The Impact of Human Resources in Shaping Innovative Behaviors in Public Sports Organizations

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the impact of human resource practices on shaping innovative behaviors in public sport organizations. The research was conducted with a sample of 397 employees working in public sports organizations in Turkey. The sample was determined by using convenience sampling method and the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research designs, was adopted as the research method. Satisfaction with Human Resources Management Practices Scale and Innovative Behavior Scale were used to collect the data. SPSS.26 statistical program was used for data analysis and descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were applied in the analysis process. The findings showed that the factors within the scope of human resource management have significant and positive effects on employees' innovative behaviors. In particular, career system and wage system stand out as the variables that predict innovative behaviors most strongly. The findings suggest that effective management of human resource practices in public sport organizations can encourage innovative behaviors of employees and support organizational development.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, innovative behavior plays a critical role in the sustainable success of individuals and organizations in business environments where competition is increasing day by day (Düger & Ciner, 2023;Yorgancılar, 2011). Innovative behavior is an attitude that employees exhibit in order to improve existing processes, provide efficiency in functioning, produce new ideas and lead organizational change (Canberk, 2021). Although public institutions, especially organizations in the field of sports, are structures that support individual and social development, they are often not as flexible as the private sector in creating institutional mechanisms that encourage innovation (Cebeci & Bozkurt, 2023). However, considering the dynamic structure of sport and constantly evolving sport management practices, it has become a great necessity to encourage innovative behaviors in public sport institutions and to ensure active participation of employees in this process (Özsarı, 2024). At this point, it is an important research topic to understand how human resource management (HRM) practices affect the innovative behaviors of employees (Kaya & Kesen, 2014). Human resources management is a strategic process that aims to use human capital in the most effective way to achieve organizational goals (Arslan, 2012). It is known that HRM practices, which include processes such as wage policies, reward systems, career management, training practices, performance evaluation and effective communication with employees, have significant effects on employee motivation, job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (İspir & Yeşil, 2020). However, there is a limited number of studies on how these practices affect employees' innovative behaviors. Based on this deficiency, it is necessary to reveal how the innovative behaviors of employees in public sport organizations are shaped in the context of human resource practices. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of human resource management practices on employees' innovative behaviors in public sport organizations and to reveal which factors support this process. One of the most important features of the study is that it systematically addresses how innovative behaviors can be encouraged in the context of the public sector, especially in the field of sports. Although there are various studies in the literature that address the relationship between human resource management and innovative behavior (Pelenk, 2020; Özay, 2020), addressing this relationship in public sports institutions will fill an important gap in scientific terms. Furthermore, determining how different dimensions of human resource practices (e.g., compensation system, rewarding, career management, training practices, and performance appraisal) shape employees' innovative behaviors will be one of the major contributions of this study to the literature. As a result, this research aims to examine the impact of human resource management practices that support the innovative behavior of employees in public sport organizations. Within the scope of the study, the relationships between the perceptions of employees working in public sport institutions towards human resource practices and their innovative behavior levels will be analyzed. It is predicted that the findings obtained will make significant contributions to both the academic literature and the development of human resources policies of public sport organizations.

Material and Method

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics committee approval for the conduct of this study was obtained from Van Yuzuncu Yil University (Date: 07/02/2025, Decision Number: 2025/03-13)

In this section, the basic components of the research will be discussed comprehensively and the research method, research group, data collection tools, data collection and analysis process will be explained in detail. In terms of the validity and reliability of the research, each stage was planned and implemented systematically.

Research method

This study, which aims to examine the effect of human resources practices on the shaping of innovative behaviors in public sports institutions, was conducted within the framework of quantitative research methods. In the research, the relational survey model, one of the general survey models, was used to determine the relationship between two or more variables and the existence or degree of this change (Karasar, 1998).

