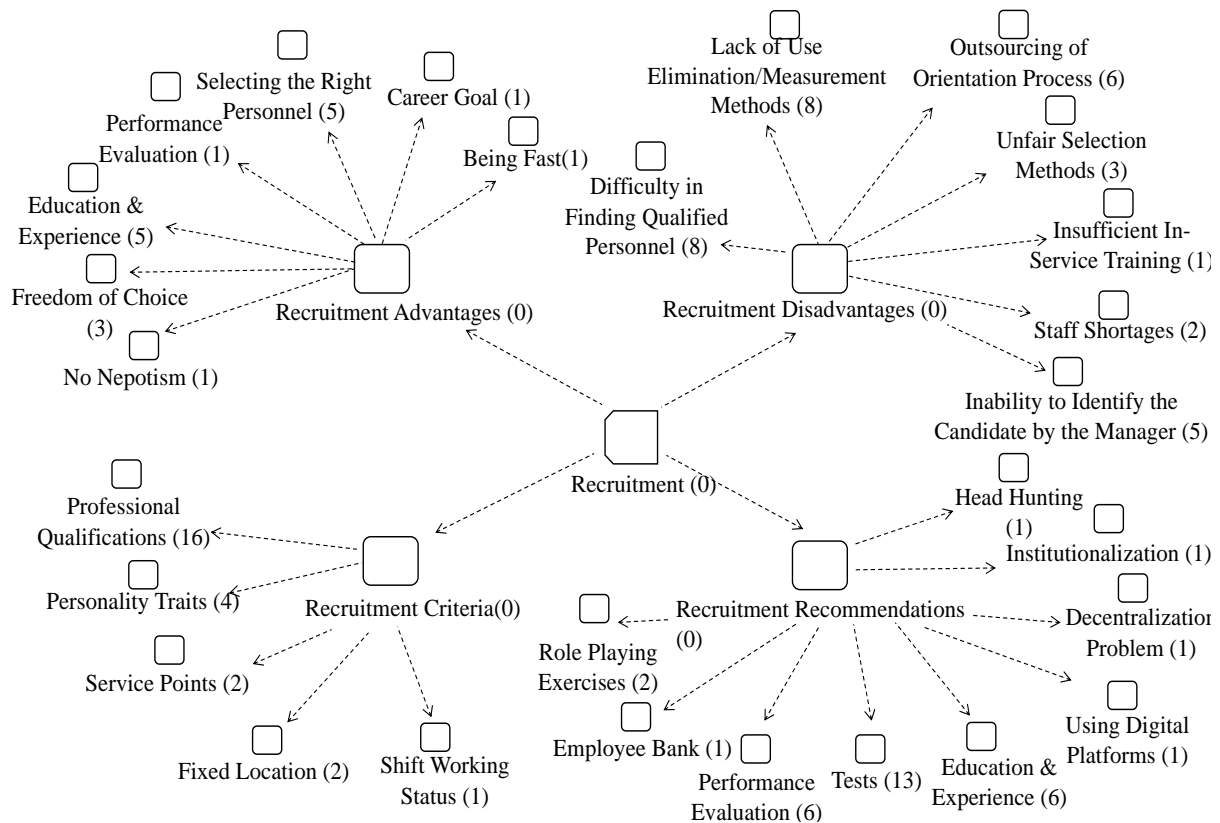
“We don’t have a candidate pool; finding the right person is often entirely limited to the manager’s social network.”(Private Sector, Manager)

“The process in the public system moves slowly; a position can remain vacant for months before the right candidate is found.” (Public Sector, Chief Physician)

Theme 2: Statements of Participants Regarding the Recruitment Criteria

Based on the opinions of the participants regarding the "Recruitment Criteria," the main theme of recruitment criteria has been established, including subcategories of Recruitment Criteria, Recruitment Advantages, Recruitment Disadvantages, and Recruitment Recommendations. The recruitment process is shown as a whole in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Recruitment Process



When looking at the recruitment process as a whole; In terms of recruitment criteria, it has been observed that factors such as professional qualifications, personality traits, service points, fixed location, and shift working status are emphasized.

In terms of advantages, it has been found that there are advantages in selecting the right personnel, especially those who are educated and experienced, at the end of the recruitment process. In addition, other advantages such as freedom of choice, allowing for performance evaluation and achieving career goals, being fast, and avoiding nepotism have been mentioned.

In responses related to the disadvantages of the recruitment process in hospitals, the lack of use of selection/assessment methods and the difficulty in finding qualified personnel were highlighted as major issues. Additionally, it was observed that various problems arose during the adaptation process of personnel sourced from external sources. This was followed by issues such as the inability of the manager to select the desired candidate, unfair selection methods, staff shortages, and insufficient in-service training.

The participants have suggested several recommendations, including emphasizing factors such as performance evaluation, education and experience in recruitment, as well as using test applications. Additionally, they have suggested utilizing role-playing exercises, headhunting and digital platforms, establishing an employee database, institutionalization and overcoming decentralization issues.

