

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences

of

Istanbul Bilgi University

Human vs. Human Capital? Exploring HR Evolution in Turkey

By

Betül YÜCEL

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the

Department of Organizational Psychology

Thesis Advisor / Director of the Department: Assist. Prof. Dr. Idil Isik

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## İnsan mı, Sermaye mi? Türkiye’de İnsan Kaynağı Evriminin Araştırılması

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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih : 14/09/2016

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 128

### Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) insan odaklı perspektif
- 2) sermaye olarak insan perspektifi
- 3) stratejik insan kaynakları yönetimi
- 4) yetkinlikler
- 5) İK yönetiminin evrimi

### Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) human focused perspective
- 2) human capital perspective
- 3) strategic human resources management
- 4) competencies
- 5) evolution of HR management

## TEŞEKKÜRLER

Yüksek lisans ve tezimi tamamlama yolculuğumda yanımda olan, beni destekleyen aileme ve dostlarıma teşekkürü bir borç bilirim. Öncelikle, bu çalışmanın gerçekleşmesinde büyük emeği geçen değerli hocam ve sevgili tez danışmanım Yrd. Doç. Dr. İdil IŞIK'a çok teşekkür ederim. Yollarımız kesiştiğinden bu yana örgütsel psikolog ve de kadın girişimci olarak gelişmeme destek olduğu için ayrıca çok teşekkür ederim.

Hayatımın her anında, ne zaman ihtiyacım olsa yanı başımda olan, özellikle tez yazma sürecimdeki desteğinden ötürü sevgili Annem'e çok teşekkür ederim. Annemin ve aramızda olmayan babamın sonsuz sevgisi ve desteği olmasa bugünkü ben olamayacağımı çok iyi biliyorum. Can dostlarım Pelin ve Ayşen'e bu süreçte yaşadığım zorlukları paylaştıkları, beni yolda tuttukları ve en kritik noktalarda hep destekçim oldukları için çok teşekkür ederim. Bu çalışmanın yazım sürecimde işlerimizle ilgili sorumlulukları üstlenip, aynı zamanda beni en çok eğlendiren insanlardan olduğu için sevgili iş ortağım Seçil'e de çok teşekkür ederim.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my family, and friends who have been part of my journey through graduate studies and the completion of my master's thesis. First and foremost I would like to thank my advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. İdil IŞIK, who has not only made this project possible but who has also played an important role in my growth as an organizational psychologist and woman entrepreneur under her guidance and support.

I am appreciative of the unwavering encouragement my mother has shown me through writing my thesis. She will be there whenever I need her support. I could never be where I am today without her and my dear deceased father's love and support. I am thankful to my dearest Pelin and Ayşen for sharing in the struggles, keeping me grounded. I also thank my awesome business partner Seçil, who has supported me to complete my thesis with her perpetual joy even I could not support her for our business during the tough days of this project.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the leading and prominent strategic human resources management (SHRM) arguments in terms of how they are applied in today's academia and business world through examination of Turkish human resources (HR) professionals. This study determined "human focused" and "human capital" perspectives as a main conceptual framework, in doing so it was also investigated how these different perspectives are reflected on HR field of Turkey as a means of functions, practices, and competencies, and what the widespread belief of HR professionals on whether their primarily focus on human beings in organizations. To obtain personal experiences and attitudes from at first hand, in-depth interviews were done with 20 HR professionals with a great majority of senior ones in Turkey. To analyze qualitative data from interviews, an inductive qualitative content analysis technique was used. The findings indicate which perspective is outstanced by HR professionals is impressed by HR professionals' individual profile and individual drivers which are found out as educational background, past work experience, and the characteristics of influencers as well as collective perspective which includes the climate and culture of organizations HR professionals work for, and socio-cultural-economical reasons. Additionally, these differences influence on HR professionals' adoption, interpretation, and implementation of strategic HRM, hence different HRM outputs and HR department perceptions appear in organizations. Thus, this study contributes to the SHRM literature by adding the human capital and human focused perspectives' impacts on organizations with the results of comprehensive and evolutionary overview of strategic HRM in Turkey.

*Keywords:* human focused perspective, human capital perspective, strategic human resources management (SHRM), competencies, evolution of HR management

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmada günümüzde sıkça öne çıkan, popülerleşen ve kullanılan stratejik İnsan Kaynakları (İK) yönetimi ile ilgili argümanların, “insan odaklı” ve “sermaye olarak insan odaklı” perspektiflerin etkisinde nasıl kaldığı, bu etkinin günümüz akademi ve iş dünyasına nasıl yansdığı ve Türkiye’deki İK profesyonelleri tarafından nasıl yorumlandığı, hayata geçerken İK fonksiyonlarının, pratiklerinin, yetkinliklerinin ve İK profesyonellerinin hizmet ettikleri organizasyonlardaki algılarına nasıl etki ettiği araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada kişisel deneyim ve tutumları ilk elden almak amacıyla nitel araştırma yöntemi tercih edilmiş, büyük çoğunluğu kıdemli İK profesyonellerinin oluşturduğu 20 kişiden oluşan örneklem ile birebir görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler, tümevarıma dayalı nitel içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre; İK profesyonelinin eğitim geçmişi, iş yaşamındaki deneyimleri, birlikte çalıştığı liderlerin özellikleri nasıl bir İK profesyoneli profili sergileyebileceğini ve stratejik İK argümanlarını nasıl ele alacağını belirlemektedir. Aynı zamanda bu bireysel özelliklerin, İK profesyonelinin “insan” odaklı ya da “sermaye olarak insan” odaklı perspektiften bakışına etki ettiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bulunduğu kurumun kültür ve iklimi ile sosyokültürel-ekonomik nedenlerin de kolektif bir etkide bulunduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Tüm bu etkileşim, İK profesyonelinin stratejik İK argümanlarını edinmelerini, yorumlamalarını ve ortaya koydukları İK uygulamalarını etkilemekte, bunun sonucunda organizasyonlarda farklı İK yönetim yaklaşımları, uygulamaları ve farklı İK departmanı algıları oluşmaktadır. Söz konusu bu çalışma, “insan odaklı” ve “sermaye olarak insan odaklı” perspektiflerin Türkiye’deki İK alanına olan etkisinden edilen kapsamlı sonuçları ile stratejik İK yönetimi literatürüne katkıda bulunmuştur.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* insan odaklı perspektif, sermaye olarak insan perspektifi, stratejik insan kaynakları (İK) yönetimi, yetkinlikler, İK yönetiminin evrimi

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## **Section 1 - Introduction**

The positioning and functioning of human resources have been discussed with many academicians and professionals for many years. HR's contribution to the firms has been more important in these days rather than the past, since the competition of business increases. Paauwe (2004) stated that gaining sustainable competitive advantage is underpinned resource-based view. It is believed that to gain competitive advantage, "human capital perspective" has played a crucial role for organizations on their company strategy as well as their performance. The human capital term was defined by Becker in 1964 as "the knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals". The human capital term has its root from economy literature, on the contrary psychologists put forward entirely different perspectives for describing it. Becker, in his Nobel speech in 1996, signaled a very important aspect such as "human capital is so uncontroversial nowadays that it may be difficult to appreciate the hostility in the 1950s and 1960s toward the approach that went with the term. The very concept of human capital was alleged to be demeaning because it treated people as machines" (as cited in Wright & McMahan, 2011). "Strategic" and "resources" indicate the sustainability of organizations. It is believed that there are necessities in organizations in order to add value, make contribution to profitability, and increase shareholders' value, notwithstanding we face with "human beings" who wanted to be treated in a humane way when we mention about "strategic human resources management", "strategic", and "resources" concepts (Paauwe, 2004). In this sense, HR definition, roles, practices, approach, competencies, and etc. have been pushed to transform themselves to align with the company strategy which has apparently revealed the shifting focus on human. Thus, the aim of this study from an evolutionary perspective of SHRM in Turkey's HR field is to examine how "human" vs. "human capital" focused perspectives influences SHRM arguments, which are commonly applied in today's both academia and business world,

how Turkish HR professionals are obtained these arguments in terms of these perspectives, and thus how they are reflected to HRM practices and HR professionals in Turkish organizations. In this section, literature related to historical perspective of HRM, human capital and human focused perspectives, expectations from HR professionals in terms of roles and competencies, perception of HR, and the research question will be presented.

## **1.1. A Historical Perspective of Human Resources Management (HRM)**

### *1.1.1. Human Resources Management (HRM)*

To remind HRM's historical evolution may help us to revive today's HRM and its transformation to SHRM. In this section, Wright, Kendrith, and Ferris (1994)'s grateful summary will be presented for HRM's historical evolution. In early developments of HRM were depicted with industrial expansion, and the emergence of labor unions in 1900s. To response these progress, "personnel department" which aimed to tell the unnecessary of labor unions were created. Moreover, during World War I, Industrial Psychologists took responsibilities for personnel activities such as recruitment, testing and performance appraisal. In those years, it was realized the impact of human resources on the productivity that is why employee satisfaction term has emerged. In 1960s, with the Civil Rights movement, employment relationship (i.e. equal pay without discrimination gender, religion, color) obliged to organizations to have HRM function. Following this, the international competition in global market has been raised in America, as well in other countries, which also elicited the competitive resource of employees in order to gain advantage. Then, it was expected HRM function to provide the linkage between HR and strategic management process and quantitative estimations of financial capital based contribution, and select the right person to the right position to function in an international marketplace by providing training, compensation benefits.

Parry, Stavrou-Costea, and Morley (2011) put forward a study about The Cranet Network which is crucial for data gathering and the largest and most representative independent survey of HRM policies and practices in the world by analyzing developments in HRM in 40 countries and gathering 50,000 responses since 1990 in public and private organizations. According to comparative empirical studies on HRM policies and practices, it was obviously seen that HRM practices were viewed and operationalized differently in the different countries. Brewster, Mayrhofer, and Morley put forward the differences of conceptualization, institutionalism, and practical of HRM in different countries (as cited in Parry, et al. , 2011). Parry, et al. (2011) showed that “HRM trajectory shows a preference for exploring the context, systems and content, and national patterns of HRM as a result of the distinctive developmental paths of different countries and their subsequently idiosyncratic institutional and economic regimes.”

#### *1.1.2. Emergence of Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)*

By definition, “strategy” term was firstly in placed in 1978 by Galbraith and Nathanson (as cited in Wright & McMahan, 1992) to discuss the human resources strategies in terms of strategic management context. They emphasized the need of HR role for implementing organizational strategy by doing selection, appraisal, rewards, and development.

In this sense, SHRM was taken part in HR field. Wright et al. (1992) defined SHRM as “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals”. While they were describing SHRM, they categorized it into three categories; strategic theories of HRM, non-strategic models of HRM, and institutionalism. Strategic theories of HRM includes resource-based view of the organization, the behavioral perspective, cybernetic systems, and agency/transition cost theory. In SHRM literature, resource-based view is prominent among others. It was described by Barney (as cited in Wright et al., 1992) such a sustained competitive advantage for which the resource is needed to add

positive value to the firm, must be unique, imitable, and cannot be subrogated with another resource by other competing companies. Non-strategic models of HRM integrate into resource dependence/power model in which the focal point is power relationships within and among organizations. Finally, institutionalism contains the processes as a means of social constructions and processes, obligations, or realizations to come.

Moreover, Schuler and Jackson defined the term of “strategic human resource management” as HRM practices that should enhance organizational performance, not least in financial terms (as cited in Gooderham, Parry, & Ringdal, 2008). Gooderham et al. (2008) stated that HR is seen a source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations that is why there has been studies for seeking to display a positive relationship between HRM and company performance.

## **1.2. Human Capital Perspective**

The resource-based view is accompanied with human capital term. To understand the role of HR in organizations, many academic authors have applied the resource based view. According to Barney (as cited in Barney & Wright, 1997), to examine the role of HR in gaining competitive advantage of companies, the resource-based organizations provide an economic foundation. The focal point of this view, the sources of companies can be sources of competitive advantage, since human being is also seen an asset and the source of competitive advantage too. Similarly, Paauwe (as cited in Gooderham et al., 2008) claimed that companies emphasize to use the resources of the organizations in a more efficient and effective way to gain sustainable competitive advantage so that it is believed that strategic HRM literature commonly underlies the resource-based view of the companies.

As Wright et al. (2011) stated that the economic approach does not limit itself to individual analysis but begins with individuals. On the other hand, at the individual level, human capital includes the individual characteristics that can yield positive outcomes for that

individual at the unit level and the human capital is accumulated by the aggregated individual human capital.

Likewise all forms of capital, human capital include assets that produce income and output via human being. In 2008, Becker also stated that people can be separated from their physical assets and financial, but cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health or values (as cited in Wright et al., 2011)

Carpenter and Sanders stated that human capital became more visible in human-capital intensive industries such as financial and service organizations (as cited in Greenwood, Will, Wood, & Zelano, 2013). The studies of Crick & Liao and Haas & Hansen showed that the required and accumulated knowledge to be shared could be a sources of competitive advantage. Nonaka and Von Krogh stated that knowledge has two aspects such as explicit which is formal, spoken and captured in manuells, and tacit which is pronounced as “know-how” in organizations. Moreover, the transference of knowledge was seen as a social function such as team activity in organizations (as cited in Greenwood, et al. 2013).

Matten and Crane asserted that employees contribute organizations fundamentally and they are “resource of the corporation, they represent the company towards other stakeholders, and they act in the name of the corporation” and so they gave a “peculiar role among stakeholders” (as cited in Greenwood & De Cieri, 2007).

### **1.3. Human Focused Perspective**

In 1985, Naisbitt and Aburdene shared their visionary comment as following; “in the new information society, human capital has replaced dollar capital as the strategic resource. People and profits are inexorably linked”. When they criticized human capital, it was the beginning of trend that we still live with today. Human focused, human oriented, and humanistic are the terms of which is a part of controversial theorists’ and practitioners’ criticism to human capital and SHRM terms.

In this sense, there has seen a rising focus of SHRM in terms of human capital, but also there are theorists and practitioners who criticize the shift from employee focus to strategy focus in the role of HRM. The main criticism is about the trend in which the “human” side of HR can be ignored as a means of focalizing the capital to gain advantage in competition and be able to become a strategic partner. A good example was given Barney, et al. (1997)’s research in which they attracted the requirement of cost cutting in organizations. As it is generally seen, it is expected HR department to look first to investments in the firm’s people such as training, wages, and headcounts.

Similarly, there are many research which are conducted by many strategic HRM researchers emphasize to focus on the practices that can acquire and develop the human capital resource, but ignore the resource itself. As much of the resource-based view of the firm viewed some resources (i.e. patents, technologies) to be owned by organizations like organizational capabilities which is admitted as human capital resources. However, these human capital resources do not belong to organizations, they cannot be owned by them. The organizations may possess them just only through an employment relationship which can be changed any time (Wright et al., 2011).

Likewise Wright et al. (2011), Paauwe (2004) claimed that “human resources are something more than just “resources”: they are active individuals with past experiences, internalized values, and norms”. As he explained in his book, human resources which refer to employees in organizations, are “human beings” at first. They are not only the employees of an organization, indeed are the members of different communities both inside and outside of the organization. They are not owned ones and their behaviors are partially governed by the organizations they work for. While HR literature has emphasized the importance of human capital, indeed its detrimental practices to HR field, strategy literature has become shifted their way into more human way surprisingly. For example McKinsey has been suggesting to CEOs

of organizations that they serve consultancy, develop, motivate, and attract talents to be ready for “war for talent”.

On the other hand, some organizations prefer to focus more on human and they display their philosophy by their practices. One notable example, which was given by Barney et al. (1997), is the view of CEO of FedEx which is a one of the most important logistic companies. In late 1990s, they declared that their customer satisfaction begins with their employee satisfaction so that they put “people-first” organization into their philosophy in which value is created by focusing on employees first so that people are the primarily link in the value chain.

Paauwe (2004) raised the relationship between employee and organization and defined as “exchange relationship” in this following sentences: “the exchange relationship not only labour, money, and time, but also competencies, knowledge, information, learning, voice/participation, and wellbeing”. He remarked it with an example that people spend their hours more than the hours they can spend with their social networks so that being involved in exchange relationship is very important than those dominated economic rationality.

Stone (2013) pointed out that “instrumental approach to HRM has been largely replaced by the preferred humanistic approach to HRM.” He stated that HR policies and practices still need to be aligned with the organization’s strategic objectives, notwithstanding “humanistic HRM” emphasizes on “human being” first as a means of development, collaboration, participation, trust and informed choice.

Wright et al. (2011) remarked individual, social, and task context in their research and described that the individual context emphasizes the characteristics of each individual in the organization which are the part of human capital. In this sense, the processing, interpretation and reaction to an information are eligible about how to behave and feel. Secondly, the organization itself provides a social context in which each individual interacts with each other.

This also makes a differentiation at organization level. Finally, the tasks which are assigned to whom and whether the systems, processes, and technologies are attainable by each individual.

Thus, as human beings can sense, think and decide differently and these differences lead them to act and contribute differently, employee as a human being can add value to the organization via his/her individual specificity.

#### **1.4. Expectations from HR Professionals**

##### *1.4.1. The Roles of HR*

The role of HR has been changing over the years. In the last decades, as the growing emphasis on human capital, the role of HR has turned into the “roles” to be performed in order to provide competitive advantage of their organizations.

HR professionals are expected to understand the economic consequences of the HR practices. HR practices are believed to provide advantage to companies for the competition by developing the human assets. Ulrich (1997) also emphasized in his research that “HR can impact firm performance through its efficiency in developing the human assets that are a source of competitive advantage.”

From the human capital perspective, most companies expect their HR professionals to minimize the costs. Barney et al. (1997) gave an example from Alcon Laboratories in which the role of HR was to decrease cost, indeed the company encouraged their employees to admit less expensive health insurance.

Van Buren, Greenwood, and Sheehan (2011) conducted a research with Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) which has approximately 14,000 members. They conducted a survey including primary HRM roles and responsibilities, HRM areas of importance, and ethics activities. The research showed that employee relations is seen as important, but it is not seen as important as strategic importance of HRM policies. SHRM activities has been rising as a challenge in HRM professionals and they claimed that “the ethical test for the HRM

professional, however, is that the business partnership role creates potential role conflict elsewhere. Part of the traditional strength of the HRM function has been the stewardship of the employment relationship”. Moreover, they remarked the position of HRM which is also seen as complicated because of the duality of HR managers’ roles. They historically played as employer representatives and advocates for employee interests, but today HRM’s orientation has been changed. Ferris, Hochwarter, Buckley, Harrell-Cook, & Frink accounted for this change as “social, legal, and political climate and organizational demands for efficiency” (as cited in Van Buren, et al., 2011).

Besides these changes, there are still common interests between organizations and their employees in terms of HRM scholarship and practice, but Van Buren et al. (2011) claimed that “HRM has become less employee focused and more organization and strategy focused, often to the detriment of employees.” HRM was meant to concern employee and employee policies when it was called as personnel management, and found its way as a means of trying to make organization-employee relations more just and humane. However it has again changed its focus in the last decades, and seek to add value to the organization through strategic HRM by “following wider trends in organizations, strategies, and management philosophies rather than leading them” (Argyris, 1957; McGregor, 1960; Vroom, 1964; Wright & Snell, 1998; Ferris et al., 1999; Mendenhall, Jensen, Gregersen, & Black, 2003 as cited in Van Buren et al., 2011).

#### *1.4.2. The Competencies of HR Professionals*

When we examine the expectations for competencies in HR field, we can see so many research which has been appeared over the decades. Barney et al. (1997) conducted a competency study with an extensive assessment by collecting over ten thousand associates of HR professionals in 1500 businesses in one hundred organizations. This research is thought to be extended current HR theory and practices by contributing to specific competencies for HR professionals to add value to organizations and demonstrating the competency-performance

relationship of HR professionals. The competencies such as “business knowledge, delivery of HR, and management of change” emerged from that study.

Although many researchers have been studied in this area, Dave Ulrich and his colleagues can be distinguished from the others with their continuously updated competency research from 1987 to now by collecting data seven times with global participation of mixed of industries’ small, medium, and large firms. Ulrich, Kryscynski, Brockbank, and Slade (2015) competency model is based on “the most comprehensive and rigorous empirical review of HR competencies and outcomes” in the world.

Ulrich et al. argued that to be a successful HR professional, it is expected to respond the changing business trends by changing their competencies. Ulrich (1998) stated that HR must express their role with the value and mechanisms they create, and they must measure their effectiveness in terms of business competitiveness rather than employee comfort. Their research from 1988 to 2007 has showed their desire of which was to define the competencies to add greatest value to key stakeholders, figure out how HR professionals develop these competencies in the most effective and fastest ways, and determine the alignment of HR competencies and practices to business performance (Ulrich et al., 2010).

When we examine Ulrich et al. competency models with a historical point of view from Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, it is apparently seen that “business knowledge” and “HR delivery” are existed in five competency models since 1987 till today. “Strategy” term is transparently found its place in the competency models of 2002 and 2016 years. Competency of “change” and “personal credibility” are also frequently taken place. When we look at their proposal for this year’s competency model, it is again emphasized on business, technical, and even technological competencies with different names. Moreover, “human capital” is apparently presented as a competency. Nevertheless, in their competency model of this year,

there is no any competency which refers to “human being” not only within the figure of the model, but also within the breakdown of it (Ulrich et al., 2015).

Likewise Ulrich et.al, there are several studies which were carried out between 1990 and 1995 years (Yeung, Woolcocki, & Sullivan, 1996) showing that to add higher value to their organizations, many HR functions were being driven to lower HR costs, enhance the quality of HR services, and established the linkages with business needs. Eventually, this need of change led to rebuilt roles and new competencies among HR professionals. However, in 1996, Yeung, et al.’s study of identifying and developing HR competencies for the future pointed out that it is crucial to align the skills of HR professionals with the changing HR functions, strategies, structures, systems, and processes, otherwise the transformation of HR will damage the organizations.