Research Group (Population-Sample)

The sample of this study consists of individuals working in public sports organizations across Turkey. In the research, random cluster sampling method was used to reach a participant group consisting of individuals working in different positions. Random cluster sampling is a probability sampling method in which individuals in the population are classified into certain subgroups (clusters) and a sample is formed by randomly selecting from these clusters (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010). The reason why this method is preferred is that it provides an effective process in terms of time and cost when collecting data from a large population. The sample determined within the scope of the study consists of individuals working in different positions in public sports institutions and consists of 397 people in total. When the demographic distribution of the sample group is examined, it is seen that individuals with different gender groups, 143 of whom are female (36.0%) and 254 of whom are male (64.0%), participated in the research. This sample was determined to be diverse in order to increase the generalizability of the research and to examine the impact of human resource practices on innovative behaviors in public sport organizations in a more comprehensive manner.

Personal Information Form: The personal information form used in the study was developed by the researcher and includes data on demographic variables such as gender, marital status, position, age and years of employment. This demographic information of the participants is presented in detail in Table 1.

Satisfaction with Human Resources Management Practices Scale: It was developed by Gürbüz and Bekmezci (2012). The scale includes 5 sub-dimensions and 22 items named as compensation system, rewarding, career system, training practices, performance appraisal and communication with employees. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) values of the scale for this study are: rewarding: .91, wage system: .88, career system: .85, training practices and performance values: .89, communication with employees: .93.

Innovative Behavior Scale: The other scale used in the study is the innovative behavior scale. The scale was developed by Scott and Bruce (1994) and its Turkish translation, validity and reliability was conducted by Çalışkan et al. The scale has one dimension and 6 propositions. For this study, the Cronbach's Alpha (α) value of the scale was calculated as. 90 was calculated.

Data Collection

The research data were collected in accordance with the approval of the ethics committee dated 07.02.2025 and numbered 2025/28 from Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee. During the data collection process, participation in the study was voluntary and participants were informed about the purpose, scope and confidentiality principles of the study. Google Form was used as the data collection tool and the questionnaires were delivered to the participants online. This method facilitated access to a wide range of participants, saved time and cost, and allowed for rapid and systematic collection of data. Thus, ethical principles were observed in the research process and full compliance with the privacy of the participants and the principle of voluntary participation was ensured.

Data Analysis

The analysis process of the data obtained in the study was carried out in stages. In the first stage, descriptive statistics were presented by calculating frequency (n) and percentage (%) values to describe the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the study. These analyses aim to reveal the distribution of participants in terms of variables such as gender, age, educational status and professional experience. In the second stage, descriptive analyses of the data collection tools used in the study were conducted. In this context, the distribution characteristics of the variables were examined by calculating the median, minimum (Min), maximum (Max), skewness (Skewness) and kurtosis (Kurtosis) values. The suitability of the variables to normal distribution was evaluated and the statistical methods to be used in the analyses were determined. In the third stage, the mean (Mean), standard deviation (SD) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were calculated to determine the internal consistency. By examining the reliability levels of the scales, the internal consistency of the measurement tools used was tested. In the fourth stage, correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the scales. This analysis examines the direction and strength of the relationship between satisfaction with human resource management practices and innovative behaviors. Finally, regression analysis was applied to test the causal relationships between the variables. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of human resource practices on innovative behaviors, and the interactions between dependent and independent variables were discussed in detail. Within the scope of the study, statistical analyses were performed with SPSS.26 program and this analysis process was structured to test the statistical significance of the findings obtained within the scope of the research and to evaluate the hypotheses with scientific methods. In this section, the data related to the responses of the participants within the scope of the research will be examined and analyzed in detail. Statistical evaluations of the participants' responses will be made and

the findings obtained will be presented in a systematic manner. In this direction, the relationships and significance levels between the relevant variables will be discussed and interpreted within the framework of scientific methods.

Findings

In this section, the data related to the responses of the participants within the scope of the research will be examined and analyzed in detail. Statistical evaluations of the participants' responses will be made and the findings obtained will be presented in a systematic manner. In this direction, the relationships and significance levels between the relevant variables will be discussed and interpreted within the framework of scientific methods.