Private hospitals prioritize speed and performance, whereas processes in the public sector progress more slowly due to the prevailing procedural framework. In recruitment, there is an insufficient utilization of systematic testing, standardized assessment tools, and competency-based evaluations.

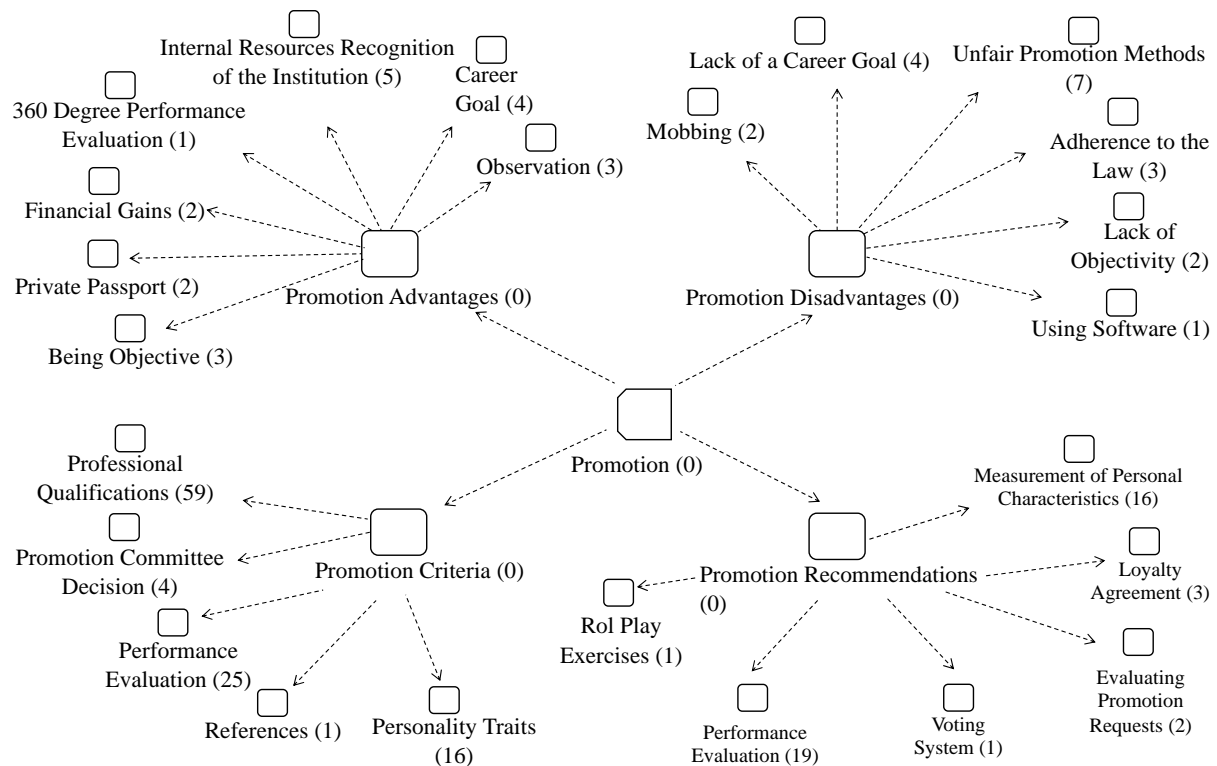
Illustrative Quote

"Many institutions still view the interview as the sole criterion. This makes the process highly susceptible to error." (Quote Source/Context, e.g., Private Sector Manager)

Theme 3: Participants' Views on Promotion Criteria

Based on the opinions expressed by the managers who participated in our study regarding the "Promotion Criteria" currently used in their organizations, subcategories were created under the main theme of promotion, including Promotion Criteria, Promotion Advantages, Promotion Disadvantages and Promotion Recommendations. The promotion process is shown as a whole in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Participants' Views on Promotion Criteria



When looked at as a whole for the criteria, advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations related to promotions in hospitals, it is observed that professional qualifications, performance evaluation, promotion committee decision, personality traits and references are among the prominent factors in promotion criteria.

The advantages of promotion criteria have been expressed as possessing qualities such as knowing the institution's internal resources, having career goals, being objective, and being able to observe. In addition to these, other points such as financial gain, private passport, 360-degree performance evaluation have been highlighted as advantages.

In the responses given regarding the disadvantages of the promotion process, unfair promotion methods, lack of career goals, and situations such as being unable to act freely in accordance with the law and inability to be objective have been emphasized as disadvantages. Along with these, issues such as mobbing and problems arising from the use of software were also mentioned.

Participants have highlighted methods such as performance evaluation and measuring personal characteristics as recommendations for promotion processes in healthcare institutions. They have also

suggested using a commitment agreement, evaluating promotion requests, role-playing exercises and using a voting system.