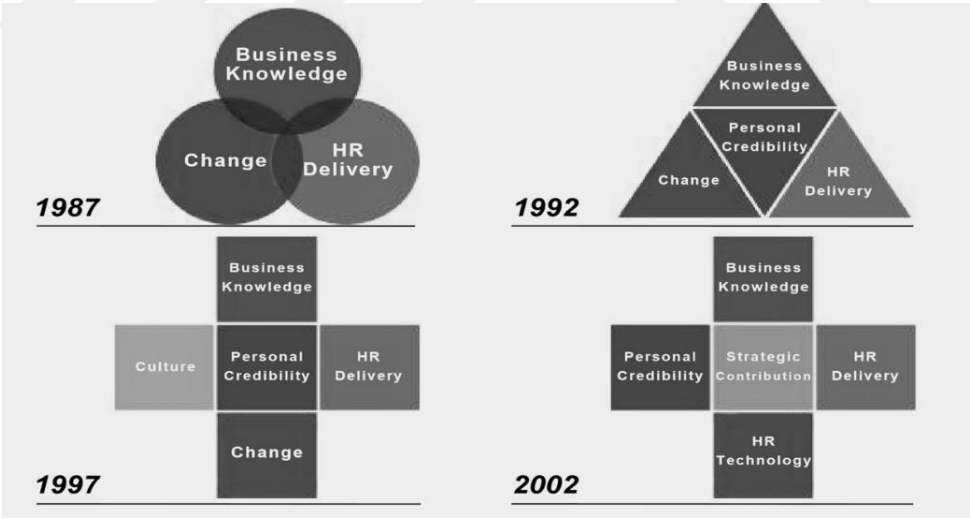


Figure 1: 1987, 1992, 1997, and 2002 HR Competencies\*

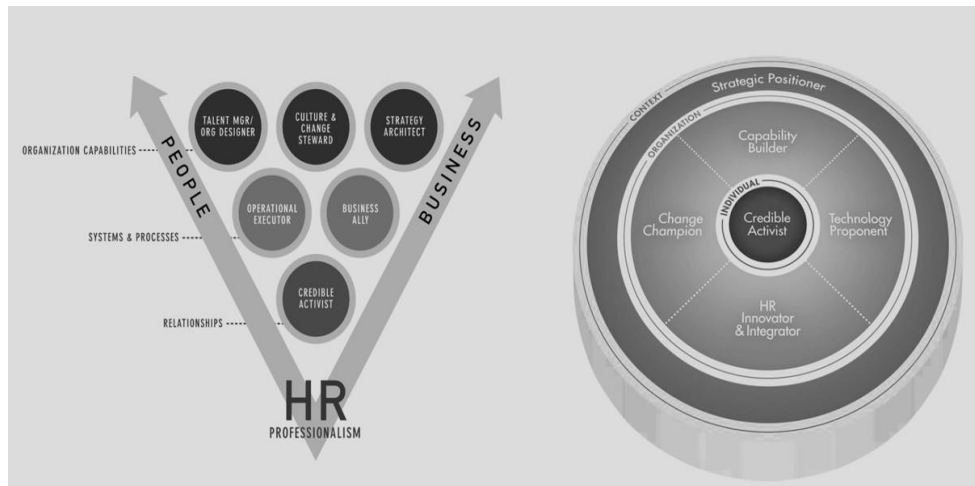


Figure 2: 2007 and 2012 HR Competencies\*

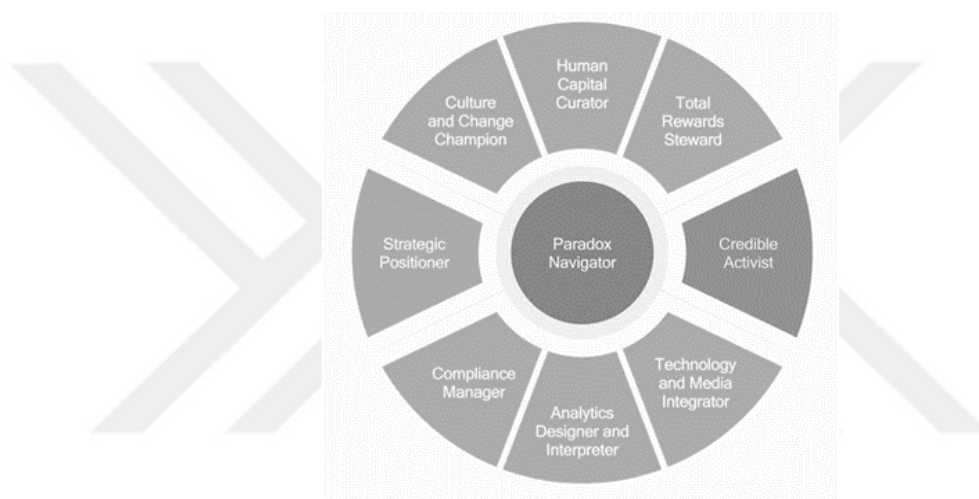


Figure 3: 2016 HR Competencies\*

\*Figures were retrieved from The RBL White Paper Series (Ulrich et al., 2016)

According to Lee and Yu (2013) research, due to the challenges which are the results of shifting business world, companies should attune to complexity, uncertainty, and change. Uncontroversial, HR is struggling with these expectations by changing their skills, competencies and has to fit themselves to new era's challenges and expectations. These followings are the ones that HR professionals more concerned with their findings: “remaining competitive in the talent marketplace” and “developing future leaders”. They also added that “digital skills, agile thinking, risk leveraging, interpersonal and communication skills, global

operating skills” are the skills which are needed to cope with the challenges by HR professionals.

Other examples of latest HR competency models accept very similar understanding of HR competency with The RBL Group in which Ulrich et al. competency research is published. Likewise Ulrich et al. competency models of SHRM, Cornell ILR, and South Africa are mostly focusing on human capital not human itself except one and/or two competency/ies. (Table 3).

*Table 1: Other Latest HR Comptency Models\**

<b>SHRM (2012)</b>	<b>Cornell ILR (2012)</b>	<b>South Africa (2012)</b>
HR technical expertise and practice	business acumen	leadership and personal credibility
relationship management	functional expertise	organisational capability
consultation	strategic HR	solution creation and implementation
organizational leadership and navigation	contextual expertise	interpersonal and communication skills
communication	capabilities	citizenship for the future
global and cultural effectiveness		
ethical practice		
critical evaluation		
business acumen		

\*Information was adopted from Lee and Yu's 2013 research

### **1.5. Perception of HR**

Van Buren, et al. (2011) emphasized that HRM has changed its focus again and again in the last several decades. As it is mentioned above section of SHRM, Wright and Snell (1998) explained this rising trend is to seek the ways to add value to the organization through SHRM.

Additionally, Van Buren et al. (2011) put forward a conspicuous argument by saying “SHRM has a dark side as HRM professionals face pressure to eschew their traditional roles as

employee champions in order to become accepted by others within their organizations as business partners” and added that shifting HRM to SHRM means to accept that employees of companies are as economic ends. Some SHRM strategies like downsizing or using outsources are the choices of companies. In this sense, questions appear to be responded whether these all decisions in terms of unitarism or not. Morris, Mortimer, and Leece (1999) defined unitarism as the integration and harmonization of company as a means of common goal in which the management’s role becomes critical to provide powerful leadership with good communication. Wilcox and Lowry (2000) figured out that aforementioned strategic choices of HRM may affect the subordination of fundamental the human rights such as fairness and justice of employees. In addition to that safe workplaces, fair compensation, and freedom of association can be affected as a means of strategic choices. Thus, unitarist tendencies, the fundamental human rights can be affected conversely by “strategic” role of HRM so that the perception of HR department can also be scrutinized.

Despite the evolving HR practices and changing trends in HR field, there is still inadequate information about how employees react to HRM’s practices as a subject of these practices. In 2002, Grant and Shields argued this subject in their research in terms of HRM ideas, idealized HR, employees’ reactions (i.e. thought, act) whom benefit from HRM practices. The psychological contract and organizational justice were found out as determinants of employees’ reactions to HRM practices.

Hammonds (2007) asserted that becoming a strategic partner has been “hopeful rhetoric” with a “seat at the table” where the business decisions are made without HR for 20 years. In his article “why we hate HR”, Hay Group’s 2005 survey was remarked with the result of “40% of employees commended their companies for retaining high-quality workers. Just 41% agreed that performance evaluations were fair. Only 58% rated their job training as favorable. Most said they had few opportunities for advancement. Most telling, only about half

of workers below the manager level believed their companies took a genuine interest in their well-being.” It is believed that HR professionals are competent at administrative works such as pay, benefits, but these types of works can also be worked with contractors outside of the companies. The crucial role of HR is to increase intellectual capital and reputation of the company, yet HR is seen as unsuited for this type of role. He sees where HR is today is stuck. Because, the opportunity for competitive advantage through lens of people could not be used effectively by HR professionals. The reasons are given in the article as followings: HR is not chosen by best and talent employees, independent thinkers are not usually hired for HR roles, people generally enter the field of HR by choice or wrong decisions such as desiring to be helpful, working with people.

Moreover, it is argued that the driving strategy of HR disconnects with business strategy. Linda Gratton from London Business Schools (as cited in Hammonds, 2007) had discovered two problems after she had given many trainings to HR professionals: “Many HR people bring strong technical expertise to the party, but no point of view about the future and how organizations are going to change. And second, it is very difficult to align HR strategy to business strategy, because business strategy changes very fast, and it's hard to fiddle around with a compensation strategy or benefits to keep up.” She claimed that few executives actually “do operations out of a set of principles and personal values” which is truly effective indeed.

Kochan (2007) indicated that loss of trust, legitimacy and credibility are the widespread crisis for HR professionals in the eyes of stakeholders. SHRM role which has been developing since two-decade has failed to realize “greater status, influence, and achievement”, because HR professionals are not providing challenging perspectives to general managers for their strategic choices. Greenwood, et al. (2007) approached that “soft HRM recognize the value of people as assets but this does not mean that HRM always adopts an employee focus”. Legge claimed that organizations constrict employee conditions and benefits due to economic stress and HRM uses

“hard” interpretations of HRM to meet organizational needs instead of employee needs (as cited in Van Buren et al., 2011).

### **1.6. The Research Objective**

The current studies, globally known / used academic or popular arguments reveal that HR function and HR professionals should be strategic in order to add value to organizations. The ways of becoming a strategic department or partner are clearly revealed. However, there is no unique study how these SHRM arguments pass over HR professionals under what dominated perspectives and their further effects on HR professionals’ perception, the way of doing their businesses, practices, etc.

As literature review shows, although there are many studies related to SHRM, human capital management and their indications to organizations; there is no study which associates how SHRM arguments shape HR professionals’ perspectives and how these arguments reflect on their HR management, functions, and practices in terms of “human capital” and “human focused” perspectives. Also, there is no unique study how HR professionals’ perceptions are affected throughout this evolution especially focused on their human focused both in Turkey and the world as well.

We predict that strategic HR research has shifted their focus on human capital rather than human itself and due to this shifting, the practices of HR professionals changed dramatically with more highlight of capitalistic perspective. We also assume that especially educated people are affected more with the light of this changing. They are not machines in intense expectation, but what are they? Do they think they are really valued as only being human not an asset or resource in the competitive world? On the whole, we aim to discuss how this perspective, that the “human is a capital”, influences the HR field to become more strategic and so the evolution of HR competencies, development of HR practices, and even the perception of HR in Turkey.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of SHRM arguments on HR functions, practices, professionals, and to figure out how human capital perspective is interpreted by HR professionals in Turkey. Additionally, the study also aims to discover whether SHRM arguments reflect on HR practices with “human” or “human capital” focused, in consequence what the prominent HR professionals’ perception is in Turkey.



## Section 2 - Method

In this section, sample, instruments, and procedure of the study will be elaborated.

### 2.1. Sample

A total of 20 HR professionals (*male = 8, female = 12*) were selected as participants from different corporate and consulting organizations in Turkey (Table 2). The seniority level was specially planned to be high so that participants were positioned as decision makers or assistants to decision makers within their current organizations, and consultants who serve for various companies. The mean age is 36.8 and the age range of participants is between 23 and 55 years.

According to educational background distribution, 25 % of them graduated from a technical department (i.e. science, technology, engineering subjects) whereas 75 % of them graduated from non-technical (i.e. social sciences, humanities, business administration, economy) department. The participants' mean tenure is 14.35 years with the range between 2 and 33 years. 60 % of participants have managerial role in their current organization with the mean tenure of 12.6 years. 50 % of this population have middle and/or above management level. 35 % of all participants are consultants and business owners with mean tenure of 19.2 years.

All participants have work experience in companies accepted as large in corporate scale (at least 1000 - 3000 employees) and 45% of the participants have small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) experience. Participants having a single sector experience formed 20 % of all participants and 50% of the participants have experience in four or more sectors (Table 2).

Table 2: Demographic Information of Participants

No	Sex	Age	Educational Background		Previous Job Experiences
			Education level	Department	
1	Female	37	Master's degree (double)	Industrial Eng., Economy	Finance, telecom.and tech.
2	Female	34	Doctorate (ongoing)	International Relations, Sociology, Adult Education	Tech., telecom., education, financial consultancy
3	Male	43	Master's degree	Industrial Eng., Business Mng.	Telecom., airport mng., holding, consultancy
4	Female	40	Master's degree	Political Science Mng., Business Admin., HR Mng.	Finance, insurance, telecom., tech., airport retail, consultancy
5	Female	23	Undergraduate	Psychology	Pharmacy
6	Male	33	Undergraduate	Business Admin.	Finance
7	Female	31	Master's degree	Business Admin., IO Psychology	Insurance
8	Female	37	Master's degree	Labour Economics, Industrial Relations, MBA	Logistics, telecom., pharmacy, airport mng., automotive
9	Male	30	Master's degree	Economy, HR Management	Telecom., FMCG, software, consultancy
10	Female	53	Undergraduate	Economy	Finance, telecom., consultancy
11	Female	39	Undergraduate	American Culture and Literature	Telecom.
12	Male	37	Master's degree	Business Admin., MBA	Durable goods, consumer electronics, telecom., tech., airport retail
13	Male	37	Master's degree	Mechanical Engin.	Production, automotive, electronics
14	Female	37	Undergraduate	Economy	Logistics, consultancy
15	Male	55	Undergraduate	Business Admin.	FMCG, fast moving consumer goods, tech., consultancy
16	Female	30	Undergraduate	Political Science, Public Admin.	Tech., telecom., insurance
17	Male	35	Doctorate (ongoing)	Industrial Eng., Organizational Behavior	Tech., telecom.
18	Male	35	Undergraduate	Mechanical Eng., Business Admin.	Automotive, holding, telecom.
19	Female	35	Master's degree	Business Admin., HR Mng., Conservatory	Petroleum, HR consultancy, energy
20	Female	35	Undergraduate	Radio, TV, cinema	Fashion, media, finance, tech., telecom.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Participants (continued)

No	Tenure (year)	Current Job Experiences			
		Sector	Position	Type of Company	Size of Company
1	10	Telecom.	First line manager	Corporate	3000-5000
2	10	Consultancy	First line manager	Corporate	1000
3	21	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	6
4	18	Airport retail	Senior manager	Corporate	2500
5	2	Pharmacy	Specialist	Corporate	6000
6	10	Finance	First line manager	Corporate	10000
7	6	Insurance	First line manager	Corporate	2500
8	15	Automotive	Top management	Corporate	1000
9	6	Consultancy	HR Analytics Consultant for SMEs	SME	No employee
10	28	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	No employee
11	17	Telecom.	Senior manager	Corporate	4000
12	16	Airport retail	Senior manager	Corporate	2500
13	16	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	No employee
14	16	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	45
15	33	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	15
16	7	Insurance	First line manager	Corporate	2400
17	14	Telecom.	First line manager	Corporate	6000-7000
18	14	Telecom.	First line manager	Corporate	6000-7000
19	14	Energy	Senior manager	Corporate	5000-10000
20	14	Consultancy	Business owner	SME	2

## 2.2. Instruments

A semi-structured interview questions were developed consisting of the following dimensions:

- a. Demographic Characteristics
- b. HR Evolution in the World and Turkey
- c. The Concepts, Development of SHRM, and Experiences
- d. SHRM Researchers
- e. Transformation of HR Competencies and Practices
- f. Future of HR

Covering aforementioned categories, 20 semi-structured interview questions were asked to the participants (see: Appendix A). Educational background, professional work experiences, and motivational factors for choosing HR career were included in demographic characteristics. “HR Evolution in The World and Turkey” category includes the questions of definition, main role, and history of HR. Moreover, there are questions that were aimed to ask participants for gathering their opinions about development, transformation of HR regarding positive and negative ways. “The concepts, development of SHRM and Experiences” category includes the questions related to comprehension of strategic term in HR, becoming a strategic HR department, their personal experiences for being strategic HR professional, their free thought whether HR really needs to be strategic or not. The category of “SHRM Researchers” contains the questions whom they are following as a SHRM researcher, their opinions about Dave Ulrich whom is well-known researcher in HR field and his arguments. The category of “Transformation of HR Competencies and Practices” includes the questions covering challenges for HR field in the world and in Turkey, expected competencies from HR professionals, impacts of expected competencies on HR agenda and practices. It was also asked where HR field stands now from their point of view, how they evaluate HR professionals’ approach to human in organizations. Their self-evaluations covering their personal experiences in HR field was asked to them through human focused approach as well. Their anticipations for “Future of HR” were also asked to participants in terms of employees’ emotions, changing roles in HR, the entitlement of HR.

## **2.3. Procedure**

### **2.3.1. Human Participant Research Ethic Committee Approval**

Before starting data collection, Istanbul Bilgi University Human Subjects Ethics Committee Application was done. Data collection via interviews was started following the

approval from the committee dated Dec 15, 2015 and issued with the 2015-20024-077 number. Approval form is given in the Appendix B.

### 2.3.2. Interviews

Participants were contacted and informed about the research, then their permission was asked to join the study. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were done with an approximately 45 min – 1 hr. time slots. Before starting interviews, participants were asked to sign the consent form. The questions were verbally asked to the participants, but the dialog was not limited to the answers for that specific questions. The sequence of some of the questions was changed or skipped if the discussion on former questions provided sufficient data for the coming questions. A tape-recorder or a cell phone were preferred to record voice during the interviews.

Two pilot interviews were conducted to check the strength of questions. After first two interviews, some of the questions were removed or revised. For instance, in pilot interviews, the questions related to the participants' experiences were not asked, but additional questions were added for exploring their experiences in the second version of interview questions. In addition to this, the description, similarities, and differences of human capital and financial capital terms had been directly asked to the participants in pilot interviews, yet these questions were removed in the second version of questions for the reason that they were found as more conceptual and academic.

### 2.3.3. Data Analysis

Voice recordings were transcribed. Data was analyzed by combining the raw material transcribed without specifying either the name of interviewees or their organizations. Inductive Qualitative Content Data Analysis was conducted on this anonym data via MAXQDA software program. Interview notes/audio-recordings were matched with a participant code.

### Section 3 – Results

The current research delivered findings on how the leading and popular SHRM arguments are applied in today's academia and business world based on a through examination of HR professionals in Turkey. As a conceptual framework, the study uses the alternative perspectives of "human focused" vs. "human capital focused" as a main conceptual framework to analyse the practices of HR professionals interviewed in this study. The findings reveal that the different perspectives adopted by HR professionals plays a crucial role in defining what constitutes HR, its roles, perception of HR evolution, and HR's contribution to the organization as well as the individuals' assessment of the industry they operate in.

Data, collected by in depth interviews, was coded by "simultaneous coding" which was explained by Miles and Huberman as "the application of two or more codes applied to a single qualitative datum, or the overlapped occurrence of two or more codes applied to sequential units of qualitative data (as cited in Saldané, 2013) and analyzed systematically by inductive qualitative content analysis methodology. Schreier describes qualitative content analysis enables to analyze data and interpret its meaning (as cited in Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). It can be used in either an inductive or a deductive way. In this study, inductive content analysis was preferred to analyse data from the interviews. In the inductive approach, the organization phase includes open coding, creating categories, and abstraction (Elo et al., 2014). Based on the findings from the data, a model was developed as represented in Figure 4. Within this context, building stones of emerging perspective and shaping structures of HR professionals' individual perspectives became the thematic higher categories. These higher categories are named as "How do the "human focused" vs. "human capital focused" perspectives shape the HR Professionals' SHRM arguments?" and "Professionals' Individual Perspectives on HRM".

Prior to further extensive analysis, the higher thematic category titled “How do the “human focused” vs. “human capital focused” perspectives shape the HR Professionals’ SHRM arguments?” deserves a brief explanation as it forms the basis for the remaining analysis. In this category, strategic HR arguments focus on designing, implementing and executing HR steps by defining competencies such as employing right candidate to right position (i.e. assigning talent to task), designing fair salary systems and monitoring performance. These competencies are seen as key factors that provide developmental support to assist the company’s future success and, sustain its competitive advantage through enhancing organizational commitment and engagement. Within the context of HR management as a strategic option, various suggestions were proposed during the conversations held in the interviews with the participants. The perspective of “human focused” is typically used within the context of focus on HR policies and executions that enhance the individuals’ potential and wellbeing to support their harmony with work. As mentioned in the humanistic HR management definition by Stone (2013), the “human focused” perspective constitutes the basis for the development of employees, collaborative working, participatory management, trust and existence of the conscious choices within the company where HR policies and executions are fully integrated with the organizational strategic goals. On the other hand, the “human capital” definition of Becker (1997), which is the employee as an “asset” of the company in terms of their knowledge, thoughts and abilities, is closely aligned with the utilization of this thesis as “human capital focused” perspective.

According to this perspective, HR management perceives HR policies and practices as a means to facilitate employees, seen as assets, to accomplish the corporate strategic goals.