Table 1. Demographic Information on Participants

		n	**%**
Gender	Male	254	64.0
	Female	143	36.0
	Total	397	100.0%
Marital Status	Single	178	44.8
	Married	219	55.2
	Total	397	100.0%
Pozisyon	Leader	36	9.1
	Administrator	55	13.9
	Sport Specialist	85	21.4
	Other	45	11.3
	Coach	44	11.1
	Officer	132	33.2
	Total	397	100.0%
Age		35.0± 9.23	
Working Year		7.86±4.31	
	Total	397	100.0%

When the demographic distribution of the 397 public sport organization employees who participated in the study is analyzed, 64% (n=254) of the participants are male and 36% (n=143) are female. In terms of marital status, 44.8% (n=178) were single and 55.2% (n=219) were married. When the distribution of the participants according to their positions was analyzed, 9.1% (n=36) were leaders, 13.9% (n=55) were administrators, 21.4% (n=85) were sports experts, 11.3% (n=45) were in other positions, 11.1% (n=44) were coaches and 33.2% (n=132) were civil servants. The mean age was 35.0 ± 9.23 years and the mean years of employment was 7.86 ± 4.31 years.

Table 2. Descriptive Analyses of the Scales

	N	Median	Min.	Max.	Skew.	Kurt.
Wage System		3.40	1.40	5.00	-0.255	-0.468
Rewarding		3.50	1.25	5.00	-0.240	-0.539
Career System		3.40	1.20	5.00	-0.174	-0.433
Training Practices and Performance Evaluation	397	3.60	1.40	5.00	-0.250	-0.483
Employee Communication		3.33	1.00	5.00	-0.144	-0.484
Innovative Behavior		3.50	1.50	5.00	-0.256	-0.421

When the statistics regarding the distribution of the scales in the study are examined, it is seen that the median values of all variables vary between 3.33 and 3.60; this shows that the participants generally made evaluations at the medium and high level. While the lowest

(Min.) values ranged between 1.00 and 1.50, the highest (Max.) values were determined as 5.00 in all scales, indicating that the entire response range was used. Skewness values ranged from -0.256 to -0.144, indicating that the distributions were slightly negatively skewed, i.e. the responses were generally closer to higher values. Kurtosis values ranged between -0.539 and -0.421, indicating that the distributions exhibited a slightly platykurtic structure and were close to a normal distribution. These findings reveal that the scales are evaluated in a balanced manner by the participants and that the responses are not overly concentrated at a certain extreme.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha Values of the Scales

Scales and Subscales	$\bar{x}$	sd	α
Wage System	3.43	0.76	.732
Rewarding	3.33	0.81	.692
Career System	3.29	0.76	.739
Training Practices and Performance Evaluation	3.47	0.78	.784
Employee Communication	3.30	0.84	.661
Innovative Behavior	3.40	0.77	.792

When the descriptive statistics of the scale sub-dimensions used in the study are analyzed, it is seen that the mean ($\bar{x}$) values of all sub-dimensions vary between 3.29 and 3.47. This shows that the participants' evaluations are generally concentrated at a medium level. The standard deviation (SD) values ranged between 0.76 and 0.84, indicating that the scores exhibited a relatively homogeneous distribution and that extreme outliers were limited. Cronbach's Alpha (α) values were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the scales and ranged from a low of .661 (Communication with Employees) to a high of .792 (Innovative Behavior). The sub-dimensions of Wage System (.732), Career System (.739) and Training Practices and Performance Appraisal (.784) show an acceptable level of internal consistency in terms of reliability. However, the reliability coefficient of Rewarding sub-dimension (.692) is just below the acceptable limit and the reliability of Communication with Employees sub-dimension (.661) is relatively lower. In general, the reliability levels of the scale sub-dimensions show that they provide moderately consistent results within the framework of psychometric criteria and can be considered reliable.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of the Scale Subscales

Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6
Wage System	-					
Rewarding	0.77[*]	-				
Career System	0.78[*]	0.76[*]	-			
Training Practices and Performance Appraisal	0.81[*]	0.77[*]	0.77[*]	-		
Employee Communication	0.69[*]	0.72[*]	0.73[*]	0.69[*]	-	
Innovative Behavior	0.77[*]	0.74[*]	0.78[*]	0.74[*]	0.69[*]	-

When the correlations between the sub-dimensions of the scale used in the research are examined, it is seen that there are significant and moderately positive relationships between all variables ($p < .001$). The correlations between the Wage System and other sub-dimensions ranged between 0.69 and 0.81, with the strongest relationship observed with the Training Practices and Performance Appraisal sub-dimension (r = 0.81) and the lowest relationship observed with Communication with Employees (r = 0.69). There are strong relationships ranging from 0.76 to 0.77 between Rewarding, Career System and Training Practices sub-dimensions. Innovative Behavior had significant correlations with the other sub-dimensions ranging from 0.69 to 0.78, with the strongest relationship with Career System (r = 0.78) and

the lowest relationship with Employee Communication (r = 0.69). Overall, these findings indicate that all scale subscales are consistently related to each other and the model is suitable for regression analysis.

Table 5. Regression Analysis Results Regarding Variables Predicting Innovative Behavior

	β	sd	t	p	
Fixed	0.384	0.103	3.73	< .001	
Wage System	0.262	0.055	4.76	< .001	**R:** 0.84, **R²:** 0.70,
Rewarding	0.149	0.048	3.09	0.002	**Adjusted R²:** 0.70 **F:**
Career System	0.287	0.052	5.51	< .001	**189**
Training Practices and Performance Appraisal	0.119	0.052	2.29	0.022	
Employee Communication	0.096	0.040	2.39	0.017	

According to the results of the regression analysis, the total explanatory power of the model was high, with R = 0.84, R² = 0.70, and Adjusted R² = 0.70, indicating that the independent variables explained 70% of the total variance in the dependent variable. The significance of the model was confirmed by the statistic F(5, 389) = 189, p < .001. The variable with the strongest effect among the independent variables is Career System (β = 0.287, p < .001), followed by Compensation System (β = 0.262, p < .001). Rewarding (β = 0.149, p = .002), Training Practices and Performance Appraisal (β = 0.119, p = .022) and Employee Communication (β = 0.096, p = .017) also show statistically significant effects. The fact that the constant term (β = 0.384, p < .001) is significant indicates that there may be factors other than the independent variables in the model that have an effect on innovative behavior. In general, the model has a strong explanatory power and it can be said that the effect of career system and wage system on innovative behavior is more significant compared to other factors.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the effect of human resource management practices on employees' innovative behaviors in public sports institutions and revealed that this relationship is significant and positive in the light of the findings obtained. In his study in Özsarı (2024), the researches examining the effect of human resource management (HRM) practices on employees' innovative behaviors reveal that this relationship is significant and positive. In addition, Özman's (2023) study is in parallel with the findings of our research. In the study, it was found that various components of human resource management practices (career system, compensation system, rewarding, training practices and performance evaluation and communication with employees) significantly affect the innovative behaviors of employees in public sport organizations. Laursen and Foss (2012) examined the effects of HRM practices on innovative outcomes and found that high levels of delegation, extensive communication channels and reward systems support innovation. Furthermore, Acosta-Pardo et al. (2020) stated that knowledge-based HRM practices enhance innovative performance through social capital and knowledge sharing. Effective implementation of human resource management increases employees' motivation to develop innovative thinking, lead change in the organization, and make processes more efficient. The studies of Tunçer, (2012) and Günsel and Pelenk, (2017), which examine the impact of HRM practices on employees' innovative behaviors, show that elements such as career system and communication with employees encourage innovative attitudes of employees. Designing human resources processes in public sports institutions in a way to encourage innovative behaviors should be considered as one of the critical elements that will ensure the sustainability of institutional success.