Illustrative Participant Quotes

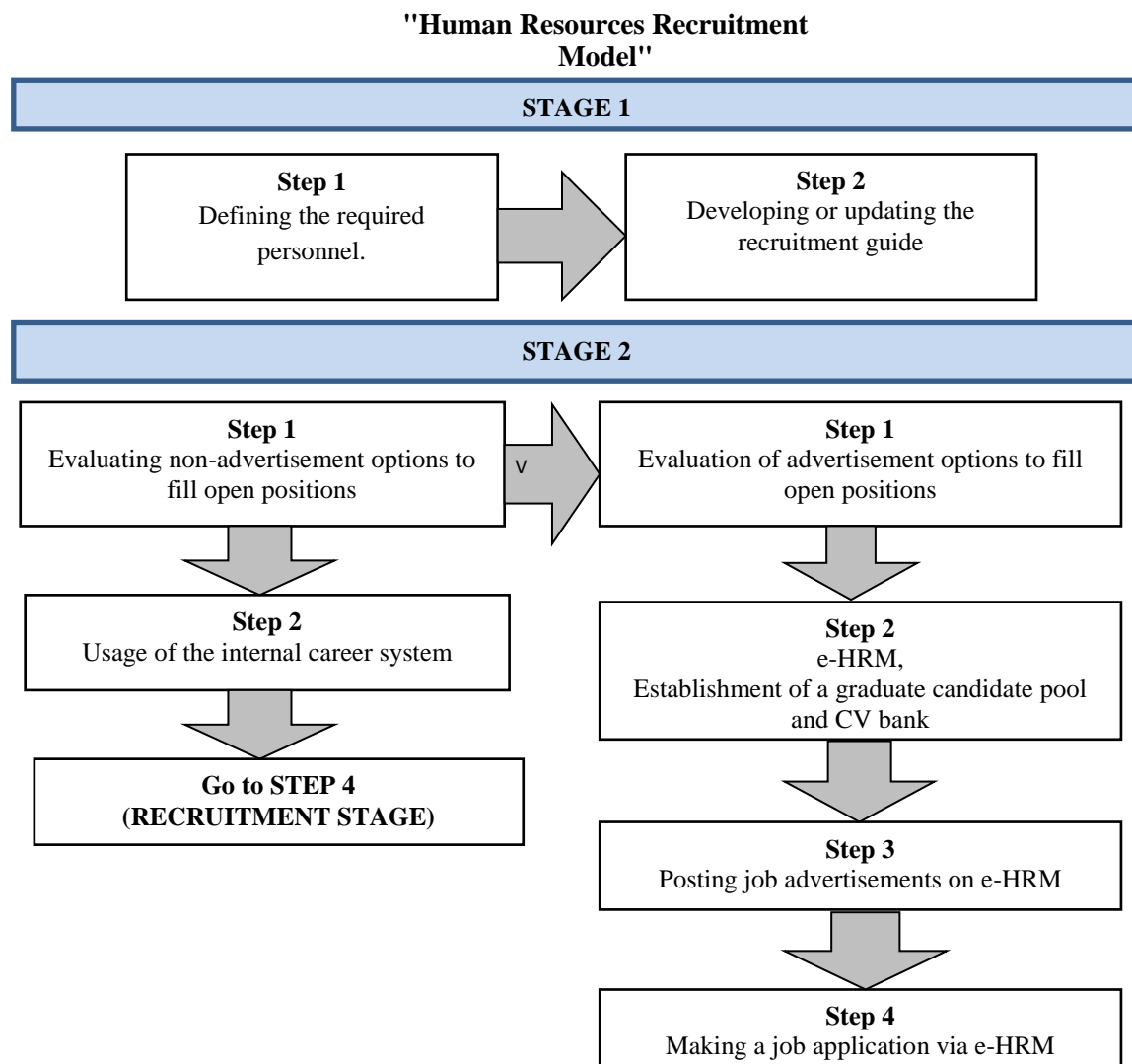
Below are sample quotes from participants, reflecting key findings regarding promotion practices in Turkish healthcare institutions:

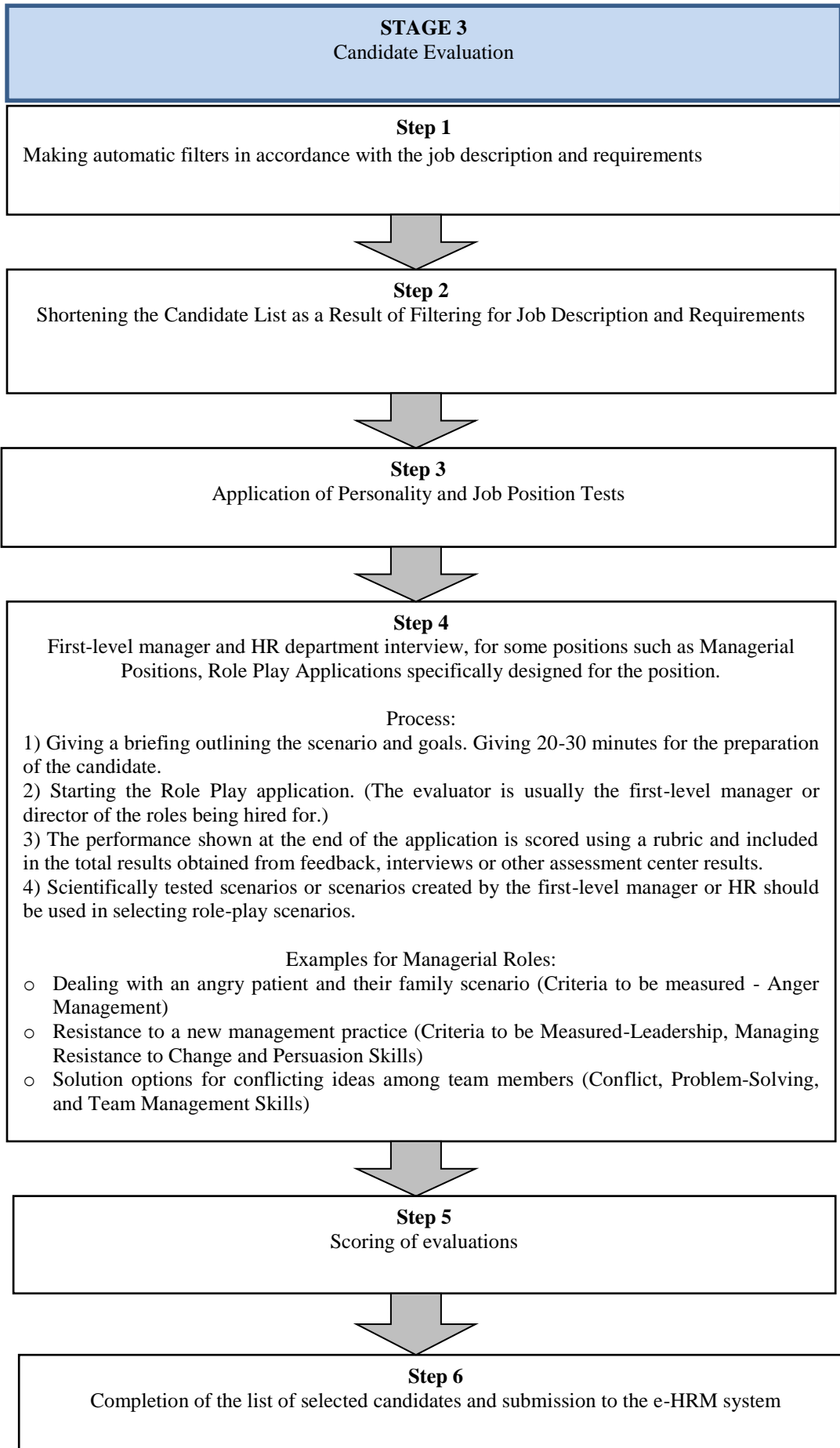
- “There is no standard in promotions; for some, loyalty is the determining factor, while for others, it’s seniority.” (Quote Source/Context, e.g., Public Hospital Manager)
- “The performance score is important, but it’s not the sole determinant; because our measurement system is deficient.” (Quote Source/Context, e.g., Private Sector HR Specialist)