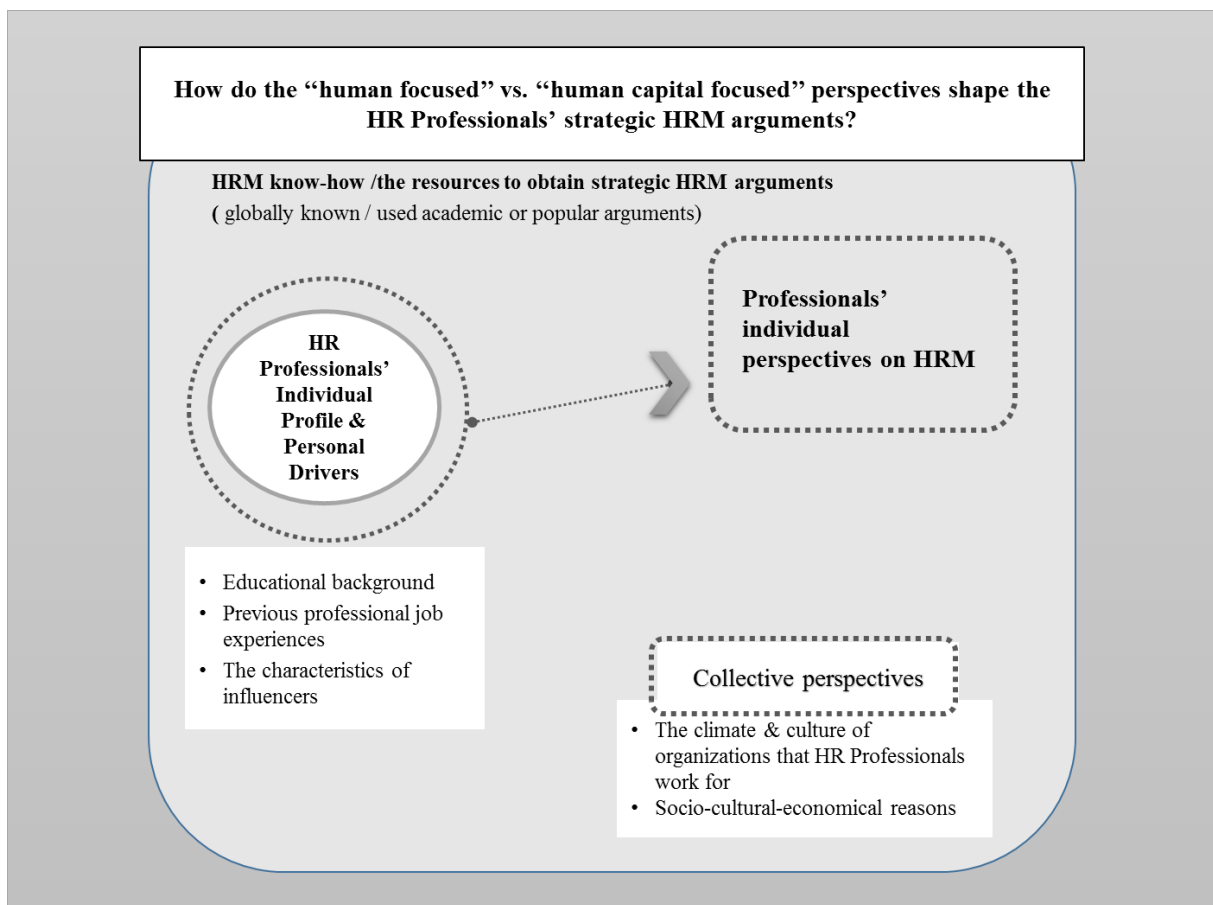
Moreover, in the higher category of “Professionals” individual perspectives on HRM”, topics such as how the professionals define HR and how they position the executions of HRM

within their sector and industry, appears to be defined by which perspective dominates the HR individuals' views.

In the following section, components of the model that emerged from the analysis are explained in detail.

### **3.1. How Do the “Human Focused” vs. “Human Capital Focused” Perspectives Shape the HR Professionals’ Strategic HRM Arguments?**

Figure 4 aims to clarify the reasons of different interpretations and executions of SHRM arguments by HR professionals. Professionals' individual perspectives on HRM appear to be influenced by their HRM know-how, as well as, differences in the HR professionals' individual profile and personal drivers. HR professionals' individual profile and personal drivers are captured through information on educational background, previous professional job experiences, and the characteristics of influencers. Moreover, collective perspectives within the context of HR professionals also have an impact on this interaction. In the research, collective perspectives are identified as socio-cultural-economical reasons and the climate and culture of organizations, which HR professionals work in. It is suggested that perspectives of “human focused” vs “human capital focused” has an effect on the emergent differences in HR management styles (Figure 4).



*Figure 4: How Do the “Human Focused” vs. “Human Capital Focused” Perspectives Shape the HR Professionals’ Strategic HRM Arguments?*

### *3.1.1. HRM Know-How / The Resources to Obtain Strategic HRM*

In order to get a sense of what constitutes HRM know-how and the resources of such know-how, the interviews focused on investigating the influence of major academic paradigms developed in recent decades as well as other sources where HR professionals derive inspiration for their perceptions and practices.

Within the context of the influence of globally known/used academic or popular arguments upon participants’ concerns and attitudes, the interviews focused on the work of Dave Ulrich and his colleagues (1998) who are the leading researchers in the field of HRM. According to the participants’ positive evaluations about strategic HRM arguments and

competency model of Dave Ulrich and his colleagues (1998), the common answers can be lined up as: (a) *their competency model stemmed from long-term and well-rounded research and it is continuously updated*, (b) *it raises HR's potential for being a strategic business partner*, (c) *it elevates HR's positioning to an independent and strategic function within the company*.

On the other hand, negative perceptions that emerged from the participants raised the following issues: (a) *the concept of what constitutes "human" has fallen into secondary importance as the positioning of "human" within HRM conflicts with the essence of what "human" implies in the human focused approach*, (b) *Ulrich's positioning of "human" within HRM creates conflict by prioritising the needs of organization in its definition*, (c) *HRM concepts within Ulrich's framework are motivated by commercial purposes instead of genuine needs of employees*, (d) *human is no longer at the focal point in the competency model, instead, system and process dominate over "human"*, (e) *Ulrich represents the model as uniformly suitable for all conditions regardless of cultural and organizational differences*.

As per other resources HR Professionals utilise to derive inspiration and guidance for their approach to HRM, leading answers revealed the information channels of HR conferences, congresses, forums, globally popular journals, relevant associations and the social networks. Making particular emphasis to the cultural specificity within HRM, some participants stated that the empirical and theoretical academic research at Turkish universities as well as the number of conferences and other best practice sharing platforms are inadequate for Turkish culture and context, and fail to meet the needs of HRM.

Questioning whether HR is a specific proficiency revealed the widespread view among the participants that it does not demand in depth information and that it is mostly based on a learning-by-doing. One of the participants indicated his opinion as:

“HR is not an extraordinary or a high-tech job. If you google it, you can reach thousands of pages related to HR. However, the critical point is knowing your

job well and adapting distinctive skills to it, thereby building tangible, fiduciary, intelligible and transparent communication with people. Now, I think that Dave Ulrich's model is quite significant and he may examine the topic with an engineering perspective but this is a model which is so focused and long lasting. On the one hand, he locates an intelligence center at the heart of the system, and he asserts that the system works on the principles of process designs of an everlasting factory. On the other hand, account management places emphasis on HR as a business partner. HR has to be in the field. In other words, if they are the business partners of production teams, they have to work side by side with the sales people. HR needs to embrace that. Moreover he claims that there is no need to have a know-how center or an operational center because HR already has serious and critical operations.”

### *3.1.2. HR Professionals' Individual Profile and Personal Drivers*

According to the model (Figure 4), which is developed based on the emerging themes, HR professionals' individual profile and personal drivers influence their approach towards strategic HR arguments. The determinant variables of HR professionals' profiles within this model are found to be educational background, previous job experiences, and the characteristics of influencers.

#### *3.1.2.1. Educational Background*

The majority of participants in this study are the senior HR professionals where 95% of them have work experience of more than 5 years and 40% of participants have work experience of more than 15 years (Table 2).

Participants are formed 70% of the participants who have technical educational background stated that they did not choose HR proficiency deliberately, and that they prefer the

organizational development sub-field of the current HR functions. One of them shared his opinions as:

“Actually, I did not prefer HR proficiency. After my industrial engineering educational background, I came across the field of organizational development while I was looking for a career where I could display and use my capabilities. Organizational development was not structured under HR in those days, it was the responsibility of a different process design team. Actually I began to work in that team. However, through time, the tasks of organizational development were eventually transferred to the HR department in my company, just like most other companies. Before I transferred to HR, I perceived it to be ineffective department, which manages human resources operations. But then through my new career, I arrived at the realisation that in the HR department, analytical works can be also done and valuable outputs can also be produced for both company and people. Before my career, HR was always faraway from me, even so I still could not say that I embrace and internalize HR with all working fields.”

Another participant with technical educational background has similar comments. He noted that: “I began to work in the organizational development function and I managed the change and development efforts within the company. I have been working in HR because these tasks are organized within the structure of HR. However, I am not responsible for core HR activities such as recruitment interviewing, providing feedback, etc.”.

Additionally, 25% of all participants who have technical educational background did not choose to work in HR deliberately, expressed similar views to the above two participants and emphasized that HR profile, HR management, definition and executions should be more technical and analytical.

Meanwhile, participants are formed 60% of the participants who have non-technical educational stated that they chosed HR deliberately. They chosed HR to be with people, and are willing to add value to human, and not willing to deal with numbers. Moreover, they completed internships in HR departments before graduated from university which can be seen as a sign of their motivation to work in HR. Especially their emphasis on “willing to add value to human” is consistent with their emphasis on human focus in HR field.

### *3.1.2.2. Previous Job Experiences*

The study includes views that HR employee profiles should be more technical where the HR professionals should have technical educational backgrounds and corporate experience in technical sectors. As told before, participants of current study have significant experience in corporate firms in different sectors. For instance, one of the participants spent majority of her seventeen year-long professional experience in telecommunication companies and a non-technical education background. However, she openly said that, “If I had the chance to begin working in HR today, I would study engineering and start my career in HR analytics because you can only make a difference when you support the technical side of HR.” She stated that she would prefer to have technical educational background due to this reason. However, she made following comments about the transformation of HR profile and what kinds of profiles she would prefer:

“Currently, when you take a look at the background of upper management of many HR departments, you see that these managers are actually coming from various different functions. This is a situation that actually supports HR analytics. I see that these kinds of HR top managers very seriously push, guide and encourage employees not to stay in the same role for long time by using their own experiences. And this is how HR profile changes, it is going through a serious change, right now. For instance, HR professionals who have engineering

background were generally industrial engineers in the past, but now various different types of engineers end up in HR. We are happy that we have been receiving job applications to HR departments from people working in more technical departments and have educational background in electrical and electronic engineering or computer engineering in our company.”

### *3.1.2.3. The Characteristics of Influencers*

We can say that the profile of the participants in this study was shaped by the experience of working with different types of leaders and mentors in the past in addition to their previous experiences organizational climate and culture. One of the participants shared her views about how the profile, vision and management type of the person managing the HR department influence HR perception by saying:

“HR is perceived as a good thing when it is at good hands and as a bad thing when it is at bad hands. As it is subjective, perception varies according to how it is managed, as well as the vision and personalities of management.”

A participant having twenty-eight years of active working experience in her professional career and spent more than twenty years working in HR, compared a leader example in her past experience to the leaders she currently encountered and talked about an example about how management style of the individuals who are in the position of leading HR department could make an impact on other HR professionals:

“When I was working at a bank during the early days of my career, there was a deputy general manager whom everybody feared. During those times, I criticized him for being too authoritarian. But now, when I compared him to a number of HR managers I recently met with, I see that he was a fair person who supported employees and was making the right decisions. Although there was a large number of employees in the bank, he was remembering names of all employees

and he was asking how they feel whenever he came across with them in the elevator. There are sophisticated competency models today but we also see the increase in the number of HR managers who refrain from getting in touch with employees and do not even ask how they are doing. I think that this approach that isolates HR from other employees and human beings is spreading to HR professionals at every level and HR professionals working in companies having this leader profile display similar behaviors. This creates allergy against HR in the company.”

### **3.1.3. Collective Perspective**

According to the findings of the study, personal perspective of HR professionals at the HR management and HR professionals’ individual profile and individual drivers are effective in the collective perspective. The climate and culture of organizations HR professionals work for and socio-cultural-economical reasons are the most important factors that determine the presence of a collective perspective within HR management.

#### **3.1.3.1. The Climate and Culture of the Organizations which HR Professionals Work for**

Climate and culture of organizations, leadership types of top management and HR top manager are viewed as an important factor that play a crucial role in the success of companies and for HR’s ability to become a strategic business partner. Majority of participants of the study were senior HR professionals with various different sector and company experiences which provided them the opportunity to compare between the current situation and past experiences and express their views by giving examples. One of the participants used soccer as a metaphor while talking about how the culture of the organization affects success of the company. He said,

“Let’s consider soccer teams. For instance, Barcelona soccer team, whoever plays in the team adapts the team’s culture. Human beings who are accustomed

to success become successful in that culture and the team reaches success, accordingly. When we consider another team and if there is no collective culture in that team, whoever plays in that team will have difficulty in becoming successful.”

The mentioned participant added that HR actually played a key role in the transformation of the culture, however, acknowledging that accepting different points of view is extremely hard in well-established and stereotyped cultures.

Another participant with a similar point of view emphasized that the reason that lies at the bottom of failure of some HR approach and implementations in some organizations is the culture of the organization adding that,

“For instance, if you try to use 360° feedback system in a company where human beings are not appreciated or where there is no open communication and even a fear culture in the company, of course this system will fail.”

It was seen that leadership development of leaders at the top management of organization, HR top managers and other managing individuals at the organization might cause people to perceive HR professionals differently in every company as well as giving way to different HR implementations and approaches. One of the participants claimed that “it is very hard to generate value if there is no vision at the HR top management.” According to the findings of the study, there is a general view *that hierarchical leadership style is common in Turkey, many unnecessary HR implementations are used in the country due to this reason and disconnection between the leader and employees.*

### 3.1.3.2. Socio-Cultural-Economical Reasons

Emerging from Turkey's socio-cultural-economical circumstances, there are some circumstances that influence the cultural climate of the company. It is believed that this situation also influences HR professionals' point of view on human beings. According to the findings of the study, mentioned socio-cultural-economical reasons include (a) *preparedness for different generations*, (b) *the overall Turkish conjuncture and culture*, (c) *the understanding of diversity: Turkish vs. global* and they are shown in Figure 5.

Participants shared their evaluations within the framework of general structure, needs and habits of Turkish society. Concerning social culture, some of the participants shared their views that the reason that lies at the bottom of why some HR approaches and implementations failed is the fact that these implementations are developed based on foreign culture norms and even if our culture has similar needs, important elements such as preparedness of companies, special design and communication are neglected. For instance, one of the participants shared his experience concerning job insecurity and fear culture in the business life of Turkish society as follows:

“Still, there is fear of leaving the office before the manager in the business life of our society. No matter how hard you try to explain talent management to a human being experiencing such fear, you would fail. When an employee could show the courage of leaving the office without waiting his manager to finish his own work and when he does not experience job loss anxiety, then we can talk about talent management.”

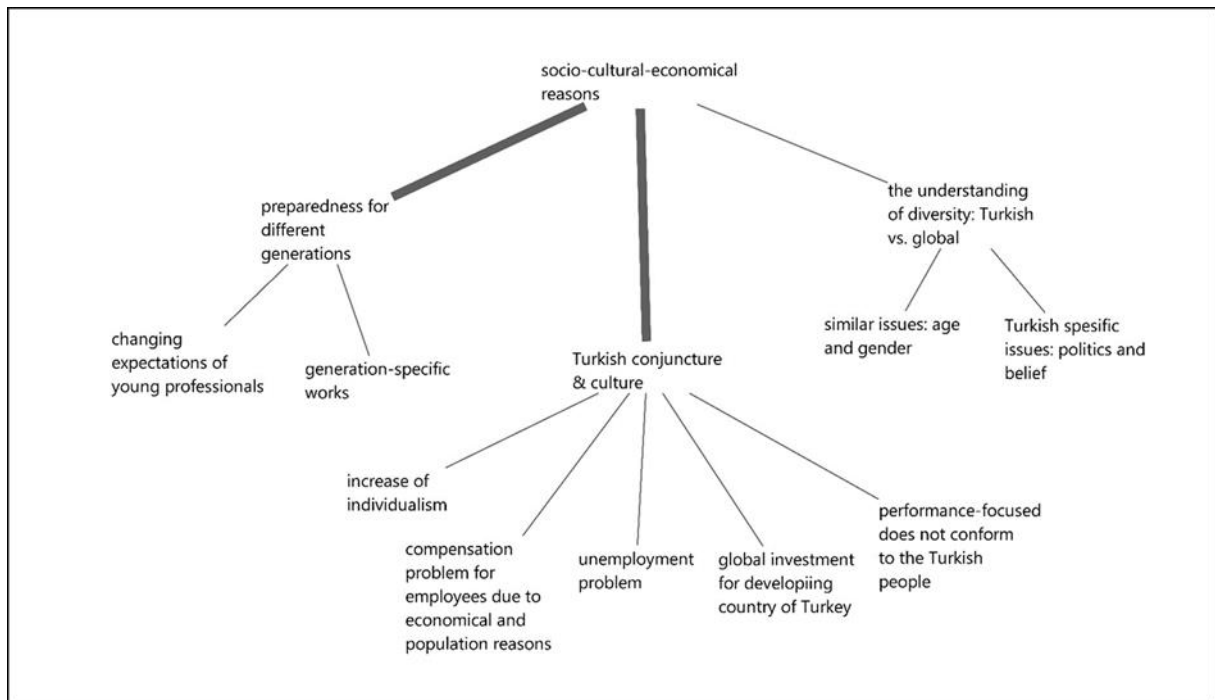
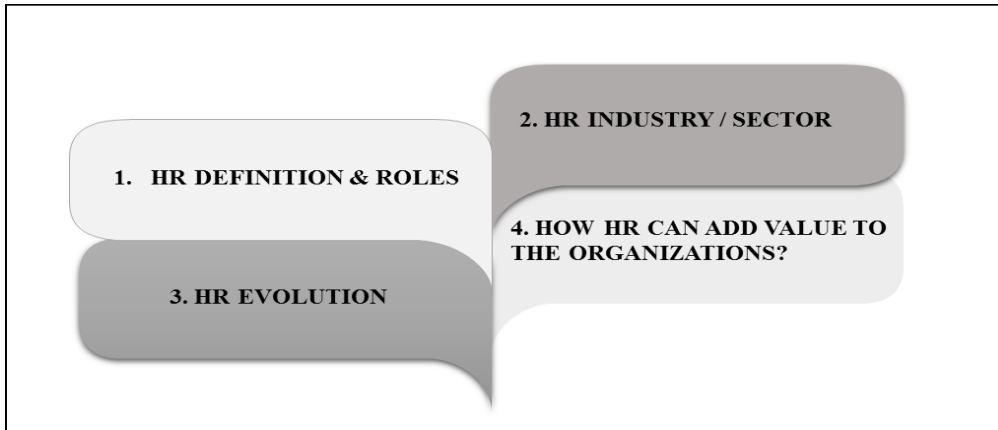


Figure 5: The Code Map for Socio-Cultural-Economical Reasons of Turkey

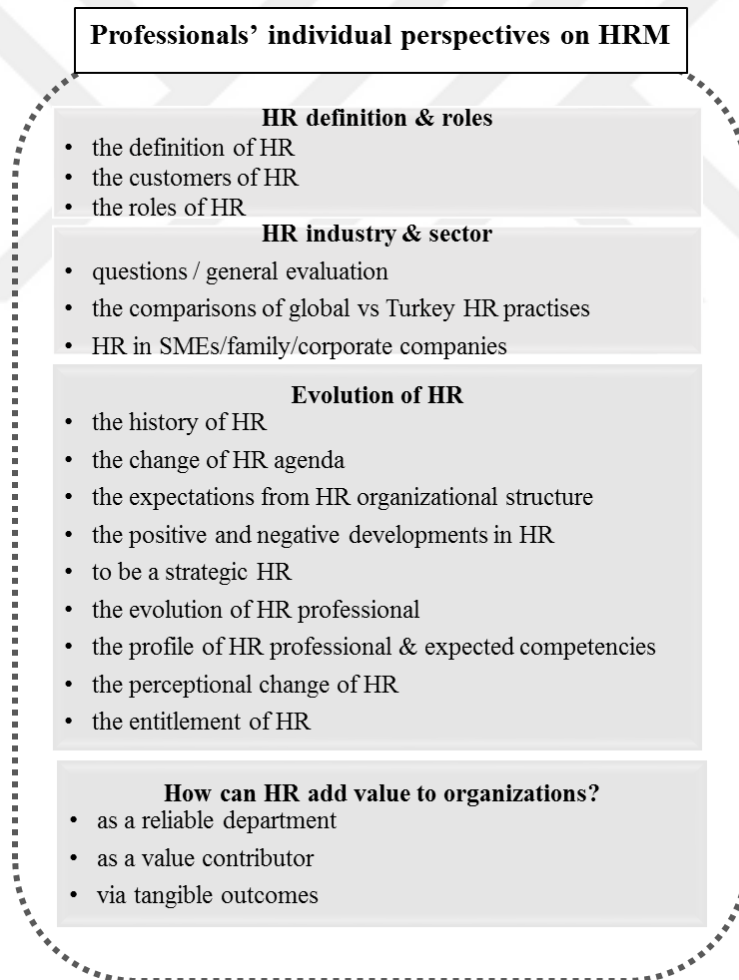
### 3.2. Professionals' Individual Perspectives on HRM

As it was explained in the method section of the study, participants were asked to express their views under five categories of questions about the evolution of HR in Turkey, strategic HR, strategic HR research and researchers as well as how HR competencies and implementations influence these and future of HR. Findings obtained as a result of participants responses according to the aforementioned analysis method, suggests that HR professionals focus can be collected under for main themes: (1) *HR definition and roles*, (2) *HR industry and sector*, (3) *HR evolution*, and (4) *how HR can add value to the organizations* (Figure 6).



*Figure 6: Main Themes*

Under these main themes, there are sub-themes which are mentioned in Figure 7 and elaborated in the following sections.



*Figure 7: Professionals' Individual Perspectives on HRM*

### 3.2.1. Theme 1. HR Definition and Roles

HR professionals were asked to express their views about the definition and role of HR. Questions related to strategic positioning of HR, evolution and future of HR were asked to the HR professionals who participated in the study. Findings were collected under three sub-themes such as the *definition of HR*, *the roles of HR*, and *the customers of HR* (Figure 8).