Career system and wage system were found to be the variables that most strongly predict

innovative behavior. This finding is consistent with previous research (Pelenk, 2020; Çetin, 2021) and shows that career development opportunities increase employees' motivation to develop creativity and innovative ideas. Considering that individuals' limited access to career development opportunities, especially in public institutions, may hinder innovation, it is of great importance to make career planning that supports employees' personal and professional development. In addition, it has been observed that a fair and competitive wage system has positive effects on employee motivation and supports innovative behaviors by increasing job satisfaction. The sense of trust that the wage system provides to employees also increases their tendency to take risks in innovation.

Reward and training practices were found to be factors that significantly affect innovative behaviors. In the study conducted by Özay and Kaymaz (2023), it was determined that reward and training programs, which are among the human resources management practices, significantly affect the innovative behaviors of employees. In particular, it was determined that training and development activities have a positive and significant effect on the innovative work behaviors of employees. In addition, in the study conducted by İspir and Yeşil (2020), it was found that reward practices also encourage the innovative behaviors of employees. Reward systems contribute to organizational innovation by increasing the creativity of employees and their motivation to develop innovative ideas. This result is consistent with the literature that rewards and recognition encourage employees to come up with new ideas and motivate innovative behaviors (Turgut and Beğenirbaş, 2013; Ulusal and Yüreğir, 2020). Appreciating employees' performance and rewarding their innovative initiatives is an important element that supports the introduction of innovative ideas into the organization (Pekdemir et al. 2014). Including elements such as not only financial incentives but also verbal appreciation, promotion opportunities and increasing visibility within the organization in reward systems can strengthen employees' commitment to innovation in the long term (Yılmaz and Sözcan, 2019). In addition, it has been determined that training practices play a critical role in increasing employees' creative thinking skills and acquiring new skills (Karataş and Özcan, 2010; Tok and Sevinç). In public sports institutions, providing employees with training opportunities on innovation can support the creation of an organizational culture that is open to change.

It has been determined that the communication factor with employees also has a significant but relatively lower effect on innovative behaviors (Çalışkan et al. 2019). It is known that effective internal communication enables employees to feel safe in expressing their ideas and developing new approaches (Özay and Kaymaz, 2023). Making transparent and open communication channels more effective in public sports institutions can increase the likelihood of employees exhibiting innovative behavior. Encouraging open communication can contribute to employees sharing information more effectively with their colleagues and managers, expressing their innovative ideas freely, and handling work processes more creatively (Derin, 2019). Especially in public sports institutions, it is important to remove obstacles such as employees not being able to express their ideas clearly due to rigid hierarchical structures (Seçtim and Erkul, 2021; Günay, 2006). Strengthening communication channels can increase the participation of employees in the organization and reinforce the sense of corporate belonging (Özel, 2018; Gürel, 2009). As a result; The research findings showed that human resources management practices in public sports institutions significantly affect the innovative behavior of employees. It was determined that the career system and wage system are the most effective factors, followed by reward, training practices and communication with employees.

Recommendations

An effective career planning strategy should be adopted for employees to benefit more from professional development opportunities. Career development programs can contribute to innovative thinking by increasing the long-term motivation of individuals. Performance-based reward mechanisms should be developed and reward systems that support innovative behaviors should be implemented. Increasing the incentives provided for innovative projects can strengthen employees' tendency to develop creative ideas. Vocational training aimed at developing innovative skills should be increased and employees' access to new information should be facilitated. Training programs should be encouraged, especially in the areas of problem solving, creative thinking and technology integration. An institutional culture should be created where employees can freely express their innovative ideas and where these ideas are taken into consideration. Regular feedback systems should be implemented to ensure that employees' ideas reach management.

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