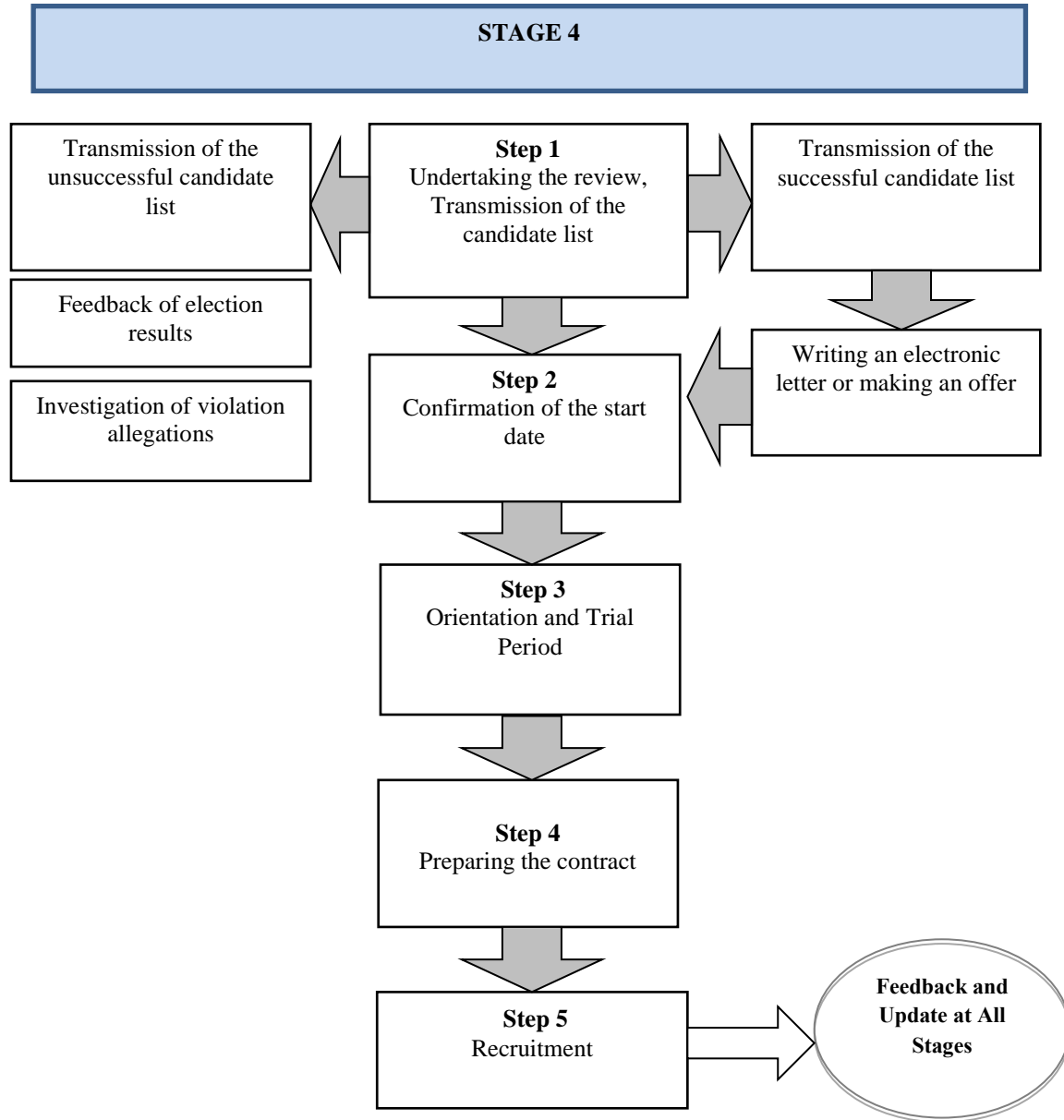
A Model Proposal for Recruitment and Promotion Criteria of Healthcare Institution Employees.

Based on the findings obtained in our study titled "Managerial Views on Recruitment and Promotion Criteria of Healthcare Institution Employees: A Model Proposal", it aims to present a model proposal for recruitment and promotion processes in public hospitals. It is believed that the model based on the principles listed below will yield beneficial results. Below are the stages of the recruitment model that we have developed based on the data we have obtained from our research.

Figure 4. Human Resources Recruitment Model







Our model has been developed by adapting the recruitment formats in the recruitment process of the Western Australia State Public Hospitals region and the Best Practice Guide Recruitment and Selection manual of Victoria State Government's Education and Training based on the data obtained from the study.

Based on the findings obtained in our study titled "Managerial Views on Recruitment and Promotion Criteria of Healthcare Institution Employees: A Model Proposal", it aims to present a model proposal for recruitment and promotion processes in public hospitals. It is believed that the model based on the principles listed below will yield beneficial results.

The Recruitment Model we created as a result of our interviews with responsible managers from both the public and private sectors consists of 4 stages. We believe that the model is compatible with modern HR theory and functions and has the potential to be further developed.

In the first stage, the process begins with identifying the needed personnel. The first stage, which continues with the development or updating (refreshing) of the recruitment guide, is divided into