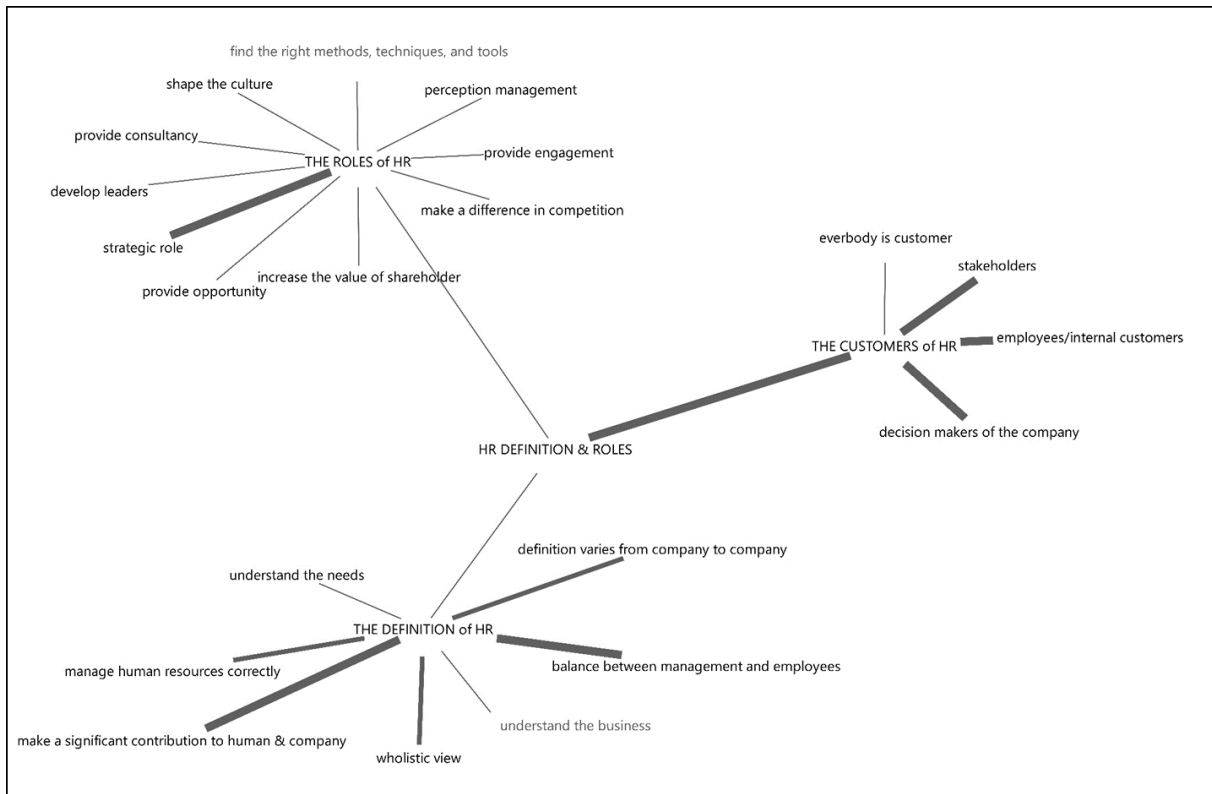


Figure 8: The Code Map for Theme 1. HR Definition and Roles

#### 3.2.1.1. The Definition of HR

According to the HR definition and roles map (Figure 8), prominent answers about the definition of HR are, (a) *balance between management and employees*, (b) *holistic view of human*, (c) *making a significant contribution to human and company*, (d) *managing human resources effectively*. Moreover, “*understanding the business and its needs*” were among the most repeated and common answers. However, many of the participants suggested that common definitions of HR varies from company to company or according to the organizational

climate and management of HR. One of the participants made a comment as follows: “Main role of HR changes from company to company. If HR is in a strategic position in the organization, HR professionals can stand by the employees and be the referee in the communication.”

#### *3.2.1.2. The Customers of HR*

The questions concerning the customers of HR was asked during the pilot interview but this question was not among the direct questions of the interview that was conducted after the pilot interview. Yet, participants expressed their views about who would be HR’s customers. Based on the findings obtained during the analysis, these answers were collected under this theme. According to the findings, participants gave similar answers about who would be HR customers and different answers when answering questions about the definition of HR. *Decision makers of the company* and *employees* were frequently mentioned as the core customers of HR. Some of the participants define “*employees*” as internal customer of HR. Furthermore, one of the participants expressed that many different stakeholders might come to mind when talking about customers of HR:

“Everybody is HR’s customer. Customers that the company serves, distributors of the company, all the persons who has contact with the company, everyone including third parties and suppliers as well as all persons who are inside the network of that entity we call company organization is the customer of HR. It is necessary to see the full picture in order to keep the balance at the end. In other words, you must make human beings happy so that they would work and achieve the goals of their lives; in the meantime, company will achieve its own goal. This is a very hard thing to do.”

### 3.2.1.3. *The Roles of HR*

As it can be seen from the map shown in Figure 5, participants mainly mentioned *the strategic role of HR, providing opportunity and its consultancy role* while defining the role of HR. Participants commonly defined the role of HR as (a) *shaping the culture*, (b) *making a difference in competition*, (c) *providing engagement*, (d) *perception management*, (e) *developing leaders*, (f) *finding the right methods, techniques, and tools*, (g) *increasing the value of shareholder*. Actually roles defined here, can be positioned strategically and shaped the culture according to how they are executed.

Almost all of the participants defined HR as a department that must have a strategic role. However, as we can see from the views of two different participants about the strategic role of HR, we can say that these definitions may differ between the “human focused” and “human capital focused” perspectives:

“HR department has a cost structure that chases after non-useful work with a large team. However, I believe that it is one of the departments that could have a leading role in value contribution and this is one of the field of expertise of HR department. I believe that the ideal role of HR is strategic partnership. Such role requires HR professionals who would go to sleep with keeping their minds as busy as the mind of their general manager while he is sleeping.”

Participant who expressed the views mentioned above, also stated during this stage of the interview that HR Professional should understand the business, anticipate the needs of business and even support management teams with financial capabilities including financial literacy.

On the other hand, the participants whose views are quoted in Table 3 and mentioned below, emphasized in the whole of the interview that understanding the essence of human being,

understanding human beings and supporting them will make a contribution to the business through a humanistic perspective.

“It is necessary to deeply explore human beings, because human beings are creatures that are able to do anything. They are very unique, they are different from each other, it is important to explore this core aspect in order to produce different solutions. To become a strategic partner, you should firstly understand your employees as human beings and do customization for them. As you are actually walking this path with human beings, you have to understand, learn and know them; no matter which organization you are working with or what kind of transformation your company wants to achieve, do not forget that achievement will come to your organization through your people.”

Table 3 includes illustrative codes of HR definition and roles in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives.

*Table 3:* Illustrative codes of HR definition and roles in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives

<b>HR DEFINITION &amp; ROLES</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
<p>“It is necessary to deeply explore human beings because human beings are creates that are able to do anything. They are very unique, they are different from each other, it is important to explore this core in order to produce different solutions. To become a strategic partner, you should understand your employees as human beings and do customization for them. As you actually walking this path with human beings, you have to understand, learn and know them; no matter which organization you are working with or what kind of transformation your company want to achieve, do not forget that achievement will come to your organization via that your people.”</p>	<p>“Main role of HR in a company is not actually different from other departments; its role is to increase the value of shareholder.”</p>

Table 3: Illustrative codes of HR definition and roles in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives (continued)

<b>HR DEFINITION &amp; ROLES</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
<p>“It is expected from HR's main role to use human as an asset on the way of company goes. However, human should be seen human at first, not an asset. If human is seen as human at first, the belief that there is nothing she/he can do emerges. HR should look at employees with a holistic approach. When they look at in that way, they do not see only an employee, moreover they realize the other roles of that employee such as being a mother / father, sibling, partner role. Then, HR can provide different HR solutions accordingly. Infact, I do not believe that HR currently is not at that maturity level in the organizations.”</p>	<p>“Of course, HR should not design system or process that do not focus on human being, add value to human. On the other hand, we are people who are coming together for the reason of business. I cannot be emotional at that point, frankly speaking. The aim of people who come together for the business should provide sustainable and successful works. That's why, HR should focus on sustaiinable and success oriented practices / implentations / studies.”</p>
<p>“If HR has a strategic position in company, it can stand closer to employees and undertakes the role of a judge during the communication. But, if HR does not have a strategic position, then it is in the position of department that pays salary and do the hiring and firing. I mean, you can think it as a gestapo but on the other side, you serve the duty of emotional or spiritual consultant.”</p>	<p>“Presence of people with know-how, correct transfer of this know-how, management of human force according to certain models and rules, because you have very limited resources in your hand and you have to use this resource in the right way and you must not make a mistake.”</p>

### 3.2.2. Theme 2. HR Industry and Sector

When findings obtained under the HR industry and sector theme are considered, it has been observed that they were based on: (1) *questions and general evaluation of HR industry*, (2) *the comparisons of global and Turkey HR practices*, (3) *HR in SMEs/family/corporate companies* (Figure 9).

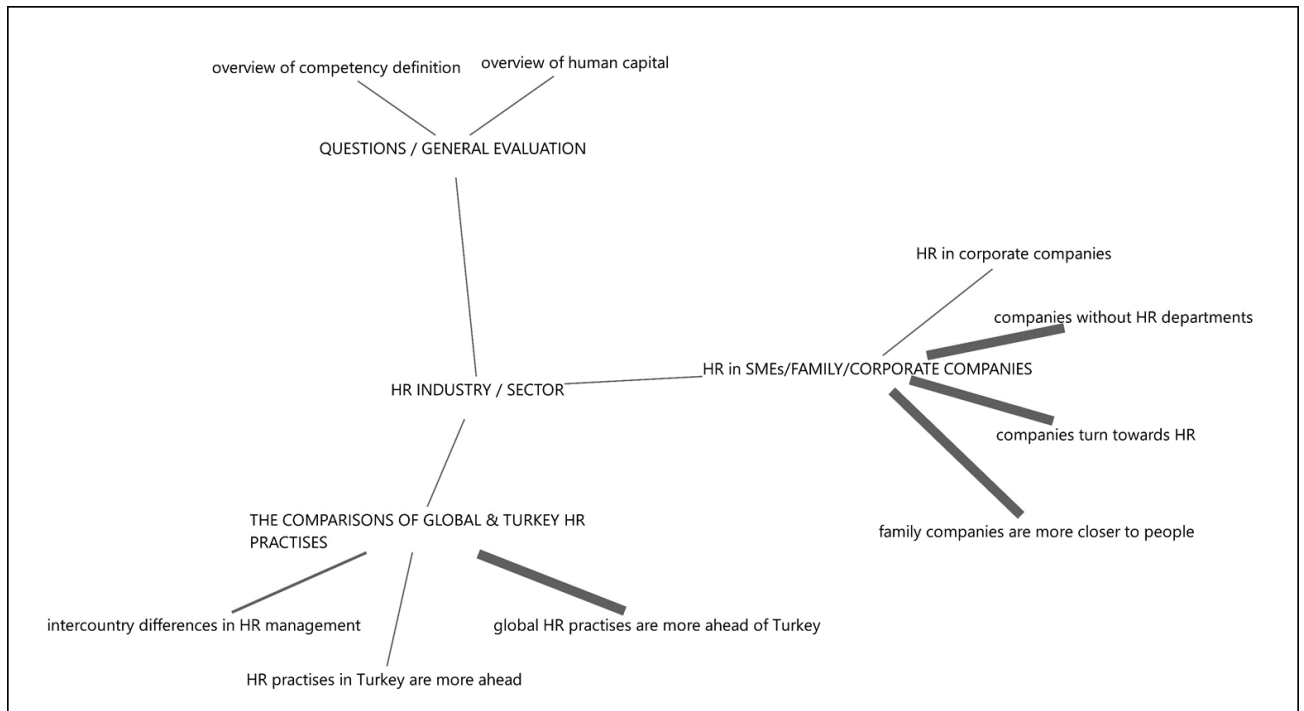


Figure 9: The Code Map for Theme 2. HR Industry and Sector

### 3.2.2.1. Questions / General Evaluation

Findings about the human capital concept believed to drive strategic HR management in HR sector and competency concept are presented under this sub-theme.

Participants suggested that there is no common definition of the competency concept which is shared by everyone and therefore, it should be revised. One of the participant made the following comment:

“I have observed that competencies about HR changes dramatically from company to company. Actually, this change is specific to the company but if I have to mention a trend, I would say for trend competencies are more frequently defined around being business focused, having an innovative point of view, and capable of managing the young generation effectly. It is possible to say that persons with powerful ego and tendency to perform a one-man-show are less

preferred. Of course, if we examine all companies one by one, we might see that some of these companies need such employees, but mainly this is the most frequently seen transformation.”

Table 4 and Table 5 show illustrative codes about the quotes under this sub-theme. In addition to the findings we shared in the chapter entitled HRM know-how / the resources to obtain strategic HRM, sample codes reflecting the differing views of participants about Dave Ulrich's Competency Model are shown in Table 4.

*Table 4: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / Questions and general evaluation / Overview of competency definition*

<b>Questions / General Evaluation</b>	
<b>Overview of competency definition</b>	<p>“For instance, competency is a very conceptual word. If we define it as things needed to be better and more prepared while doing our jobs, maybe they will understand it better. For instance, now, we are trying to define our leadership competencies but we are doing it in our company’s words and in our language, for example we are trying to define what ‘communication’ means for us.”</p> <p>“In my point of view, thing we call ‘competency’ is behavioral things. This should be replaced, I try to say that there is such big sophistication in the sub-behavioral indicators and scaling of the company I am working with. I think HR became too sophisticated; it is not possible for employees to understand it. For example, you tell employees that you are going to make the assessment of his 6 competencies and the scale will be 4-5. You have to find your place in one of these five scales and act like it. There are the systems that no manager would like to understand and use. “</p>

Table 4: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / Questions and general evaluation / Overview of competency definition (continued)

<b>Questions / General Evaluation</b>		
<b>Overview of competency definition</b>	<p>“There is no human being in Ulrich’s competency model, instead there are system, process, performance, and strategy.”</p>	<p>“Last year, I attended Dave Ulrich’s latest competency research in Turkey. When I was examining its results, one of the things that came to my mind was that his competency model was like rejecting our core for a human being. In fact, I asked the partner team whether they were sure about that research. In Dave Ulrich’s competency model, the competencies such as credible activist and understanding the feelings of human are two separated competencies, to me it should not be. I do not find it right to define competencies while keeping people apart.”</p>
	<p>“Although, each company should have its own style, culture, we used to import practices that belong to quite different continent. I think we really misunderstood learning something from each other. For instance, one of the worldwide leading company’s suggested competencies are used in almost every corporate companies in the same way. No one turned and asked to his company why they do not define their own competencies without copying the others.”</p>	<p>“I get stuck on the competency subject. Especially when I get together with HR top managers, everybody talks about the competencies but many of them do not know what that really means. I think they feel that they have to know the competency because they work in HR, because of these types of HR professionals, today’s competency sets and organizational structures have been misconfigured.”</p>

Table 5: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / Questions and general evaluation /

Human capital

Questions / General Evaluation		
<b>Human capital</b>	<p>“If you ask the point of view of HR professions and if I want to see the issue from their point of view about human, I would say human capital but still I do not place it anywhere. Can we act the way we think? We couldn’t. We see the human beings as human capital and try to put this at the center of everything but we couldn’t. We want to do it but we can put this into action.”</p>	<p>“When you talk about human capital, you claim this; taking a human being out from his own depth, content and meaning and turn into a machine that you like. It mustn’t be like this; this is not sincere, not real. This is the reason why people feel unhappy after a certain point.”</p>
	<p>“In today’s world, we manage in order to increase the capital and still see people as human capital. I think, in today’s world, it is not possible to see it in a way that could develop the potential due to your economic structure. The best thing you can do other than seeing through the order is to maintain the sustainability or maintain the happiness of people or so.”</p>	<p>“It changes from culture to culture and from company to company. There are some companies that are standing in two different poles such like black and white. And there are some who sees human being as human. Increasing competition in the business world, reflection of all these pressures to the employees may cause us to miss the human factor. But still I cannot answer it as no, human is not capital or human is capital. There is no two distinctive points about this question on my mind but there is a sincere effort but there are also realities of capitalist world and these realities do not always carry us to an ideal point.”</p>
	<p>“What I understand from human capital is how we are aware of our needs and emotions to manage this as a higher level manager and this is something we can lower after realizing or spread to the whole of the company.”</p>	<p>“At the end of the day, I convert the culture, economy, knowledge and social values of human beings, in other words his climate and information into money.”</p>

When we take a look at the findings of the study, we see that almost all the participants expressed that HR should be human focused. However, it is possible to say that participants do not have a common point of view about the definition of human focused, just like as in the case of competencies. One of the participants shared his views about the subject as follows:

“Presently, definition of human focused is changed. What do we imply when we say human focused? Are we talking about a person who constantly needs human beings, or a person who cannot do their job without the approval of human

beings, or a person capable of doing their job in cooperation with human beings?”

Participants also commented that humanism is decreasing in HR practices and approaches, hence, people more and more feel like that they are machines. When we examine the findings about the participants who made the aforementioned comment, reasons for diminishing humanism and feeling like a machine rather than a human being are can be due to: (a) *one fits all approaches*, (b) *high performance focus*, (c) *increasing competition in business life*, (d) *routine works which hinder creativity*, (e) *easily parting ways with employees when they become useless*.

#### 3.2.2.2. *The Comparisons of Global and Turkey HR Practises*

As part of the analysis in this study, global practices and practices in Turkey were compared in terms of HR practices.

Findings reveal that there are *inter-country differences* in terms of HR practices. Especially, even if the agenda of HR shows similarities across countries, there are significant inter-country differences resulting from contextual differences. Similar to the examples quoted in Table 3, one of the participants made the following comment:

“For instance, many different languages are spoken in England, France and America, and of course they are different in terms of culture but all share have common culture and civilization. When compared to them, we have less in common and we must still go a long way. So, if there are fifty companies in Turkey who use a newly developed model in the world, we must learn how many of these companies really make an achievement based on this model- this is what we must consider. Generally, there is a trend in Turkey and we know how to start but we do not know how to end.”

On the other hand, it was observed that there are opinion differences among participants in the comparison of global and Turkish HR practices. One of the participants said that HR practices in Turkey keep up with global and some practices have even surpassed Europe; while majority of the participants believed that Turkey is behind Europe and the USA in terms of HR practices (Table 6).

*Table 6: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / The comparisons of global and Turkey HR practises*

<b>The Comparisons of Global and Turkey HR Practises</b>	
<b>Intercountry differences in HR management</b>	<p>“For instance, many different languages are spoken in England, France and America, of course they are different in terms of culture but all have basic civilization share. When compared to them, we have less share and we must still take a long way. Due to that reason, if there are 50 companies in Turkey who use newly developed model in the world, we must learn how many of these companies really make an achievement based on this model- this is what we must consider. Generally, there is a trend in Turkey and we know how to start but we do not know how to end.”</p> <p>“Europe and America have totally different cultures and even way of raising children is totally different from us. When they start working in a company, expectations of their company and executives are too different from us. When you start working in a foreign company in Turkey, even that company expectations and mindsets etc. will be different. I do not try to say that we must keep our distance, I am a person who believes that Europe and America are only 3 or 5 steps ahead of us and I respect this. We must not certainly copy and paste; it is too artificial and it does not work. After a certain period of time, it becomes weird and looks as if you are wearing a dress that does not fit to your size.”</p>

Table 6: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / The comparisons of global and Turkey HR practises (continued)

<b>The Comparisons of Global and Turkey HR Practises</b>	
<b>HR practises in Turkey are more ahead</b>	<p>“Currently, HR in Turkey is at a better point than Europe.”</p> <p>“Although, there are some similarities between our HR issues and the world’s HR issues, I see that they are more ahead from us. They speak more talent, training. They speak about figures from a financial point of view. We are a little bit behind. Employee happiness and employee engagement are more ahead when compared with our country.”</p>
<b>Global HR practises are more ahead of Turkey</b>	<p>“Of course, HR in Turkey is behind the global practice because knowledge is mainly produced in Anglo-Saxon countries, especially in England and America. We try to transfer any practices to our country via international consultant companies. Sometimes this dress can be too big for us; sometimes it can be too small. Unfortunately, we spend millions of dollars to establish a system and forget all about it after one year.”</p> <p>“I see that diversity are discussed more in the world than us. This classic is not applicable to Turkey, I mean they try to apply it but they try to do as they see it as a basic human right. In this sense, I can say that HR studies are more human focused in the world than us.”</p>

### 3.2.2.3. HR in SMEs/ Family /Corporate Companies

Findings concerning differences in HR management in Turkey depending on the size of the company, company culture, type of company and characteristics of the leader were found. There is a common view among participants that regardless of the size of the company, many companies, recently, tend to have HR departments and participants expressed their views about differences in terms of HR management in corporate companies, SMEs and family companies.

According to the common answers of participants, subjects, that HR departments deal, show variation in corporate companies and especially agendas of global companies show more variations than local companies. One of the participants stated that human resources for many companies in Turkey do not go beyond being personnel management, while another participant pointed out that according to the data obtained from Capital 500, there are some companies in Turkey that do not still have HR management and despite the lack of development investment, these companies' financial outcomes are still good and this can be defined as a striking situation (Table 7).

*Table 7: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / HR in SMEs / family / corporate companies*

<b>HR in SMEs / family / corporate companies</b>	
<b>HR in corporate companies</b>	<p>“Actually structure that we call as evolved human resources management is only present in some corporate companies in Turkey. In majority of companies, human resources is not different from personnel management.”</p> <p>“Banking sector is more advantageous in terms of HR because banking sector explored human resources long before than other sectors.”</p>
<b>Companies without HR departments</b>	<p>“There are still some companies in Turkey that do not have HR departments and do not have HR management. You can even come across with some of these companies when you take a look at Capital 500. I know this from the comparison studies I have conducted in Tegep. You can see that some very big companies do not have HR departments and they are still very successful. It is really interesting even striking. They even do not have training development investments but their financial outputs are still very good. I think that a study must be carried out on this issue for example in order to see what they are doing better.”</p> <p>“I believe that small portion of HR practice in Turkey could keep up global practices. I mean, yes there are many companies include HR departments. But, there are only very few HR companies in Turkey that brings all stakeholders together and focus on them and works in the true meaning of HR. Only these companies are parallel to the global.”</p>

Table 7: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector / HR in SMEs / family / corporate companies (continued)

<b>HR in SMEs / family / corporate companies</b>	
<b>Companies turn towards HR</b>	“Recently, SMEs are turning towards HR. Of course, there are several reasons of this trend such as benefiting from European Union incentives and criteria required to be present in the structure of company organizations in order to receive some incentives and grants. This is a positive development in terms of spreading HR practices in Turkey.”
<b>Family companies are more closer to people</b>	“As a person who worked many years in corporate companies and just only three years in a family company, I see this: Although, I am not comfortable and happy in the family company, I see that I was wrong in everything about HR that I have learned since today. Do family companies become successful at the end of the day? To my surprise, yes, they do. Do they achieve to keep the most valuable, crucial man? Yes, they do. How do they do?”

