Human Resource Management in Project-Based Organisations

Challenges, Changes, and Capabilities

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This doctoral thesis consists of a compilation of six papers and an extended summary, and it centres on human resource management (HRM) in project-based organisations. In the thesis, it is argued that the increasingly common project-based organisational form has characteristics that challenge traditional ways of organising and carrying out HRM. The research reported in the thesis is based on a combination of multiple, comparative, and single case studies of project-based organisations. The core case studies have been conducted at Saab Aerosystems, AstraZeneca, Volvo Car Corporation, and Tetra Pak. The first four papers identify and analyse challenges for HRM in project-based organisations as well as changes in people management systems in order to meet these challenges. Particular attention is given to the increased HR orientation of line managers and alternative configurations of HR departments. The two final papers apply a capabilities perspective on project-based organisations and develop a conceptual framework that embraces people capability: the organisational capability to manage the relation between people and their organisational context. It is suggested that this conceptual framework could be useful for the analysis of HRM in project-based organisations and for explaining the changes in people management systems that are needed in order to align them to a project-based context.

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