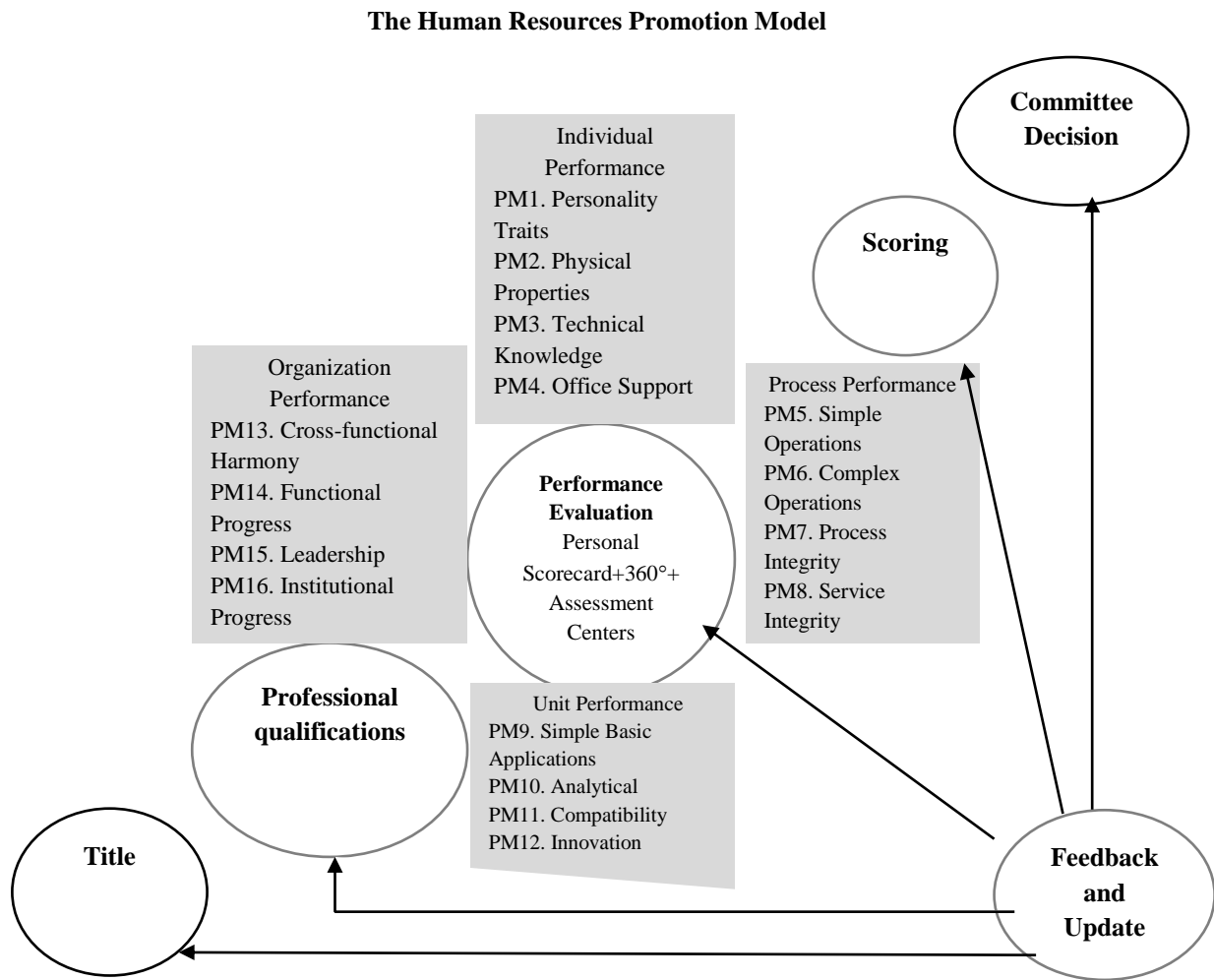
different steps depending on the internal and external recruitment options when the second stage is reached.

In the second stage, if non-advertising, in-house recruitment options are in question, the in-house career system comes into play and methods such as transfer and promotion are used in this direction. In the second stage, if job advertisement options are used, the e-HRM software comes into play. It is considered to establish a digital infrastructure system in public hospitals with the e-HRM system, which can be explained as an Electronic Human Resources Management system and to carry out recruitments through the system. The establishment of an e-HRM system is recommended to create a comprehensive candidate pool tailored to the needs of healthcare institutions, particularly healthcare licensees, followed by the creation of an electronic CV database. Thus, a system design is being considered where job postings can be published through a single portal, as in the example of e-HRM; and candidates can easily make their applications in a compatible and approved manner with e-government, graduate information system through the e-HRM application.

In the third stage, it is envisaged that the applications made through the e-Recruitment system will be filtered in accordance with job descriptions and job requirements, and as a result of the filtering, the candidate list will be shortened. This will enable meeting key priorities such as finding candidates who meet the basic qualifications of the job, preventing incompetence and unnecessary applications. After shortening the candidate list through filtering, the next step is to apply personality tests and professional tests suitable for the job to be performed. Personality and professional tests can vary depending on the job being performed and can be conducted online or face-to-face. After personality and professional tests, interviews and the use of role-play applications are recommended, again depending on the position. Our model includes various examples for role-play applications, and it is stated that "role-play scenarios used in scientific studies or role-play scenarios created by the first supervisor or HR department should be used in the selection of role-play scenarios". Interview and role-play applications may vary from institution to institution and job position, and they can be conducted either online or face-to-face. In the next stage, it is recommended to score the evaluations through multiple assessment methods such as CV review, interviews, role-play applications, and referee checks, and enter the list of selected candidates into the e-HRM system.

In the fourth and final stage of recruitment, the successful candidates are reviewed, the list of candidates is communicated, and then the successful candidates are offered the job electronically. The recruitment process continues with orientation and trial period after the confirmation of the start date, and it is concluded with the preparation of the contract. Another feature of the model is the use of feedback and update mechanisms at all stages of the recruitment process, allowing for continuous improvement of both the recruitment and the recruitment process to be made suitable for current conditions. In the recruitment process, feedback is provided to unsuccessful candidates, and recommendations are made for investigating any allegations of violations if there is any doubt.