When we take a look at the codes quoted in Table 8 and when we consider the evaluations of participants about HR industry and sector, it is possible to say that there is difference of opinion across the framework of human capital and human focused perspectives.

Table 8: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives

<b>HR INDUSTRY / SECTOR</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
'Especially, this is very crucial for global companies, how these countries regard these differences, this is something human resources should think thoroughly. Now, when we come to us, well I don't know, multi-diversity cannot be a headline in our country but for example recently it is possible to see diversity about faith, diversity about gender as headline in many places.'	“I also feel this in my company I mean, we are trying to figure out how we touch human beings, engagement, but in reality in everything there is aim to increase their performances and not to lose them.”

Table 8: Illustrative codes of HR industry and sector in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives (continued)

<b>HR INDUSTRY / SECTOR</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
<p>“Human beings are constantly wake up at mornings, go to 9-6 jobs, do what they are asked to do and fail to totally feel a part of their jobs. How can we eliminate this feeling? Maybe, a little bit more personalized implementations and creation of a climate suitable for added value can make people more included to their jobs.”</p>	<p>“Nowadays, I see that human beings are perceived as financial capitals. In other words, human beings are considered as assets.”</p>
<p>“Recently, I participated in a training in America and all the participants were HR professionals. This training was about well-being and energy management. Even before I participated in this training I asked myself this; did we do everything so well and is it to time to learn this now? I thought probably this is what well-established companies are doing right now. The training was totally based on personal life of an individual and balance between his business and personal life, it is also about his personal habits (drinking, eating, and sleeping). That was a training program about all these and if you apply all those to persons, then you would manage your energy better, at the end of the day you would be a happy employee, a happy person, you will be less burnt out. It is not important, I mean this person may resign from our company but this information will be an asset for him. Actually, this is a very nice point of view, in other words, it is a human focused point of view.”</p>	<p>“In recent years, Turkish population, especially our young population and mobility are the headlines that we draw attention in the world. They also want to do something in our country both in terms of commerce and activity. We have such relation with the world and our popularity is rising and falling like stock market. We became a popular country in some years and almost everybody wants to make investment.”</p>
<p>“When I adapt something to the system, to the process, I might be doing it in order to be strategic or whatever its name, I mean, yes, I am moving away from being human focused. We have to make sacrifices from taking special individual characteristics of human beings and sometimes from our ability to make a special decision for special occasions etc. I believe that this is actually what family companies do best.”</p>	<p>“In my point of view, human being is like an asset, machine of an enterprise. Difference is knowing how to motive and use these human beings.”</p>
	<p>“Ultimately, in the absence of human being all we talk about is a story. In other words, I do not think there is a possible of degradation in the value of human beings. Mechanization, formulations and such do not erase human beings, on the contrary, these make human beings more valuable.”</p>

### 3.2.3. Theme 3. Evolution of HR

According to the findings of this study, topics collected under this theme include highly important part of the study findings. Findings collected under this theme display participants' personal HR experiences, HR's past, today and future through their own perspective, agenda and timewise transformation of HR as well as expectations from organizational structure. In addition to these, positive and negative developments from past to today according to the personal HR experiences of participants, evolution of HR professional, HR professional's profile and expected competencies, way of doing business, having a strategic approach to HRM and comments and suggestions about the name of human resources are among the findings collected under this theme. Moreover, sub-themes under this theme are shown in Figure 10.

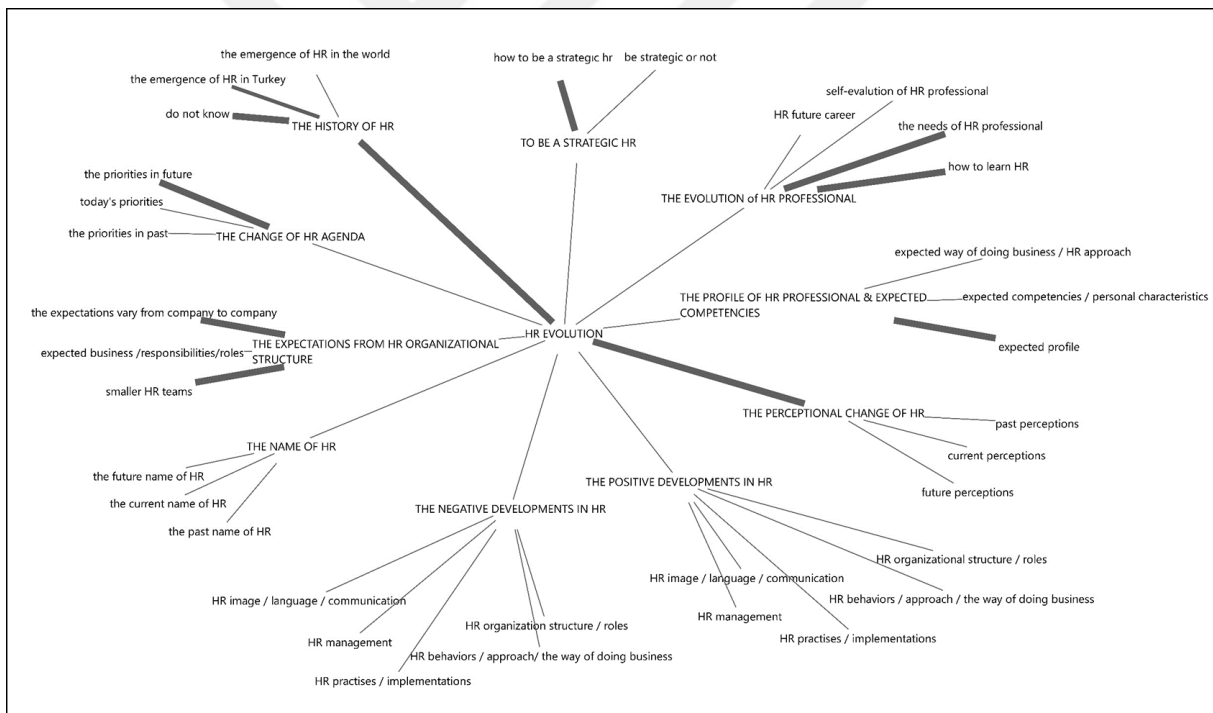


Figure 10: The Code Map for Theme 3. HR Evolution

#### 3.2.3.1. The History of HR

According to the findings obtained as a result of questions asked to participants about the birth and development of HR in the World and in Turkey, industrial revolution and needs

of military were the most common answers. The need to manage the masses was also another commonly provided answer. Common answers concerning emergence of HR in Turkey was operational and legal requirements as well as the need to keep track with Europe and the USA.

Comments of participants about history of HR are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The history of HR

The History of HR		
The emergence of world	<p>“It can be seen from the studies conducted about productions systems after the 19th century Industrial Revolution that it is actually important to increase the productivity of human beings using the rails rather than the productivity of rails in order to increase the productivity of production systems. Due to this reason, they focus on working in an effort to find what they can change in human beings and ways to change the point of view of human beings.”</p>	<p>“It emerged from the requirement related to the re-organization of industry. It emerged as a result of need to manage larger masses.”</p>
The emergence of Turkey	<p>“With the emergence of modern HR processes in Europe and the United States, these processes also emerge in our country as a part of our will to implement it, too.”</p>	<p>“It emerges at the personnel management phase.”</p>

### 3.2.3.2. The Change of HR Agenda

Under this sub-theme, participants’ answers concerning priorities of HR in the past, today and future are collected under three sub-themes, namely, *the priorities in past*, *today’s priorities*, and *the priorities in past*.

#### 3.2.3.2.1. The Priorities in Past

- a. *Operational tracking, quality, process studies*: Most common answer among participants about priorities in the past was operational tracking. Participants commented that starting from 1990s; quality management, process studies

and documentation were among the prominent issues while transformation was prioritized in 2000s.

#### 3.2.3.2.2. *Today's Priorities*

- a. *Employee engagement:* One of the most important subjects on the current agenda of HR management is maintaining employees' engagement with the organization. Common answers from participants included; engagement is prioritized in order to protect the interests of the company in a competitive environment, only a few companies prioritize employee happiness and emotional health, almost all corporate companies conduct engagement surveys and social activities are preferred to increase employee engagement. However, there are some participants who believed that engagement is high in SMEs although such activities are rarely organized in there. This casts doubt on the real effectiveness of the practical approaches to measuring engagement.
- b. *Digitalization:* Using HR systems and practices reflecting modern technologic developments were prominent among the priorities of today. Especially, while recruitment practices were carried out at the operational level in the past, these emerged among the areas where digitalization is prioritized most.
- c. *Talent management:* Findings show that increasing competition and a limited number of competent professionals despite high unemployment were among the reasons for prioritization of talent management. One of the participants stated that we are currently witnessing "war of talents" while another participant commented that HR gained a more strategic role and earned a seat at the CEO's table as talent management became a top priority.

- d. *Performance management*: Prominent findings include performance competition, performance focused HR culture, creating a performance that makes a difference, recognizing and awarding faster runners.
- e. *HR Business Partner*: Common answer of almost all participants about becoming a strategic HR management was that HR business partner role should exist in the organizations.

#### 3.2.3.2.3. *The Priorities in Future*

- a. *Understand employees*. Participants shared the view that the future agenda of HR management would not be limited to only maintaining the engagement of employees with the organization but also include close encounters with employees, knowing them better and prioritizing their happiness and emotional health. One of the participants commented on the issue as follows:

“When we take a look at the issue today, we see that well-educated and qualified employees have the opportunity to work in different positions in different companies. In this light, I am aware that motivating employees and offering higher salaries or fulfilling some of their needs are not enough to keep them in the company and in addition to all the things I mentioned above, we must take their personal psychological circumstances into consideration and detect their personal motivational needs in order to increase their engagement and encourage them to work more productively.”

- b. *HR Business Partner*: HR professionals who play this role should be elected amongst those who are more competent and senior, have good command of business and provide strategic support to business.
- c. *Transformation of HR practices/implementations*: Among the most common responses of participants were some HR concepts and practices/implementations would go through transformation in the future and more original and flexible practices would be preferred in the organizations. According to the prominent findings of the study, some participants commented that: (a) the importance of competencies would decrease while more simple and plain competencies special to companies would survive, (b) performance and talent management managers would have more responsibility, (c) new performance tracking studies would be implemented in order to prevent performance tracking by setting numerical targets, personal performance would be prioritized, (d) number of studies aiming at preventing miscommunications would increase and (e) importance of talent definition specific to company would increase. Moreover, it was emphasized that importance of roles of leaders in HR implementations/practices would increase and one of the participants made the following comment: “Recently, I have been reading some studies mainly stating that performance management style will gain flexibility according to the competencies of leaders in the performance rating system. I think that the world would prefer a path where some roles of HR are transferred to leaders in order to maintain empowerment.”

Comments of participants about transformation of HR agenda from yesterday to today and to future are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The change of HR agenda

<b>The Change of HR Agenda</b>		
<b>The priorities in future</b>	<p>“Actually, the key is human beings and understanding human beings. We might create the most perfect systems, we might explain the most correct things but as long as we live in a world where do not understand human beings, this system will always be a failure. This is most important crucial point.”</p>	<p>“Now, I believe that engagement will be removed from creating a fun culture and spiritually included to the spiritual management and a special field in HR would be dedicated for this.”</p>
	<p>“In the future, companies may give up evaluating performance. As I followed the global researches, today's giant branded companies have been started to left evaluating performance their behind.”</p>	<p>“Succession planning for employees will be more prominent than today.”</p>
<b>Today's priorities</b>	<p>“Competent human beings of many sectors are at war and this both increases costs and makes the work HR harder, and it emerges as an obligation. Consequently, our weak human resources, today, defines the responsibility of HR as the creating engagement and sustainable development. In other words, hire the right human being, keep him, do not miss him and keep him updated.”</p>	<p>“There are totally and totally result and performance oriented tendencies in basis of everything we do.”</p>
<b>The priorities in past</b>	<p>“In 90s, there were works in HR as seen as important such as quality management and process documentation.”</p>	<p>‘At the end of 80s and beginning of 90s, re-engineering projects were highly popular especially in the business world. During that period, I became a team member of an important re-engineering project and review the whole process of a leading bank of that time in cooperation with a US consultant company.’</p>

### 3.2.3.3. The Expectations from HR Organizational Structure

This part includes findings about expected business from HR, responsibilities, roles of HR and HR team size. One of the participants said that expectations from HR organizational structure vary from company to company (Table 11). Findings collected under this title reveal that most common answers among participants are, (a) *HR should have a center of excellence*

structure by using technology in operational issues, (b) organizational development, learning and development departments should be separated from HR organizational structure and they should be affiliated to the general manager/CEO, if possible. There are some participants who asserted that HR departments are recently managed by teams that are larger than needed and team size must be smaller (Table 11).

Table 11: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The expectations from HR organizational structure

The Expectations from HR Organizational Structure		
<b>Smaller HR teams</b>	<p>“In my point of view, numerically human resources is larger than it should be but unfortunately their impact is lower although it should have more influential place. I mean, there is a cost structure or central role where there are larger teams are dealing with less prominent works.”</p>	
<b>Expected business responsibilities/roles</b>	<p>“I think that HR professional should rather play the role of consultant.”</p>	<p>“HR should be responsive, in other words, HR should be a department capable of adapting demands promptly. I mean it should be developing systems both as a center of excellence and in HR business partner structure.”</p>
<b>The expectations varies from company to company</b>	<p>“According to my observations, it still varies from company to company, it is the same for HR capabilities and many of HR roles.”</p>	

#### 3.2.3.4. *The Positive and Negative Developments in HR*

During the interviews, questions about transformation of HR in time and their views about positive and negative developments that took place from past to today in the light of their own professional careers were asked to the participating HR professionals. Based on the views of participants, positive and negative developments are collected under the common sub-themes of (a) *HR practices/implementations*, and *HR behaviors/approach/the way of doing business*. Positive developments has *HR image/language/communication* as separate sub-themes. On the other hand, negative developments theme additionally had *HR management*, and *HR organizational structure/roles* as other sub-themes.

##### 3.2.3.4.1. *The positive developments in HR:*

- a. *HR practices/implementations*: According to the participants, the most positive developments that took place in HR were related to its implementations and practices. Mentioned practices and implementations include, *digitalization of HR, internal communication implementations, HR planning by predicting business and financial situation and salary practices*.
- b. *HR behaviors/approach/the way of doing business*: *Establishment of operational process and inclusive way of doing business* are among the most common answers. SMEs also start using structured HR implementations/practices inclusively. One of the participants made the following comment about this issue:

“When I started working as a consultant, I realized that SMEs are also display competent HR implementations. Of course, there are various reasons of this tendency. For instance, SMEs are expected to implement some HR implementations/practices as a pre-condition of receiving incentives and grants from European Union. Due to this reason, they

started to establish HR departments. Actually, this is a very positive development in terms of establishment of HR in Turkey.”

*c. HR image/language/communication:* Participants responded that HR departments are in a *more respected position, more heard and more active* when compared with the past.

#### *3.2.3.4.2. The Negative Developments in HR:*

*a. HR practices/implementations:* There is a common view among majority of participants that some negative developments have taken place in some HR practices and implementations. *Employee engagement, performance system, talent and career management* are among these practices and implementations. Findings reveal that participants have different points of views about employee engagement and performance evaluation system as they evaluated the issue from two different perspectives, namely the “human focused” and “human capital focused” perspectives. One of the participants made a strong criticism by stating that system eliminates the individual differences and standardizes all employees.

*b. HR behaviors/approach/the way of doing business:* *Copying others/trends and not doing business customized to the climate and culture of organization* are most criticized developments and they are defined as negative developments.

*c. HR management:* The increasing tendency to hire employees from outside the company instead of investing in own employees is evaluated as an example of negative development. One of the participants commented:

“Meanwhile, I have to say that this changes from company to company but when we consider Turkey as a whole, there are many companies that could easily let go of the employee when they are unsatisfied with his performance, they distance themselves from being human focused and

treat human beings as machines and easily part their ways when an employee becomes useless.”

*d. HR organizational structure/roles:* As it was also expressed in the part about transformation of HR agenda, the business partner role of HR was evaluated as a positive development, yet, not big enough a step for being strategic. Participants suggested that the perception that seeing HR as a business partner marks the completion of the process of being strategic is not correct and the existing HR business partners need progress in terms of their competencies and seniority.

Comments of participants about the evolution of HR in terms of positive negative developments are shown in Table 12 and Table 13.

*Table 12:* Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The positive developments in HR

<b>The Positive Developments in HR</b>	
<b>HR image/language/communication</b>	“Recently, both sides (top management/company owners and employees) have positioned themselves at a respectable level.”
<b>HR management</b>	“It is important to keep a person and choose the right man but it is, of course, very important to see that such things are at the agenda of general managers. I believe that we have come a long way.”
<b>HR practises/ implementations</b>	“The side that I see is missing but apart from that important steps have been taken either in terms of training or recruitment phase or giving feedback as well as performance management when compared to past.”
<b>HR behaviors/approach/ the way of doing business</b>	“At this stage, many HR implementations speak the language of company. But, various different outputs such as really positioning employee in our and company’s value, this is something that has depth.”
<b>HR organization structure/roles</b>	“As far as I can observe and see from my climate, many companies are seeking and really using HR business partners despite the fact that it is not a very old role in the country.”

Table 13: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The negative developments in HR

<b>HR image/language/communication</b>	“When you talk about human capital, you claim this; taking a person out from his own depth, content and meaning and turn into a machine that you like. It mustn’t be like this; this is not sincere, not real. This is the reason why human beings feel unhappy after a certain point. For instance, HR department organizes many activities and develop many implementations but actually 80% of them are failed. Because, there is no genuine sincerity. It feels imported and imposed on our lives. You do not see me for who I am but still you do this for me at the end of the day, this means that I am absent in this story.”
<b>HR management</b>	“I have to say that it changes from one company to another but when we take a look at the situation in Turkey, I see that especially many branded, corporate companies easily say they will not continue to work with employees who are not useful for them anymore and act persons like machines instead of focusing on humanly side and separate their ways very easily.”
<b>HR practises/implementations</b>	“We have been executing talent management in the company; actually the reason of this talent management is to invest in a human being. Consequently, determination of development areas of human beings but more subjectively; as an outcome, it may cause a negative impact in persons’ lives.”
<b>HR behaviors/approach/the way of doing business</b>	“At this stage, many HR implementations speak the language of company. But, various different outputs such as really positioning employee in our and company’s value, this is something that has depth.”
<b>HR organization structure/roles</b>	“HR management begins to sit at the table with general manager and I think it is positive. But, like everything else in Turkey, to be frank, it has become a department that boosts egos. The ego of this department boosted too much that it has forgotten his real intended population, I mean the employees. At least, this is how I feel. Due to this reason, HR became a department that is placed at the management floor.”

### 3.2.3.5. To Be a Strategic HR

Related to the strategic HR concept, the participants were asked their views on whether HR is strategic partner or not; and how it could become a strategic business partner. Findings in this area can be collected under sub-themes of *be strategic or not* and *how to be a strategic HR*.

3.2.3.5.1. *Be Strategic or Not*: Strategic HR is among the most common answers of participants. However, there are some participants who criticized views concerning the

word “strategy” and being strategic. Some participants stated that not HR but human beings can be strategic and there is no real need to use a phrase such as strategic HR but it is just a fashionable concept. On the other hand, when analysis findings are considered, it can be seen that some participants believe that perspectives of companies in Turkey are rather short termist with short term, and therefore, while they are capable of making short term strategic planning; it is hard for HR to be strategic in a longer term cycle.

3.2.3.5.2. *How to Be a Strategic HR*: Frequently seen answers about how to be strategic are as follows (a) *understanding business, strategy and priorities*, (b) *making analysis by anticipating expectations and need*, (c) *constant self-development*, (d) *implementing participatory management*, (e) *developing and executing implementations special to the organization*. Moreover, focusing on human capital as a way to be a strategic HR are among the frequently received comments from the participants. Concerning the issue, one of the participants offers the following definition, “company should focus on how to benefit from human beings in order to be able to focus on human capital. Finding ways to convert this situation into money is what is entailed in strategic HR management.”

Comments of participants about the evolution of HR in terms of “to be a strategic HR” are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / to be a strategic HR

<b>To Be a Strategic HR</b>	
<b>How to be strategic HR</b>	<p>“If HR has to power to urge taking decisions on the behalf of employees, then I can believe that it has a high strategic importance.”</p> <p>“Financial literacy is a must and even beyond must; in other words we need HR staff having the qualities needed to become a general manager in the company. We need HR professionals who could become HR leaders, in other words, we must equipped our HR professionals with financial data.”</p>
<b>Be strategic HR or not</b>	<p>“If company itself fails to properly display its strategy, then will it possible to establish a strategic partnership?”</p> <p>“When I consider strategic HR management as a general concept, it can be seen that it is necessary to think strategy in the long term and to think how employees that the most important capital of the company should be managed in parallel to the company strategies under the management of human resources in the long term. Therefore, strategic human resources management is actually a fashionable term as well as a fact that should not be avoided for the success. Do companies of today achieve this or not; this is a whole different issue but frankly it should be achieved.”</p>

### 3.2.3.6. The Evolution of HR Professional

Under this title, there are definitions regarding *how to learn HR, self-evaluation of HR professional, the needs of HR professional, and HR future career.*

#### 3.2.3.6.1. Self-Evaluations of HR Professional:

*a. Positive evaluations:* Participants’ positive evaluations about HR professionals are mainly about *recruitment and HR’s ability to develop its business partner role.* Participants also expressed positive evaluations about implementations aiming at improving business manner, culture and happiness and engagement of employees.

*b. Negative evaluations:* Prior negative self-evaluations made about HR professionals by the participants are, *HR professional’s inability to synchronize to changing business world, HR message conflicts, employment of HR*

*professionals who are unaware of the reason why HR exist and who do not internalize professional practices in organizations.* Message conflict was defined as statements and behaviors that contradict with increasing number of studies aiming at improvement of employee engagement by the participants. One of the participants expressed that: “there is a mentality that underlines the importance of engagement while also indicating that employees might be dismissed if they fail to reach certain personal performance. I believe that giving strong messages in two very different directions leads to contradiction.” Another participant voiced his view as “despite the realities of the capitalist world, there is a sincere effort in HR” and emphasized the impact of collective perspective on HR’s behaviors, implementations and approaches (Table 15).

*3.2.3.6.2. The Needs of HR Professional:* Most prominent answers from participants can be summarized as elimination of “*situations preventing HR professional to be sincere and transparent*” as much as possible. Findings concerning such situation are *influence of leadership and management mentality of organization, vision of HR top managers and some business realities*. For instance, a participant expressed his views about such situation as follows: “I don’t think HR departments in organizations where decisions are made behind the closed doors could claim to carry out a transparent communication.” Moreover, elimination of concerns that emerged due to the image problem of HR and decreasing human focused HR are among the findings of this study. The image problem of HR can be defined as, “*negative perception is general in the organizations towards HR and its being among the less liked departments, common belief about there cannot be a HR professional profile that may have a different and more positive impact than ordinary HR profiles.*” Findings concerning decreasing human focus include “*not prioritizing human beings, increasing importance of pragmatism.*”

3.2.3.6.3. *HR Future Career*: Those who participated in the study mainly believed that experience gained in various different business fields would be an asset in building a career in HR. Some participants expressed that horizontal career progress would be more prominent than vertical progress.

3.2.3.6.4. *How to Learn HR*: Topics such as HR not being a specific expertise in today's world, ability of current academies to produce applicable knowledge in HR, transformation of HR conferences especially in Turkey into events that constantly repeat themselves and contexts that are copied from foreign examples are shared, were discussed and it seems that there is no common view on this subject. Findings about HRM know-how/the resources to obtain strategic HRM sections are mentioned.

3.2.3.6.5. *The Profile of HR Professional and Expected Competencies*

Expected competencies from HR professionals and their effects on HR agenda are the findings obtained as a result of answers in this part.

3.2.3.6.6. *Expected Way of Doing Business/HR Approach: Simple and solution focused processes, customization and multitasking* are the most common answers of participants about HR's expected way of doing business and approach of HR.

3.2.3.6.7. *Expected Competencies*: Most common answers in this field are as follows: (a) *being analytical*, (b) *developing financial literacy*, (c) *being a good narrator*, (d) *being able to use the language efficiently and talk sincerely*, (e) *showing holistic approach*, (f) *being able to manage balanced manager-employee relations*, (g) *being able to keep the pulse of the company*, (h) *developed sense of business understanding*, and (i) *being able to understand the needs*. An expected personal characteristic of HR professional is a person *with high awareness, being curious, dependable, brave, and self-confident*.

The study shows differing views about the expectation of “being analytical” mentioned among the expected competencies from HR professional. Some participants considered being analytical as making financial, systemic and procedural analysis and reporting.

For instance, according to one of the participants;

“Since today, there was a HR team doing operational works such as execution of system and focused on developing soft skills such as relationship management. For the moment, I do not think that HR professionals are not attending the management meetings with analytical outcomes and reports although they are a part of higher management team. They still do not have infrastructure, stored data and ability to analyze existing data and sufficient engineering background.”

On the other hand, some of the participants commented being analytical as doing analytical thinking about the emotions and tendencies of employees. There is a different point of view about the idea of ‘HR professionals’ being analytical’ which is mentioned below:

“We must adapt a more macro approach while we talk about doing analysis. For instance, taking a data which is there for the last ten years, analyzing it and making an assumption about the organizational culture or making an analysis about moods and tendencies of employees is what being analytical means. In my point of view, HR departments should go beyond undertaking analysis about who resigned from the company, who applied to the company or age average of employees and develop an analysis ability that would provide vision to the company. That does not necessarily mean that this vision would forecast the future but this vision might help to adapt a factual approach to subjective situations by using past data.”

Table 15: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / the evolution of HR

<b>The Evolution of HR Professional</b>		
<b>HR future career</b>	<p>“I was hired to work in HR, I managed training, performance , career management, I served as HR director but this is not how it should be done, in other words, HR director should not be like this. An HR director should work as Sales Director or Finance Director or Procurement Director at first and then become HR director.”</p>	<p>“I see that there is a vertical growth in the career in HR. What I want to see is more strategic growth and want to see HR professionals to become as business development manager/ director.”</p>
<b>Self-evaluation of HR professional</b>	<p>“There is a sincere effort in HR but there are also realities of capitalist world and these realities do not always carry us to an ideal point.”</p>	<p>“Many things are done only for show. I believe that needs of human beings did not change. I think that humanly living term was the same even a thousand years ago. Living like a human was a valid term then and it is still valid.”</p>
<b>The needs of HR professional</b>	<p>“HR needs Don Quixote to fight. It feels like HR is a person-oriented field, as if Ahmet can achieve this but Mehmet cannot.”</p>	<p>“Although, I am a human resource manager who basically prioritize seeing employees as human beings at first and focus on business process from this point of view, I could not see that thing in employees’, management teams’ eyes. I mean, I don’t hear the words such as ‘yes, I am on HR’s side, I will be following you in everything you do, I am sure you are doing the right thing for us’. Whatever your prioritization is, still, you have to explain and convince them as your approach as HR is human focused.”</p>
<b>How to learn HR</b>	<p>“I monitor trends and developments in HR from the HR conferences that I participated, other colleagues working in other companies and some internet research.”</p>	<p>“I try to read psychology based things.”</p>

Table 16 includes illustrative participant views on the profile of HR professional and expected outcomes.

Table 16: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / the profile of HR professional and expected outcomes

<b>The profile of HR professional &amp; expected competencies</b>		
<b>Expected way of doing business/HR approach</b>	<p>“To prepare, design and present a different way by scaling persons’ expectations according to the age groups. It is similar for compensation benefits and for HR business partner. In a similar way, it might be necessary to approach differently to more experienced, more senior and older staff from younger staff. This is a challenge but I see this as richness as well as an opportunity for HR to develop itself.”</p>	<p>“To do your job by believing that a stone that you put today will make a difference three years later.”</p>
<b>Expected competencies/personal characteristics</b>	<p>“HR must know the challenges of the sector, where these company is heading and HR should have good command of the vision of the company. HR should be able to raise his hand and speak freely in company strategy meetings. The meaning of being a strategic partner is not only attending the same meetings with the management team but also creating added value. I think that analytical ability is highly crucial as well as having a good command of business in order to achieve this.”</p>	<p>“Sometimes, we make such analysis that everyone would have a say if we did not make this analysis, some are true and some are false. Sometimes, it is like you put a picture on display and then people start to argue about it; this will carry their thinking level a click away because there is a fact there.”</p>
<b>Expected profile</b>	<p>“Head of HR should be more determined and should have the required persuasive ability to convince CEO.”</p>	<p>“Today, every HR job posting seeks Industrial Engineers but I believe that Financial Engineering will also be wanted in time. On the other hand, psychology and process side of the profession will become stronger, too.”</p>

### 3.2.3.7. The Perceptual Change of HR

In addition to expected competencies from HR professionals, expected way of doing business and HR approach, how HR is perceived in today’s organizations and perceptual change of HR in time was also discussed with the participants. This chapter includes findings about HR’s past, current and future perception.

3.2.3.7.1. *Past Perceptions*: While some participants said that HR profiles in the past were “*more capable of understanding human beings’ worries*”, “*having higher communication skills*”, and “*more valuable in the eye of human beings*”, some other said they were “*more hierarchical, power focused, subjective and rule based.*” On the other hand, some participants pointed out that persons who used to work in “*accounting and operational departments*” were transferred to HR departments in the past and due to this reason, the past profile was different from current profile and they were “*civil servant minded and more operational.*”

3.2.3.7.2. *Current Perceptions*: According to the analysis obtained from the study, many participants said that HR perception changes according to the type of HR employee and type of company. There were some comments such as, “*less liked department*”, “*feared department*” and “*a department that creates unhappiness*” in addition to the comments such as, “*employee’s advocate, defender and representative*”. There were some differing comments that mainly say, “*there are corporate blindness in HR more corporate organizations those who manage talent better, have more advantage*”. (Table 17).

a. *Positive perceptions*: Most common answers about positive HR perception was “*having more consultant role, being proactive, and producing value added works.*” On the other hand, there is also a common view that current HR profile is more powerful.

b. *Negative perceptions*: The comments about current HR managers included that “*they lack of vision, fail to take initiative, makes more work lists than needed*”. Concerning this issue, one of the participants made the following comment: “*There are only a few people in Turkey who has the HR competency to undertake the strategic role of HR. Since the prominent profile of HR top*

managers is low profile in Turkey, top managements of the companies' point of view about HR is weak.”

*3.2.3.7.3. Future Perception:* Some participants commented that implementations that urge the robotization and standardization of employees would be abandoned in the future of HR and, instead, a more flexible and original approach to HR that puts the perception of employees as human beings at its core will dominate the future of HR. One of the participants stated that, “more thought should be given to future perception of HR and it must be put on the agenda.” However, there was also common view that some parts of the HR roles would be transferred to business owners and HR professionals would play the role of consultant and supervisor in the organization in the future.

#### *3.2.3.8. The Entitlement of HR*

This part includes views and suggestions about the past name of HR, suitability of current name of HR to the purpose of the department and suggestions for its future name.

*3.2.3.8.1. The Current Name of HR:* “*Personnel*” was used for the name of HR in the past. Participants answered the question on whether the current name of “human resources management department” reflects the current situation or not. It was seen that there are two different points of view among the participants. Those who believe that human resources name reflects the current situation expressed that, “*its context is more important than its name, my resource is human beings, human beings can be considered as resources like soil and energy, we all are a resource and this does not bother me at all*” (Table 18). Participants who said that “the name does not reflect the existing situation and its name should be changed, accordingly” claimed that “*the name does not prioritize human focused and does not reflect the transformation experienced in the recent years*” and suggested name change. They also criticized the name used by some

companies such as *“happiness department”*. Concerning this issue, one of the participants made the following comment: “I see that some companies are naming this department as “Happiness Department”. Such names given to a field whose sincerity in terms of context is still under discussion carries the discussion into a bizarre dimension.”

3.2.3.8.2. *The Future Name of HR*: Participants who expressed that the current name of HR does not define and reflect the existing situation commented that, *“name of HR can be changed according to how companies positioned HR and department can be named as a better sector that manages perception better”*. Name suggestions include, *“human assets, society engineer, human designer, human management, organizational leadership”*. One of the participants stated that this argument can be a good subject for a workshop and said, “this subject is open to discussion and it can be a very good workshop topic and actually we have to discuss this. I think, human resources is not enough to define the role of the department.”

Table 17 and Table 18 includes illustrative participant views on the perceptual change and the entitlement of HR.

Table 17: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The perceptual change

<b>The Perceptual Change of HR</b>	
<b>Past perceptions</b>	<p>“It begins to transform into being more proactive department from being more reactive department.”</p> <p>“There was a structure that was more close to human beings, focused on knowing the employees in person and there were no systems imported by us and due to this reason, it was based on knowing them personally and touching them.”</p>

Table 17: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The perceptual change (continued)

The Perceptual Change of HR	
Current perceptions	<p>“HR is perceived as a good thing when it is at good hands and as a bad thing when it is at bad hands. As it is subjective, perception varies according to how it is managed, as well as the vision and personalities of management.”</p> <p>“Other departments of the company work themselves to the bone, they do overtime etc. but HR professional could be perceived as staff who do not work side by side with them and make judgments without hesitation.”</p>
Future perceptions	<p>“Recently, talent is so valuable and limited. So, companies carrying out better human resources implementations will have more advantage.”</p> <p>“As people become more conscious, they eventually put human beings to the focus because human beings cannot be happy no matter what has been done and said if you fail to create this image. Therefore, things might go off the rails if human beings do not feel that they are valued.”</p>

Table 18: Illustrative codes of HR evolution / The entitlement of HR

The Entitlement of HR	
The future name of HR	<p>“As an individual, I would prefer to say that I am representing people, I mean instead of human being management, I would be happier to work in an effort to understand and develop human beings and I am representing the point of view of human beings.”</p> <p>“Now, I don’t know which word can replace human resources, can it called as human force or, well, I don’t know. First, we have to hear the alternative and see if this alternative is better than human resources. But, yes, it is possible to find better name for sector.”</p>
The current name of HR	<p>“Just like I consider soil, energy and raw material as a resource, I consider human labor as resource, too. Here, there is a reality, the name of the profession speaks for itself, there is no point in trying to ignore it.”</p> <p>“At this stage of human resources, I do not think that the term of human resources fully portrays the point of view of the sector. It reminds me only human but not much human resources. When resources is mentioned, it feels like asset or tool, and feels more materialistic.”</p>
The past name of HR	<p>“Towards the end of 80s, human resources were used in banking sector, there were personnel departments and this was how we used to call such departments.”</p>

Table 19 shows illustrative codes compiled from views of participants about “human focused” vs. “human capital focused” perspectives.

*Table 19:* Illustrative codes of HR evolution in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives

<b>HR EVOLUTION</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
“Civilization granted us to ask about our rights. In other words, as more as democratization continues to grow, it will give human beings the right to ask why they are dismissed from their jobs and urges managers to show reason.”	“There is a perception about HR as if majority of HR solutions are pointless money loss.”
“But, if you want to establish systems generally as if human beings are like sheep flocks without recognizing the personalities of individuals, I think that this will fail.”	“If you become unsuccessful, then you would be eliminated. it is right to offer bonus for achieving a certain performance target, if they could not achieve this target, they even would not stay in the company due to pressure of performance focused management.”
“Under the title of relations with human beings and making assessment by only evaluating soft-skills, a number of incompetent people are included into the human resources processes and as system and process are already imported, a group of HR professionals who implemented this imported process from their desks, did not visit the field, did not touch people, did not understand their organizational culture, did not know the real expectation of employees and failed to customize these processes emerged.”	“If I reach that man insincerely or if I approach him for my own benefits only, I cannot reach anywhere. I have to give something in order to receive something from him. I have to persuade him to invest himself. I believe persuasion is the crucial word in this sentence. In other words, that man should really believe that something has changed and he has to change in that direction, too. This will allow him to provide contribution to my purpose.”
	“Competent human beings of many sectors are at war and this both increases costs and makes the work HR harder.”

### **3.2.4. Theme 4. How Can HR Add Value to the Organizations?**

Questions under various different headlines were asked to the participants during the interviews in order to explore their views about value focus of HR. ‘How HR can add value to the organizations’ theme was formed after analyzing the views of the participants. Sub-themes under this theme are shown in Figure 11.

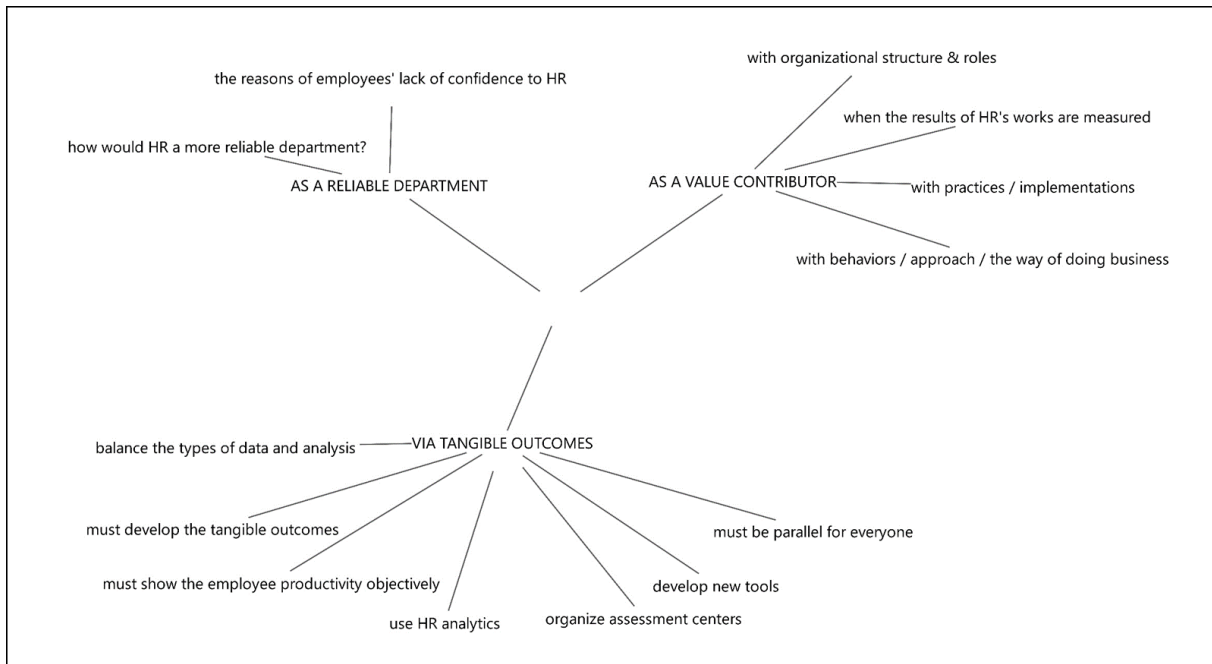


Figure 11: The Code Map for Theme 4. How Can HR Add Value to the Organizations?

#### 3.2.4.1. As a Reliable Department

Many findings regarding the reasons why a lack of confidence in HR exists and how HR would be a more reliable department are collected under this sub-theme.

*3.2.4.1.1. The Reasons of Employees' Lack of Confidence to HR:* When the findings in this chapter is considered, the most common answer was lack of confidence to HR emerges when: (a) *balance between employee-management-company benefit cannot be maintained*, (b) *incomprehensible system/tools/implementations are used*, (c) *employee is not recognized personally*. One of the participants defined employees' lack of confidence to HR as follows: "there are bizarre, new, fancy but complicated designs in the tools used during the HR processes. They become more incomprehensible as they get more complicated and this results in especially lack of confidence to HR."

*3.2.4.1.2. How Would HR Be a More Reliable Department?:* Findings concerning how HR would be a more reliable department are as follows: (a) *serves as a consultant under any circumstances*, (b) *does sustainable work*, (c) *executes simple designs and*

implementations, (d) makes reasoned decisions, (e) acts clearly and sincerely under any circumstances, and (f) must be fair to everyone.

Table 20 below includes illustrative code samples of HR contribution as a reliable department.

Table 20: Illustrative codes of HR contribution/as a reliable department

<b>As a Reliable Department</b>	
<b>How would HR a more reliable department?</b>	<p>“It is something to make a clear statement and even to say that I am not able to do so. But to say “okay, we are on it”, “we are working on it” and do not respond for three weeks is different. Because, they create expectation; we wait and see after this expectation but they say we could not do anything and after trying for the fourth or fifth time, they respond as there is nothing we can do about it. At least they did not create expectation when they say there is nothing they can do at the first place.”</p> <p>“When you share the justifications and implementation type of decisions based on simple and plain practices and if everyone agrees and confidences this, this is how you can create a confidence environment.”</p>
<b>The reasons of employees' lack of confidence to HR</b>	<p>“For instance, when I compare two big corporate companies I worked, I see that there were clearer definitions and everyone was adapting this model frame; maybe there were simpler and more plain designs but there were more confidence in that place where there were designs giving the feeling of objectivity.”</p> <p>“Some develop projects without knowing the climate they were managing and they are trying to come down from the top. Employees are not idiots, they see that. Thus, employees finally see that there is a HR department there that develops system for me without knowing anything about their lives and they realize that this department will fail as they do not know their jobs. Due to this reason, there is a lack of confidence among employees against HR.”</p>

#### 3.2.4.2. As a Value Contributor

Participants made some suggestions concerning possible organization structure and role of HR as a value contributor department, measuring the impact of works, implementations, studies, behavior, approach, and business manner. One of the participants stated the following

with regards to the required department structure, role and business manner of a value generating HR department:

“We must focus on the development aspect of organization in order to allow HR department to create greater value. It is necessary to think about where real performance gaps are and how much of this gap can be filled by HR and how much of it can be filled with business strategies. For this, there must be a corporate academy and this academy should be capable of designing company’s know how in order to allow the development of human beings.”

In order to become a value generating HR department, the following conditions are seen as essential: (a) *should monitor the impacts on financials*, (b) *should not only focus on completing the work but also develop perception measurements*, (c) *keep the track of studies and their impacts*, (d) *increase the number of systems and implementations participated by employees*, (e) *manage employer’s perception*, (f) *focus on leadership*, and (g) *develop implementations that would make a difference in the competition*.

“HR can create value when it makes human beings feel that they are valued” sentence was frequently repeated and voiced by almost all of the participants. Prominent findings are: (a) *sincere and transparent communication*, (b) *ability to take embracing decisions*, and (c) *doing business, executing implementations and developing system without losing humanism*.

Table 21 below includes illustrative codes concerning as a value contributor sub-theme.