Figure 5. The Promotion Model



The Promotion Model that emerged as a result of our research and the interviews we conducted with public and private sector managers has a step-by-step and gradual structure. Our promotion model highlights different professional and personal competencies depending on different job positions. Promotion and salary policies are related not only to professional and personal competence criteria but also to the contribution to individual, process, unit, and institutional performance in harmony with the job performed.

In the research, it is recommended to use performance measurement systems in addition to professional qualifications in promotion. In this regard, it is recommended to use multi-dimensional performance management practices such as personal scorecards and 360-degree evaluation methods in addition to professional qualifications for promotion. It is also recommended to use assessment centers, which are known to have much lower error rates. It is thought that assessment centers in healthcare institutions will provide contributions such as ensuring merit through objective evaluation, as well as assigning the right people to the right job and allowing individuals to see their strengths and weaknesses. Another recommendation we have for the promotion model is to have defined feedback and update activities for all stages of the promotion process. Thus, it is thought that it will enable promotion processes to be harmonized with current conditions, to be updated specific to the position, and to avoid erroneous practices.

V. DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this research reveal that the recruitment and promotion processes in healthcare institutions harbor numerous deficiencies at both the structural and implementation levels. These results are consistent with bibliometric studies that indicate the field still possesses a fragmented knowledge base, despite the recent surge in human resource management (HRM) research in healthcare. A 30-year bibliometric analysis by Qin et al. (2023) reports a quantitative growth in the HRM–healthcare literature but notes that holistic, systematic, and practice-oriented frameworks remain limited; our study contributes to filling this gap with qualitative data within the Turkish context.

The centralized, rigid, and appointment-based recruitment processes observed, particularly in public hospitals, along with lengthy orientation periods, inadequate use of assessment tools, and non-merit-based promotion practices, parallel frequently reported issues in the literature. This situation supports the assertion that the organizational HRM structure (including line manager—HR specialist relations, clarity of roles/descriptions, and distribution of authority—responsibility) requires strategic renewal within healthcare organizations. For instance, the study by Buchelt et al. (2020) indicates that inefficiencies and limited potential in HRM practices are observed in hospitals lacking well-designed organizational HRM structures (specifically the clarification of roles for line managers and HR specialists). This finding aligns with the criticisms regarding organizational structure that emerged from the manager interviews in our study.

Significant differences were detected in candidate selection methods between private and public hospitals in our research: private hospitals predominantly utilize responsive methods based on interviews and testing, whereas public institutions commonly rely on more static methods like central assignment or placement. The suggestions provided by managers (e.g., testing, role-play, establishing talent pools, e-platform usage) are supported by findings in the literature showing that e-recruitment and digital HRM applications enhance recruitment effectiveness. Various studies have specifically demonstrated that e-recruitment applications broaden the applicant pool, accelerate processes, and enable data-centric preliminary screening, and conceptual and review papers on this topic highlight the strategic contributions of e-HRM applications (Abia & Brown, 2020).

Our findings regarding promotion practices are parallel to the criticisms in the literature concerning "position-centric" talent management. Studies like Ingram and Głód (2016) demonstrate that talent management in healthcare institutions often focuses on specific (especially medical) positions, lacking holistic talent definitions. This makes it challenging to link promotion and career paths to measurable, merit-based criteria. Our study supports the conclusion that promotion processes must be based on transparent, multi-source performance metrics and competency frameworks. These approaches provide evidence, both in the literature and recent applications, that they increase the fairness and reliability of promotion decisions.

The role of electronic recruitment is one of the key solutions highlighted in the study. Research conducted on healthcare SMEs in Dublin like Bhaumik (2018) reported that e-recruitment applications provide advantages over manual techniques in managing applicant databases and sourcing qualified personnel; similar results have been reiterated in e-HRM literature reviews (e.g., conceptual reviews and application reviews of e-recruitment). These findings directly support our proposed model design, which is based on an e-HRM-based centralized candidate database and automated pre-screening/test integration.

The Study's Contribution and Model's Novelty

Existing literature tends to focus more on single HRM elements, such as recruitment, performance appraisal, or talent management. Conversely, our proposed model offers a holistic framework that integrates these elements and enhances implementability, particularly for public healthcare services,

through a digital infrastructure (e-HRM). The distinction of the model can be summarized in three main points:

Integration: The sequential and data-flow based integration of the candidate pool (diploma/CV bank), competency-based testing (restricted and position-specific tests), multi-dimensional performance measurement, and a transparent promotion mechanism goes beyond the fragmented applications found in the current literature (Qin et al. 2023).

Public-Private Adaptability: The model is designed to integrate with the legal framework of public institutions (e-Government / Ministry channels); simultaneously, it includes modular components tailored to meet the speed and flexibility requirements of private hospitals. In this respect, the model aims to provide a balance between flexibility and standardization in field applications (Qin et al., 2023; Buchelt et al., 2020).

Implementability and Measurability: The multi-dimensional performance indicators (individual, unit, process, organization) and 360° feedback mechanisms included in the model offer an alternative to promotions based solely on decision-maker assessment. This makes recruitment and promotion criteria more measurable and traceable. This approach increases the objectivity and accountability of promotion processes (Ingram & Głód, 2016; Sureda et al., 2021).