Table 21: Illustrative codes of HR contribution / as a value contributor

<b>As a Value Contributor</b>	
<b>Organizational structure &amp; roles</b>	<p>“HR goal is to maintain sustainable success of employees who get together for work. Thus, I want to see HR as a department that would actually vanish into a thin air. HR should be department that must work without distinguishing itself, then it would added value to work.”</p> <p>“There is no engineering in human resources teams; I believe this is the most important shortcoming.”</p>
<b>Measuring the results</b>	<p>“We must not adapt too much complicated view; what has been done, did it work, how employees perceive or embrace this? We do not focus on this, we move to the next level. When we do it like this, we see that we have developed 12 projects in a year and receive awards, but we are never measured. Majority of companies just brand it.”</p>
<b>Practices/implementations</b>	<p>“When human beings feel included, the outcome could be so much different. I have seen this in my working life, when human beings are included in the process instead of practicing unexpected and sudden decisions, different results can be achieved.”</p> <p>“Employee well-being is a rising trend in the World but it is not practiced commonly in Turkey. There are many examples of saying actually you are valuable for us and we care everything about you in Turkey such as sending flowers to the family of a hardworking employee. HR sees that high salary as one of the most important thing for employees. At the end of the day, they show tendency to focus on utilitarianism rather than being human focused department.”</p>
<b>Behaviors/approach</b>	<p>“Even if HR leaves everything aside and only focuses on leadership, it would still create an important value for the organization. Because, HR is nothing without the vision of the man at the top.”</p> <p>“Even by saying performance oriented, you would be able to touch human beings. Due to this reason, it could be necessary to focus on the development of human beings and how people could do better while doing their jobs rather than being performance oriented, and even you should be able to genuinely explain this to them.”</p>

### 3.2.4.3. Via Tangible Outcomes

Findings concerning how HR can generate value via tangible outcomes are as follows:

(a) *balance the types of data and analysis*, (b) *must develop the tangible outcomes*, (c) *use HR analytics*, and (d) *organize assessment centers*.

Many of the participants share a common view that development of HR by using HR analytics would contribute value to the organization. However, there was no common definition about HR analytics among participants. One of the participants made an emphasis on balance of two data types by saying that numerical and verbal data should be merged in HR (Table 22).

Table 22 below includes illustrative codes concerning participants view on as a value contributor via tangible outcomes sub-theme.

Table 22: Illustrative codes of HR contribution / via tangible outcomes

<b>Via Tangible Outcomes</b>	
<b>Data and analysis</b>	“Moreover, numerical and verbal sides of HR should be merged. I think that both are very critical. For instance when verbal side of HR outweighs, then real action might not be taken; then people leave and watch them go. Or when just the opposite of this situation occurs and analytical side of HR outweighs, it is even worse. For instance, you begin to consider human beings as machines.”
<b>Developing tangible outcomes</b>	“HR does not something like standard input-output, when the material on hand is human when decisions is about human and when decision directors of human resources are also human, then there is always decisions special to that particular situation. Due to this reason, a decision which is taken for you today could be different for someone else tomorrow and I also believe they do not concretely define this.”
<b>HR analytics</b>	“Analytical side of HR is maybe the best part that allows us to understand what HR really does, what its contribution?”
<b>Organize assessment centers</b>	“Actually, assessment centers should be established in order to get tangible outcomes. This will allow people to have a material output when ask themselves what has happened and why I failed.”
<b>Fairness</b>	“HR develops various tools, this is nice but are these tools and outcome is parallel for everyone, this is still a question mark for everyone.”

Table 23 includes illustrative codes that display the views of different participants about ‘human focused’ vs. ‘human capital focused’ perspective under the general theme of how can HR add value to the organizations.

*Table 23: Illustrative codes of HR contribution in terms of human focused and human capital focused perspectives*

<b>HOW HR CAN ADD VALUE TO THE ORGANIZATIONS?</b>	
<b>HUMAN FOCUSED</b>	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL FOCUSED</b>
<p>‘We focus on keeping up with the trends and forget what we were really trying to do, we miss saying one minute, there was something called human being or maybe there wasn’t. Instead of focusing on essence and doing the job, we are trying to follow others and follow the trends in America. I see that when a HR department tries to keep up pace with system trends, it moves away from the essence and alienates.’</p>	<p>“Heavy alienation due to multitasking has been experienced in the cross working teams. Job is changing constantly; so does the process and manager. Alienation that emerges due to constant change of work and process decreases the sense of belonging and trust. It is different from the alienation of blue-colored workers employed in factories, I believe that alienation of modern times are more intense.”</p>
<p>“I have been working with HR teams for many years, we have “to do” lists, we check them and say perfect. Actually, when we look back, we see that we did not care if the projects are perceived correctly, that project or transformation was adapted or not or will they work.”</p>	<p>“I have witnessed that HR teams could affect the company’s financial results positively when they really maintain the motivation and engagement needed to achieve a certain goal.”</p>
<p>“It is important that it could show me directions in my career journey. What I mean from showing directions is, you know, I must feel that I have a safe even when I trapped and fall. I see HR professions not as HR professionals but any other employees in professional life but they do not feel lonely as I do.”</p>	<p>“Moreover, numerical and verbal sides of HR should be merged. I think that both are very critical. For instance when verbal side of HR outweighs, then real action might not be taken; then people leave and watch them go. Or when just the opposite of this situation occurs and analytical side of HR outweighs, it is even worse. For instance, you begin to consider human beings as machines.”</p>

### 3.3. Summary of Results

- a. HR is seen more as an experiential field, obviously the most preferred learning channel is the social networks. The other channels, are stated as conferences, congresses, forums, globally popular journals, and relevant associations. The empirical and theoretical academic research at Turkish universities as well as the other related sharing platforms were emphasized for being inadequate to meet the needs of HRM and the cultural specificity.
- b. The study has pointed out that whether SHRM arguments are obtained by HR professionals through “human focused” or “human capital focused” is influenced by HR professionals’ individual profile and personal drivers. Personal drivers within this study is found to be determinant variables including educational background, previous job experiences, and the characteristics of influencers.
- c. Collective perspectives are also pointed out as determinant factors. The most important factors that determine collective perspectives within HR management are defined as the climate and culture of organizations HR professionals work for and socio-cultural-economical reasons.
- d. Climate and culture of organizations, leadership styles of top management, and HR top manager are viewed as important factors that play a crucial role in the success of companies and for HR to become a strategic partner. It is expected that HR top manager should; be competent, have visionary perspective, and convincing about HR for the sake of being a strategic partner. Even top management should have HR vision to attain the goal of being a strategic partner, otherwise, it happens very difficult.
- e. Based on socio-cultural-economical reasons, the rate of unemployment, job insecurity among employees, and culture-fit problems while implementing foreign

HR implementations which are developed based on foreign culture norms can be listed as socio-cultural-economical reasons.

- f. HR turned into more human capital focused with the participants who have technical educational background and corporate company experiences. The focus of HR as human or human capital is changing from participant to participant due to their past experiences, the characteristics of influencers and the type of organizational climate and culture that they worked. HR professionals with technical educational background want HR employee profiles to be more technical like HR professionals having corporate experience in technical sectors.
- g. Professionals' individual perspectives on HRM are explained with four themes, as follows: HR definition and roles, HR industry and sector, evolution of HR, how can HR add value to organizations.
- h. Important findings might be summarized for SHRM in terms of definition and roles:
  - Being a strategic partner via being HR business partner
  - Understanding the business, their needs, and language
  - Making a significant contribution to human and company
  - Holistic view of human
  - Making a balance between management / company and employees
  - Considering everybody as customer, increasing the value of shareholder
  - Providing consultancy
  - Making a difference in competition as well as increasing engagement via practices, approach, tools, techniques, and methods
  - Managing human resources effectively
  - Developing leaders
  - Shaping the organizational culture

- Being analytical in every work by systematic analysis of data, executive reporting
- Perception management

i. In terms of HR industry and sector;

- There is no common definition of competency term which is shared by everyone. It is believed that there are a lot of competencies which are very complex, and defined same across companies, but it should be specific to organizations' cultures.
- There is no common point of view about the definition of human focused, just like in competencies, but the general belief is that humanism has been decreasing for a while in both HR approach and practices. The reasons of diminishment of humanism can be lined up as; one fits all approach, high performance focus, increasing competition in business life, and routine works which hinder creativity, easily drifting apart from employees who have poor performance.
- There is also no common point of view about human capital perspective. Its content and actual meaning are known with a limited information. The participants who know its actual meaning and content can also be divided in two for evaluating it as a positive or a negative perspective. Those who evaluate human capital perspective positively claimed that it meets today's business life's expectations. On the contrary, those who evaluate human capital perspective negatively claimed that it puts capital in the center than human beings. Moreover, there are some participants who do not know its actual meaning, but support it since it is prominent in HR field.

- There is a common view that regardless of the size of the company, many companies tend to have HR department. There are HR agenda variation between companies due to their size and type (corporate/ SME/family).
- i. Important findings might be summarized for HR evolution in terms of priorities, expectations from HR organizational structure, HR professional profile and competencies, perceptual change, and entitlement of HR:
- The priorities in the past were operational tracking, setting processes, and ensuring quality. Today's priorities are employee engagement, HR analytics, digitilization, performance management, talent management, and HR business partnership. For future priorities, engagement is thought to be different from today which will be more focusing on employee happiness, wellbeing, and work-life balance. Additionally, performance management is thought to be different from today by more focusing on behavioral side of human, not just only focusing on their quantifiable target outputs. Participant estimated that the way of doing HR businesses with customized, and flexible approaches by caring on employee communication and cultural fit would become prominent. Some of the HR roles such as performance management would be changed or transferred to business leaders in the company. Moreover, organizational development, academy structures are thought to be reported to general manager/CEO. The common thought is that HR professional would be consultant in the organization.
  - Positive developments in HR are listed as increasing internal communication implementations, digitilization of HR, HR planning by predicting business, financial situation, and salary practices. HR is seen more respected position, more heard, and more active when compared with the past.

- Despite the positive developments in some of the companies about engagement, performance management, talent management, and career management, there is a common view among participants that some negative developments experienced with them. Moreover, copying others/trends and not doing business customized to the climate and culture of organization are most criticized developments.
- There is a common view that HR should be strategic. In order to be a strategic department, the followings are pointed out: (a) understanding business, strategy and priorities, (b) making analysis by anticipating expectations and need, (c) constant self-development, (d) implementing participatory management, and (e) developing and executing implementations special to the organization.
- The profile of HR professional and expected competencies are listed as (a) being analytical, (b) developing financial literacy, (c) being a good narrator, (d) being able to use the language efficiently without HR jargons and talk sincerely, (e) showing holistic approach, (f) being able to manage balanced manager-employee relations (g) being able to keep the pulse of the company, (g) developed sense of business understanding, and (h) being able to understand the needs. An expected personal characteristic of HR professional is a person with high awareness, being curious, dependable, brave, and self-confident.
- HR professionals need supportive and visionary leaders in the top management and HR. They also need to be eliminated from the situations which prevent them to be sincere and transparent.
- Experience gained in various business fields is seen an asset for HR future career, in addition to horizontal career progress would be more prominent than vertical progress.

- Positive self-evaluations of HR professionals include being developed in the recruitment processes and HR business partner role, conversely negative self-evaluations include not being synchronized to the changing world of work, failure to tell the benefits of HR to the company, not being able to keep balance between managers and employees, giving conflicting messages due to conflicting subject matters of HR such as engagement and performance management.
- It can be inferred from the results that perceptual change occurred throughout HR's own life long existence. In the past, HR professionals were better in understanding organizational members' worries, had more effective communication skills, so that they were perceived more valuable. Additionally, HR management was more hierarchical, power-focused, subjective, and rule based. HR professionals' way of doing their business was operational and with civil-servant mind-set. The current positive perceptions about HR department are listed as follows; having consultant role, being proactive, and producing value-added works. Moreover, it is also believed by some of the participants that they are employee's advocate, defender and representative. On the contrary, being a department that people do not like and that creates fear and unhappiness are the negative perceptions about HR department today. It is also perceived that there seemed to be a lack of visionary perspective in the HR managers. In the future, it is anticipated that HR professionals would give up the robotized applications for human, become more flexible, authentic, and individual oriented such as understanding individual as a whole.
- The entitlement of HR is commonly said as personnel in the past. It was shifted from personnel to human resources in time. Currently, there are different

opinions about the entitlement of HR in terms of using the name with “resource” or without it. Those who believe that human resources name reflects the current situation defined the resource as human beings like soil and energy or they expressed that “resource” does not bother them. Those who believe the name does not reflect the existing situation and its name should be changed claimed that the name does not prioritize human focused and does not reflect the transformation experienced in the recent years. The future name suggestions of HR include, “human assets, society engineer, human designer, human management, and organizational leadership”.

j. HR’s contribution to the organization might be summarized as follows:

- There are lack of confidence to HR department. The reasons are explained as follows: (a) balance between employee-management-company benefit cannot be maintained, (b) incomprehensible systems/tools/implementations are used, and (c) employe is not recognized personally. To be a more reliable department, HR department (a) serves as a consultant under any circumstances, (b) does sustainable work, (c) executes simple designs and implementations, (d) makes reasoned decisions, (e) acts clearly and sincerely under any circumstances, and (f) must be fair to everyone
- In order to generate value in organizations, HR department (a) should monitor the impacts on financials, (b) should not only focus on completing the work but also develop perception measurements, (c) keep the track of studies and their impacts, (d) increase the number of systems and implementations participated by employees, (e) manage employer’s perception, (f) focus on leadership, and (g) develop implementations that would make a difference in the competition.

- To obtain tangible outcomes, followings are expected from HR : (a) balance the types of data and analysis, (b) must develop the tangible outcomes, (c) use HR analytics, and (d) organize assessment centers.



## Section 4 – Discussion and Conclusions

Today almost every HR professional claims that HR department should be a strategic department. It can be inferred that there is a common understanding what HR should do for becoming a strategic HR, in contrast there are doubts about how to become a strategic HR while the main focus is “human” more than “capital”. Is there any possibility to have SHRM while focusing on employees as “human”, not only a than “capital” ? What do these different perspectives present to HR field? Which one is providing more strategic ways to become a more strategic HR? What do we really understand from SHRM? Are HR professionals really equipped to understand the differences between the perspectives of “human focused” and “human capital focused” ? Do they really know the differences or go adrift? These were the questions which were occupied my mind before starting my thesis.

Many SHRM researchers have been focusing on the practices that can acquire and develop the human capital resource, but ignoring the resource itself (Wright & McMahan, 2011). The concept of human capital comes from economic literature, and Becker (2008) argued that all forms of capital are assets and produce income and other outputs over time. However, the uniqueness of human capital comes from the understanding that people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health or values, but they can be separated from their financial and physical assets.

Employees, as human beings can sense, think and decide differently, that is why these differences lead them to act and contribute differently. Popularly used sources such as Dave Ulrich’s (1998) researches figure out the need of “add value” and in doing so they propose a common structure of HR, competencies and the ways how you acquire and maintain them. Since 1980 with the shifting focus on HR and human capital, majority of organizations have moved towards such structures, competencies and practices.

This study mainly aimed to address whether all organizations need these mindset shift regardless of their sector, company size, and cultural differences. SHRM researchers treat human capital as a form of capital owned and controlled by the organizations and it is crucial to understand if this is reflected in the real organizational settings and how. Moreover, if HR professionals approach employees more like a “capital” than “human” and how this makes a difference in the organizational processes. With the light of these questioning, it is intended to learn how “human focused” and “human capital focused” perspectives adopted by Turkish HR professionals play a role in defining HR, its roles, its contribution to the organizations, their assessment of the industry and perception of the evolution of HR field in Turkey as well.

The general meaning of “strategy” term was described by de De Wit and Meyer (1998) as “about achieving a fit between organization and environment, or developing a course of action for achieving an organization’s purpose”. The term of strategy was firstly used in HR field by Galbraith and Nathanson (as cited in Wright & McMahan, 1992), and carry HR strategies to the strategic management context. However, it is known that the term comes into HR field by 1990s with the meaning of adding positive value to organizations in order to make a difference in competition and helping companies to manage their human resources effectively. Accordingly, the focal point is to make a difference in competition, benefit more from people, minimize financial cost, and increase or maintain employee engagement. The findings of the current thesis have pointed out that HR is an experiential field so that the best learning media of HR is mostly based on a learning-by-doing. In addition to that, following the global trends and resources, and the leading companies’ practices via conferences, forums, globally popular journals, and the social network platforms are also information channels of HR. This is similar in Turkey, however in the current study we see that participants’ questioning about the specificity of know-how through the arguments of whether HR is a specific proficiency, and even criticize cultural specificity within HRM. Within the context of the influence of globally

known/used academic arguments, some of the participants criticized for using some models in every type organization and culture without questioning whether the organization needs and fits its culture. For instance, Dave Ulrich and his colleagues' (1998) competency model is thought to be crucial which was stemmed from long-term and well-rounded research and continuously updated, whereas it is also criticized of their model for positioning "human" within HRM which has fallen into secondary importance and may create conflict by prioritising the needs of organization in its definition.

They put forward that universities and institutions are producing HR related information, but they are generally far away from HR field in Turkey. The general belief is that the information related to HR is generally imported from America and Europe which sometimes does not fit to Turkish culture and context. For the same reason, it may fail to meet the needs of HRM even though for the situations in which the needs of HRM is similar to foreign cultures. In this sense, following the trends and copying the trends are different from each other. They mentioned that there are inter-country differences in HR so that it sometimes damages their organizations, especially when the organization is not ready for new approach or practice. One of the participants emphasized on even the ways of raising children of Europe and America is totally different from us, the expected ways of doing business and employee profile have also differences. She did not mean that we must keep our distance, in contrast she insisted on not certainly copy and paste which would result in too artificial practice, systems, etc. She added after a certain period of time, copying the foreign practices, approaches without customizing or filtering, it would become like "you are wearing a dress that does not fit to your size".

The findings of this study have revealed that obtaining SHRM arguments through "human focused" or "human capital focused" differ from person to person. It can be inferred from the study that HR professionals' individual profile and personal drivers, which are determined as educational background, previous job experiences, and the characteristics of

influencers. Moreover, the climate and culture of the organizations HR professionals work for and socio-cultural-economical reasons are thought to be influential and crucial that determine the presence of a collective perspective within HRM. In addition to these factors, I realized during the interviews that HR professionals' personal characteristics, visionary perspectives, and social value judgements may also be taken into account as determinant factors. Since this study is solely an empirical, I did not prefer to use these headings, which were not asked to participants directly, as determinant factors in my findings. I would like to share this information as a finding to be examined in the future research.

In terms of educational background and previous experiences of the participants in the study, it was revealed that participants who have technical educational background and corporate company experiences agreed that HR should be more focused on capital. They also asserted that the organizational development role of HR should not belong to HR, whereas it should be reported to general manager/CEO of the company. It is very striking that majority of participants with technical educational background mentioned that they did not choose to work in HR, whereas they choosed to work in organizational development so that they do not define themselves as a HR employee. In additon to these, they claimed that without financial literacy, business understanding, and analytical reasoning abilities, HR professionals would not become a strategic partner. Participants with corporate experiences in more competitive sector such as telecommunications, technology tend to position HR management and its approach in a more capital focused way. In the competitive sector, the most distinguishing factor of the companies among the others is their employees. It can be interpreted that these sectors are much more competitive and rapidly changing, thereby HR professionals have more time pressure and business challenges. Additionally, HR professionals who have technical educational background are prominent and preferred. Because of aforementioned reasons, my interpretation is that HR professionals tend to focus more on human capital in these sectors. As I shared in

the results section, one of the participants who voiced his view from more human capital perspective suggested that HR department has a cost structure that chases after non-useful work with a large team. He believed that it is one of the departments that could have a leading role in value contribution and shared a striking sentence that to be able to a strategic HR, HR professionals' minds should be full of their general managers' agenda even they would go to sleep at night. When I look at this sentence, I clearly interpret it as a reflection of capitalistic perspective. Thus, the findings of this part indicated that people who have technical educational background and experiences which were shaped in competitive, corporate companies have tendency to define and execute HR department's design with HR professionals who are more technical, analytical and have human capital focused.

Past experiences and the characteristics of the influencers also have shaping effect on HR professionals' individual perspectives on HRM. However, I realized that participants who have non-technical educational background both believe the perspective of human focused and human capital focused. When I looked at their examples in interviews, I induce that they were more impressed by their previous experiences and the leaders with whom they had worked, conversely the majority of participants with technical background claimed that HR should be human capital focused regardless of their past experience or the influencers whom they worked with. Participants especially with both corporate and SME and/or family company experience shared an important aspect and asked the reasons why some SMEs or family companies have high employee engagement. For an instance, a participant told one of her experiences that she finds surprising about a family company. After working many years in corporate companies, she worked just only three years in a family company and interpreted that she was wrong in everything about HR that she had learned till that years. The reasons why she commented like that the reason of the company's high rate of engagement scores and their success for retaining the most valuable, and crucial employees. She also added that there were more investments in

big corporate companies and it was expected that kind of companies' engagement scores would be higher due to benefits they provide. As a researcher, I interpret this is a good example for displaying a corporate HR professionals' mindset. Because, the majority of corporate companies with highly brands in competitive sectors create more capital atmosphere for their employees. They voice the importance of engagement and expect HR professionals to behave in maintaining and/or increasing engagement in very similar ways. Engagement is supposed to be higher in such kind of companies than family or SME companies. Furthermore, a striking comment was given by a participant during interview. While she was doing a comparison study which was conducted in a non-governmental organization, she found out that some big companies even listed in Capital 500 do not have HR departments, training development investments, but their financial outputs are still very good. She added that a study must be carried out on this issue in order to see what they are doing better. To conclude, I think it can be understood from her example that she totally explained "success of a company" by only limiting to the results of its financials. While the SHRM's main argument gives advice to HR professionals for increasing employee engagement scores in order to get positive financial results, I may evaluate this point of view as a strong manifestation of capitalistic view. As a researcher, I conceive that we cannot be sure that good financial results lead to increment of engagement and make people feel more happy in that company. It may not be always like that.

It can be inferred that current and future climate and culture of organizations play a crucial role in the success of organizations. Leadership style of HR top manager and general manager/CEO, the profile of employees, the size of the company, and sector are the prominent factors that can determine the climate and culture of the organizations. Majority of participants in the study were senior HR professionals with a wide range of experiences in terms of sector and HR roles so that they had chance to put forward their views with comparison of their past experiences and express them by giving examples. These wide range of experiences influenced

me to think the profile of a HR professional and his/her personal drivers are important factors determine HRM in organizations. In addition to that, in terms of leadership types, the most frequently met ones are believed as the power-oriented and hierarchical. Emerging from Turkey's socio-cultural-economical circumstances, there are some circumstances may also affect the cultural climate of the company. For an instance, the high rate of unemployment, job loss anxiety, and fear culture in the business life of Turkish society may lead to emerge power-oriented and hierarchial leadership. It is also clearly seen that even HR professionals want to focus on "human" rather than "human capital", it is expected both from HR professionals and HR top managers to be competent and having visionary perspective about HR to convince general manager/CEO of the company. On the other hand, if general manager/CEO has already visionary and human focused perspectives, it would be much more easier to be a strategic partner with the focus of human. A participant gave an example regarding this part, "HR is perceived as a good thing when it is at good hands and as a bad thing when it is at bad hands. As it is subjective, perception varies accordingly how it is managed, vision and personalities of management."