Limitations and Future Research Proposals

The findings of this study are based on qualitative data; thus, quantitative pilot implementations and multi-center experimental studies are necessary to prove the model's effectiveness. Furthermore, issues such as data security, privacy, and the technical infrastructure costs of e-HRM applications warrant detailed evaluation. Recent reviews in the literature and the rise of potential AI-based pre-screening tools (as discussed in e-recruitment and e-HRM literature like, Abia and Brown, 2020) will also contribute to the future evolution of the model. Since the present study focused primarily on managers' perspectives, future research should incorporate the views of employees, HR specialists, and other stakeholders (such as nurses, technicians, etc.). This inclusion will enable a more comprehensive and multi-layered understanding of perceived fairness and organizational dynamics within recruitment and promotion systems.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussions in our study, it can be concluded that regardless of whether they operate in the public or private sector, the healthcare sector as a whole does not present an institutionalized image and it is observed that human resources functions and practices lag behind modern human resources management practices. In addition to all these, the role of HR units within the organization in the private sector determines whether the activities are carried out in line with the modern HR management approach. Despite the superiority and advantages they have over public hospitals, in the private sector, especially in hospitals that do not have institutionalization purpose, HR units operate within the limits determined by the hospital owner and chief physician. The modern HR activities are seen as cost items and the window of HR activities is restricted with a strict and subjective approach.

In conclusion, it is observed that especially in the management of public hospitals, they are managed by central decision-making points based on criteria such as hospital capacity, number of beds and personnel, and human resources practices are not organized and utilized according to the current needs of hospitals. The other findings reached in our study are as follows;

The current job descriptions and job requirements fundamentally negatively affect the effectiveness and efficiency of recruitment and promotion processes.

It is observed that in the public sector, information that provides input to job descriptions and job requirements, such as graduation from relevant undergraduate programs, foreign language proficiency, experience, sectoral experience, expertise, the school of graduation, age, and gender, is not taken into account, especially for managerial positions.

It is observed that in public hospitals, a formal candidate pool similar to those in the private sector is not established, national announcement mechanisms are not currently in use, and candidates are not employed based on their personal and professional competencies.

The modernization of the authority lines of public hospitals and the establishment of a new organizational structure based on division of labor and specialization are required.

The individuals or units responsible for managing and supporting processes should be undertaken by persons and authorities who are experts in that field.

Public hospitals should be allowed to choose their own staff. Ensuring that the personnel regime in public hospitals is aligned with a strategic thinking and management approach, reducing staff turnover rates, and creating management programs and career paths for public hospitals are necessary.

A correlation should be established between recruitment and promotion criteria and the creation of corporate vision and culture, ways to encourage long-term employment of personnel should be sought and incentives should be offered in this regard.

A relationship should be established between recruitment and promotion criteria and strategic measurement mechanisms, and the organizational functioning should be designed accordingly. It is recommended to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between unit goals and individual goals. The organizational structure in healthcare institutions should be decentralized in a way that is suitable for competence levels related to positions and multidimensional performance indicators.

The conclusion reached is that the success of promotion processes is dependent not on the success of recruitment processes, but rather on the success of the recruitment processes being tied to the organization's talent management system and overall success of promotion and career management practices.

This research underscores critical structural, procedural, and cultural deficiencies in the hiring and advancement protocols of healthcare organizations in Türkiye. It is evident that both public and private hospitals lack HR processes that are standardized, equitable, and competency-driven.

The suggested e-HRM model presents an achievable, scalable, and transparent remedy for these difficulties. If the proposed model is implemented, it will generally lead to:

Strengthening of Merit-Based Human Resource Management: Ensuring that competence, skills, and merit are the primary drivers of career decisions.

Increased Internal Equity (Fairness) within Institutions: Promoting fairness in processes, reducing subjective decision-making, and enhancing transparency.

Measurable Performance Management: Making performance assessment criteria clear, objective, and quantifiable.

Reduced Human Resource Turnover Rate: Increasing employee satisfaction and alignment, thereby lowering the rate at which staff leave the organization.

Formation of a Standardized HR Culture Across All Healthcare Institutions (Public and Private): Establishing consistent, professional, and competency-based HR norms across the entire healthcare sector. Future studies ought to validate the model using more extensive samples and examine its viability through initial pilot programs.

In conclusion, this study not only documents the current weaknesses of HRM practices in healthcare institutions within the Turkish context but also proposes a highly implementable, digitally-based, integrated model that addresses existing gaps in the literature. Pilot implementation of the proposed model has the potential to yield tangible improvements in human resource management at both local and national levels and aligns with the observed benefits of e-HRM in international studies.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Trakya University Faculty of Medicine Scientific Research Ethics Committee (TÜTF-BAEK; Protocol No: 2018/357, Decision No: 19/03, Date: 19 November 2018).

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