The study also figured out that there is no common point of view and understanding for some terms and perspectives in HR professionals. This can be induced due to the differences which come from individual differences and collective variables. However, the participants' focal point of competency is its complexity, reduncancy and being the same in almost every organization regardless of the organizational culture and need differences. One of the participants made a comment that HR professionals misunderstand learning from each other. While we know that each company should have its own working style and culture, we generally prefer to import practices from quite different continents. He added that one of the worldwide leading company's suggested competencies are used in almost every corporate companies even in the same way. He criticized HR professionals and even the management team of the company

for not asking why they do not define their own competencies by using their own daily language instead of copying the others. Likewise, another participant put forward an interesting aspect blaming the leading, worldwide consultancy firms and/or researchers. He said that they boost new trends, concepts, and/or suggestions of practices to HR field to get more projects and gain more income. This is not only the case for competency models he said, but also same for HR management, practice, systems, etc. I may say that the imported sources are not generally filtered by HR professionals before using them in their companies. Majority of participants also argued that due to Turkish cultural characteristics, people are also struggling with some most used HR practices. For instance, evaluating 360 degree competency surveys and giving feedback to each other accordingly are the ones because of which every organization struggles. Thus, it can be interpreted that HR professionals generally do not look at their organizational needs and ask whether their organization's culture and climate fit. Another reason why HR professionals tend to import sources, which are seen as trends used by leading companies, without filtering may be to keep themselves on the safe side. Some of the participants criticized HR professionals for implementing some HR trends just because they are produced by worldwide companies in Europe or America. Because, there is a common understanding that these countries are ahead of us in terms of HR subjects and their suggestions, products are chosen in the world by many HR professionals. Due to its prevalence and being foreign product, it may be chosen by HR professionals in Turkey as well and it may also help them convince their management team in a more easier way. For instance, if there is an unexpected result after implementing new HR practice or system which is imported from those kinds of companies, HR professionals may defend themselves as if it was a prominent practice or system in HR field, so there cannot be a problem due to their competency, etc.

When we look at the evaluations of participants regarding "human capital" and "human" focused, it can be acquired without any exceptions, participants believe that HR should be

human focused. Majority of participants asserted that humanism has been decreasing so that people need to feel as they are valued, otherwise they would feel themselves as a machine. When examining the common reasons the participants put forward for decrement of humanism, it can be interpreted that they are stemmed from human capital perspective. In this case, these are the reasons of increasing competition in business life which leads to high performance focus in companies and it also influences to take some decisions easily such as letting employees who have poor performance go. Besides these prevalent criticisms, how to keep humanism in HR is seen vague. Moreover, some participants also have disbeliefs about human focused in HR due to the expectations of today's business world, and see the focus of human capital as inevitable. A participant's following comment can be a good example;

“It changes from culture to culture and from company to company. There are some companies that are standing in two different poles such like black and white. And there are some who sees an employee as human before an employee. Increasing competition in the business world, reflection of all these pressures to the employees may cause us to miss the human factor. But still I cannot answer it as “no, human is not capital or human is capital”. There is no two distinctive points about this question on my mind, I see a sincere effort but there are also realities of capitalist world and these realities do not always carry us to an ideal point.”

Furthermore, the definition of human capital especially depends on the personal profile and individual drivers of HR professionals. There are some examples in the study that some participants believed human capital perspective without noticing that they actually criticize the focal point of human capital or there are some participants who describe human capital without corresponding to its core meaning. For example, one of the participants explained human capital like an understanding that explains how higher level manager is aware of his/her personal needs

and emotions which help them to manage organizations in a better way than before. On the other hand, a considerable numbers of participants consciously believe what human capital offers to HR field.

When we look at the findings related to HR professionals' individual perspectives for defining HR, determining roles, perceiving HR evolution, contributing to the organization, we again see the impact of "human focused" vs "human capital focused" perspectives. It can be interpreted that participants whether they are more human focused or human capital focused talk on common issued on the side of "what"s to define HR, its roles and customers, its history and its change of agenda; but the main difference comes from "why" and "how" sections of these subthemes. To make it clear, they mainly emphasize HR's roles and definitions that it should be strategic partner, make a balance between management/company and employees, make a significant contribution to human and company, manage human resources effectively, understand the business and its needs. When it comes to explain "why" HR should do and "how" HR can do these roles and responsibilities, the different perspectives' impacts emerge. Participants who focus more on human than capital claim that HR should firstly discover employee as a human being, understand his/her as a whole, think their well-being, make feel them that they are valued. With the perspective of "human focused", it is expected from them to learn employees' individual differences, do not mass management in all cases, whereas do segmented and customized management, and provide system, practice, etc. accordingly. On the contrary, participants with the perspective of "human capital" claim that HR should always monitor financial results, be in line with management, sort out poor performance, provide ways to benefit more from employees. In such recommendations, employee's wellness, individual needs, developmental needs are seen in the background. The system, procedure, management expectations, and financial results are the key issues to be positioned in the foreground.

When we examine the priorities in HR field from the participants' point of view, we again see the same subjects that were shared by HR professionals. They all shared today's HR field's priorities as engagement, digitization, talent management, performance management, and the role of HR business partner. Even they shared they have been dealing with negative impacts of these aforementioned subjects, they argued why these negative impacts are seen and what can be the solutions through different perspectives. For example, without any exception, all participants claimed that performance management is not effective today compared to the past. In fact, some participants blamed HR professionals not being adequately analytical, lack of financial literacy, and having business understanding.

By comparison, some participants blamed HR professionals for developing systems with neglecting individual differences, giving more importance to numerical outputs and not including behavioral variables adequately. They also added that there is no adequate participative management, recognition, balance between managers and employees. Guthrie put forward that use of high involvement work practices enhance organisational competitiveness as well (as cited in Gooderham et al., 2008). Moreover, performance system was criticized for just promoting runners, not giving importance to develop before eliminating employees. It was interpreted that this is because there is no enough time to do so for competitive business life. It is preferred to drift apart poor performers rather than invest them. However, when we look at their further anticipations for priorities in HR field, they all shared today's approach and practices need to be somehow changed. Participants who position "human" to their center asserted that organizations would encounter with employees by knowing, understanding them better, and prioritizing their happiness and emotional health. They added studies would be conducted for aiming at preventing miscommunications, finding specific term for talent for each company, increasing the empowerment within leaders in HR implementations. Even some roles such as performance management, talent management would belong to business leaders

and these subjects' management would gain flexibility accordingly leaders' profile. Thus, I may induce from this part that participants are very similar defined today's priorities and their negative impacts, but again there were two different perspectives for the root of these negative impacts that they shared. Moreover, their anticipations for future priorities are almost similar.

According to the findings, the image and perception of HR department and HR professionals are also differentiated in terms of their individual perspectives and their impacts. For instance, there are some participants claimed that HR department's perception has been changed in a negative way such as more less liked, feared department, and a department that creates unhappiness. Moreover, HR professionals were seen as more capable of understanding individuals' worries in the past. However, some participants claimed that HR is more proactive, producing value added works, having more consultant role compared to the past. There is also a common view about HR managers that were generally criticized as being lack of vision, making more to do lists than needed, and failing to take initiative. When examining these arguments, participants who focus more on "human" put forward negative perceptual views in terms of losing humanism in HR field, blaming HR managers for not defending humanism as well as not convincing adequately the top management of their companies to focus on human. On the contrary, participants who focus more on "human capital" expressed that they blamed HR managers because of not being adequate for understanding business and finance subjects in order to meet the expectations of top management.

The most powerful comment, which was shared by the majority of participants, indicated the same issue that HR earned a seat at the general manager/CEO's table so that they have become a member of top management of the organizations. Without a doubt, all participants see this progress as a positive, but their expectations from this progress have differences. For instance, some participants expect from HR managers to convince top managers to take more human focused decisions and not allow to damage employees'

wellbeing. This is primarily expectation for those participants. They claimed that they can have a chance to balance the needs, expectations of employees and company. In order to do that, it is expected them to display how employees are more efficient when they are more valued. On the other hand, some participants see this progress as a sign of approval by business owners so that they should talk about more financials and find ways to minimize costs.

Similarly, Barney et al. (1997) mentioned similar issue in their research by indicating many HR executives' complaints about not inviting to the strategic planning "table" and they stated as following "there are far too many HR executives who view themselves as Human Resource people who happen to work in a business, than business people who happen to work in the Human Resource function." They emphasized that if HR professionals want to develop sustainable advantage in organizations without losing their primarily focus on employees, they should look from VRIO framework which constitutes of value, rareness, imitability, and organization). As a researcher, I do not interpret this expectation in a negative way, but I would also like to point out that they should not forget their primary focus, and they do not need to focus more on capital to be approved instead they should display the negative impacts on devalued, neglected, and secondarily positioned employees' impacts on the organization with financials as well.

In terms of the evolution of HR professionals, there are some self-evaluations shared by participants: giving conflicting messages, employment of HR professionals who are unaware of why HR exists, and who do not internalize professional practices of their organizations. For instance, one of the participants defined conflicting message as exhibiting behaviors for aiming to improve employee engagement, but concurrently easily parting ways from employees for their failing to reach certain personal performance without giving adequate time to develop themselves. In these evaluations, it can be interpreted that HR professionals need to be

supported by influential HR leaders whom are expected to handshake with top managers and eliminate the situations preventing them to be sincere and transparent as much as possible.

The current entitlement of human resources and suggestions for future were also asked to participants. It is seen that there are still two different points of view among the participants related to the entitlement of current and future of HR. Those who believe that its name reflects the current situation evaluated human resource's "resource" part with a positive meaning such as resources like soil and energy. Nevertheless, participants who believe the name does not reflect the current situation criticized "resource" part for bothering them, and suggested to prioritize "human focused" in the future name (i.e. society engineer, human designer, and organizational leadership).

While examining the prominent answers which were given by participants for the expected HR profile and their competencies, expected ways of doing HR business, the suggestions how to be a strategic HR department, and the suggested contributions of HR to the organizations, I have decided to put forward some keywords regarding aforementioned subthemes to point out commonality in this part: "being" analytical, narrator, simple, solution-focused, reliable; "having" financial literacy, business understanding; "displaying" holistic approach, sustainability, leadership; "keeping" the pulse, the tracks of works; "providing" incomprehensible approaches/systems/tools/practices, tangible outcomes, consultancy; and making balance, managing perception, doing customization, adding value". Yeung et al. (1996) found out the critical HR professional competencies as following : " (1) solid knowledge of business or business acumen; (2) a capacity to facilitate and implement change; and (3) influencing skills." This was interpreted in those years as an emerging trend of "measuring HR effectiveness and impact, the process orientation while delivering HR services" in HR functions. When we look at this study's findings, business understanding, HR analytics are ones that are most answered. I induce as a researcher that in order to manage HR department

efficiently for the sake of all parties, these aforementioned keywords would be a prescription for HR professionals. When we look at the most common answers for being a strategic HR, it is clearly seen that all HR professionals want to be strategic and analytical. I may say that what is understood from “strategic” and “analytical” needs to be clarified. According to the findings, some technical abilities such as financial analysis, designing technology driven systems, even data gathering are accompanied with HR professionals with technical educational background. In order to be analytical and providing incomprehensive analysis, it does not always need to be done by engineers or with technology driven systems. For instance, qualitative methodologies for gathering and analysing data, which are rarely used in HR field, can also lead to analytical results for HR field. One of the participants’ criticism for this issue like that HR professionals should adapt a more macro approach while they talk about making analysis. He added that they can analyze the various kinds of data and make an assumption about organizational culture, even they can make an analysis about the moods and tendencies of employees, and this is what he called as being analytical. When we look at “strategic” term of HR, it is seen that strategy role of HR mostly matches with the role of HR business partner.

Finally, I may say that the findings of this study may introduce a comprehensive and evolutionary overview of strategic HR management for Turkish HR field in terms of discovering which perspective (human focused vs. human capital) has a prominent role for obtaining strategic arguments by HR professionals, leads to an impact on HR professionals and HRM. Throughout my thesis, I realized that HR professionals’ and even top management’s prioritization for forming a HR department even with the same needs of agendas, challenges, contexts, expectations of companies, and employees change from each other, and in doing so this leads to different results and perceptions in organizations. Overall I may say that three prevalent profiles of HR professional can be induced according to the results: One of them can be defined as focusing on human at first and doing/managing HRM accordingly, but needs to

be supported by both leaders and organization. The other one can be defined as believing HR should focus more on human than capital, but also having disbeliefs about this perspective in order to be realized just because of competitive business needs and expectations. The last but not least one can be defined as focusing more on human capital than human, and claiming that business life expects professionals to behave in a professional way which does not need to behave in an emotional way. Having said that how SHRM arguments are presented to HR field, interpreted by which HR professionals, adopted and managed by which companies may lead to different impacts on organizations and people.

#### **4.1. Implications for Research and Future Studies**

The implication of the current study can be discussed from the perspectives of practical significance of qualitative study. The qualitative methods brought me to develop not only a model which may add value to the related literature but also practical interpretation of the findings for the organizations.

This study can contribute to the related literature in terms of its comprehensive overview of human vs. human capital focused perspectives throughout HR field in Turkey. It was also the first study that aimed to discover evolution of SHRM in Turkish HR field from the impacts of these aforementioned perspectives. Throughout my literature review, I have not also encountered with any research approaching to SHRM through these two perspectives in the world as well.

The sampling of this study was also valuable since majority of participants are senior HR professionals who are still working as decision makers or supporting decision makers in their current companies, and consultants who are providing consultancy to various organizations. In this sense, they have wide-ranging experiences which were gained from leading organizations in Turkey. For these reasons, their interviews revealed broad data which helped me to discuss the subject of my study from different perspectives with a wide angle.

Moreover, some participants who have two to four years professional experience helped this study to examine the subject with reflecting their point of views. However, the subject of this study can be studied with a more broader range of ages with participants from different ages and gained data in terms of generational perspective. In addition to that, a sample of employees from the organizations in which participants of this study is working can be selected to display their perceptions in terms of the study questions. As well as employees, top management of that companies may also be included to this study. Thus, we can have a chance to examine this study question with different perceptions of HR professionals, employees who are affected by those HR professionals' outputs, management, approach, and top managers who are the last decision makers for those HR professionals' outputs. Additionally, quantitative methodology can also be preferred for this offered target groups in order to reach large numbers of participants in the future research.

This study was also revealed a great number of examples which were shared by participants from different organizations. To keep my focus in my study question, I did not prefer to use these examples in my thesis. However, the examples can also be examined in the future research.

This study can also be conducted according to specific sectors or company size in order to get comparable results. With the light of the findings of this study, HRM in competitive sectors such as telecommunications, technology vs. non-competitive sectors and/or corporate vs. family companies can also be studied in the future research.

According to the results, HR professionals' individual profile and individual drivers have revealed the determinants of educational background, previous job experiences, and the characteristics of influencers. However, personal characteristics, social value judgements, and visionary perspectives can also be studied within this study scope. They may also put forward additional outputs.

During interviews, I realized that participants used many English words, even sentences while expressing their opinions and feelings about HR field, their past and current experiences. Moreover, some of participants used arrogant language nevertheless they intended to express their egalitarian behavior or approach like “go down at the grassroots level”. I may say that this can also lead to conflicting messages to their organizations, so that a study can be conducted to discover the impacts of “HR professionals’ language, jargon” on the organizations.

## **4.2. Implications for Practice**

The study has some practical outcomes for organizations, universities and institutions.

### **4.2.1. Universities and Institutions**

SHRM terms, arguments, and generally HRM know-how from human focused perspective can be taken into account. According to the findings, especially for some terms such as “human focused” vs. “human capital focused” SHRM needs to be differentiated. More information and examples related to these perspectives can be provided to HR field and even to leaders. While doing so, if simple, practical, comprehensive methodologies, tools, and language are preferred, it may help universities and institutions to attract more HR professionals and leaders.

As we all know, leadership development is a prominent subject in business life for many years. As it can be inferred from the study’s results, leader’s vision and support are crucial for HR management in a more human focused way. In future HR, it is commonly anticipated that some current roles of HR would belong to business leaders such as performance management, talent management, in doing so it is expected business leaders to manage these practices accordingly their leadership styles. In this sense, leadership development with this scope can be provided.

Organizational Psychology field can take more responsibilities to take action and be visible in HR field. Moreover, Wright et al. (2011) remarked the emergence concepts of constructs in HR field coming from industrial/organisational psychology. Other disciplines do not recognise its value and validity. He also shared an example from economy field and asserted that human capital characteristics are formed by economists without any concern of the emergence concept, and added “emergence may serve as a divisive construct that stifles cross-fertilisation of research disciplines. This certainly means that researchers must uncover empirical evidence for the need to consider emergence before imposing the construct on all human capital research.” As Wright et al. (2011) adding, some practices which help HR field such as organizational need analysis, organizational climate studies can be provided to HR professionals.

#### **4.2.2. Companies/Organizations**

Since the study has pointed out some common perceptual problems that HR professionals have within organizations in terms of competencies they have, behaviors they exhibit, and practices, systems they contribute to the organizations.

In this sense, this study can suggest some practical outcomes. In order to meet the expectations of individualized practices and systems, this study revealed suggestions for performance management, talent management, and engagement practices. Segmentation of employees in organizations, providing individualized and customized system and approach are needed for aforementioned practices.

Moreover, HR business partner role is seen as the most strategic role in HR department so that developing this role with the organizational psychology perspective can help organizations. For example, developing HR business partners with qualitative research mindset and organizational point of view including comprehensive and holistic approaches through trainings.

In this study, it is also shared that measuring the outputs and perception of HR need to be developed. Whether HR management and their outputs are perceived as valued human can also be measured. Moreover, sustainability of HR works, practices can also be measured according to this study results.

### **4.3. Limitations of the Study**

This study has limitations in terms of sampling and data analysis methodology which will be considered for the future research.

The sampling strategy of this research was to reach senior HR professionals in order to get comprehensive data that is why majority of participants was selected from mid and above management roles or senior management consultants. There were a few participants who are working as junior in their organizations. However, participants from different ages groups, different roles such as non-managerial and higher level managerial role from different departments can be the target group as well.

Moreover, specific sectors and company with different size can only be selected to conduct comparable study for current subject

Although this study displays self-evaluations of HR professionals for their proficiency, HR field, and their personal opinions and feelings, it was not deliberately aimed to raise their awareness for the state of affairs of HR field and themselves. But I may say that this study might present benefit to participants to make a pause for criticizing their HR profession. However, in the future research this study can also be studied in a detailed way in terms of their self-evaluations.

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**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions : Human vs. Human Capital? Exploring HR Evolution in Turkey

#### **A. General Questions**

1. Tell me about your background and what is your current job?
2. Which were your motivation factors for choosing to work in HR field and becoming a HR professional?

#### **B. HR Evolution in The World and Turkey**

3. How would you define HR? What do you think about the main role of HR?
4. What do you know about the emergence of HR in the world and Turkey?
5. What is your opinion about how HR has changed over the years? Can you tell the critical points that you have seen in this change for the world and Turkey as well?
6. Do you think there have been negative developments in HR field over the years? If yes, in which area and for what reasons aforementioned negative developments have been arised?

#### **C. The Concepts, Development of SHRM, and Experiences**

7. How do you comprehend when it is said that HR is strategic? How does HR become a strategic department?
8. When you consider your personal experiences, what have you done personally for your current and/or previous HR roles for being a strategic? Which one went well and which one did not go well? Why?
9. Based on all the experiences you have shared, do you think HR should be a strategic department?

#### **D. SHRM Researchers**

10. Do you follow any Strategic HR Management researchers, HR Influencer or institutions in the world? If yes, who are they?
11. Do you know Dave Ulrich who is known as an influencer in HR field? If yes, what do you think about his arguments/research? What do you think about his arguments whether they have positive or negative impacts on HR field?

#### **E. Transformation of HR Competencies and Practices**

12. What are the current challenges for HR in the world? Considering the challenges in the world, do HR professionals have same challenges in Turkey?
13. How have the competencies which are expected from HR been changed?
14. How have competencies, that are changed, affected HR professionals' agenda and practices?
15. Have you seen any negative change in HR department and HR professionals in terms of approaching human? Do you think HR department is still human focused and valued human in organizations?
16. When you think of your HR experiences, do you have any experiences in which you and/or your HR department supposed to do a good work or project for the sake of creating value in employees, conversely ended with gaining negative perception from them?

#### **F. Future of HR**

17. What are your opinions about 'feeling like a machine' which is interpreted by some well-educated employees who are working in competitive working settings? What would you do as a HR professional for employees not to have such as feelings?

18. What type of new roles would be expected from HR professionals in near future?

19. Do you think the name of “human resource” is appropriate for today’s understanding of HR? If not, what would be your suggestion?

**G. Final**

20. Would you like to share with me any comment regarding this study?



## APPENDIX B

### Human Participant Research Ethic Committee Approval

#### ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research on Humans)

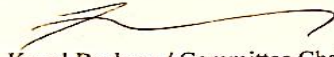
**Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant:** Betül Yücel

**Proje Başlığı / Project Title:** Human vs Capital? Exploring HR Evolution in Turkey

**Proje No. / Project Number:** 2015-20024-077

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 15 Aralık 2015

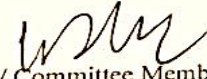
  
Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Yrd. Doç Dr. İtir Erhart

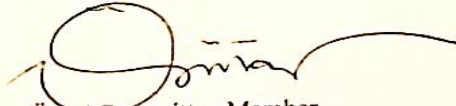


Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak

  
Üye / Committee Member

Doç. Dr. Koray Akay



Üye / Committee Member

Doç Dr. Ayhan Özgür Toy


  
Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Aslı Tunç



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı

  
Üye / Committee Member

Yrd. Doç Dr. Uğur Kevenk