

Kompleksinen näkökulma kansainvälisten henkilöstövoimavarojen
johtamisen tarpeiden ymmärtämiseen julkisen sektorin
projektiverkostoissa

Ville Kivivirran ehdotettu dispositio

Väitöskirja on suunniteltu monografiaksi

UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL ACTORS IN PUBLIC SECTOR PROJECT NETWORKS

1. INTRODUCTION (8%)

1.1 Role of IHRM in public sector project networks – enter the under-researched domain

1.2 Aims of the study and research questions

- *Tavoite on tuottaa kriittistä ja relevanttia johtamistietoa tavoitteena ymmärrys kokeneiden projektityöntekijöiden kansainvälisten henkilöstövoimavarojen johtamisen tarpeista*

1.3 Structure of the thesis and research strategy

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Transformations: HRM and governance of international project networks (12%)

2.1.1 Project management and projectification of work

2.2.2 HRM in the public sector: New environments, new goals

2.3.3 Towards international project network governance and beyond?

2.2 International human resources management (18%)

2.2.1 Shaping the beast: IHRM definitions, models and underlying assumptions

2.2.2 Evolution of IHRM: From international personnel administration to global human resources management

2.2.3 Mapping IHRM research: developments and black boxes

2.3 Moving away from mainstream IHRM comfort zone (13%)

2.3.1 Lessons of the critical theory: IHRM in post-colonial context

2.3.2 Challenges ahead: Understanding individual IHRM needs in public sector project networks

2.3.3 Theory meets practice: Focal points of IHRM development

2.3.4 Summary: Theoretical framework and its relationship with public administration theory

3. RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY (8%)

- *Empiirinen materiaali hankitaan tekemällä pari tusinaa semistrukturoitua yksilöhaastattelua ja mahdollisesti focus-group -tilaisuus. Analyysimenetelmänä käytetään sisällönanalyysiä*

4. ANALYSING RESULTS (35%)

4.1 Understanding IHRM needs of project professionals

- *Vastaa miten projektiammatillaiset kokevat IHRM-tarpeet kansainvälisissä julkisen sektorin projektiympäristöissä ja mitkä ovat näiden tarpeiden erot valtaviirran HRM-systeemeihin*

4.2 Defining and managing perceived people needs in international public sector projects

- *Vastaa miten projektiammatillaisten kokemia IHRM-tarpeita voisi määritellä ja johtaa*

5. CONCLUSIONS (8%)

5.1 Concluding synthesis: IHRM challenges in project network governance

5.2 Critical understanding of IHRM needs in the public sector project networks

5.3 Epilogue: Limitations of the research and future avenues

Key words: IHRM; public sector; project networks; individual reactions to IHRM

Kansainväliset julkisen sektorin projektiverkostot kompleksisena toimintaympäristönä

Kuten dispositiosta ilmenee tämä ei ole tutkimus kompleksisuudesta eikä ole kuntatutkimusta. Professori Stenvallin kannustamana ilmoittauduin kuitenkin tähän seminaariin, koska kyse on hallintotieteellisestä tutkimuksesta kompleksisessa toimintaympäristössä. Nähdäkseni kompleksisuus ilmenee kansainvälisissä julkisen sektorin projektiverkostoissa kolmella tasolla. Ensinnäkin yksittäiset projektit ovat sinällään kompleksisia ja perinteinen projektinhallinnan kirjallisuus onkin pyrkinyt kompleksisuuden vähentämiseen. Toiseksi henkilöstövoimavarojen johtaminen kyseisissä uusissa ympäristöissä on kompleksista; HRM-funktioiden tulee toisaalta sopeutua monimutkaiseen toimintaympäristöön, toisaalta toimia osana kompleksista verkostoympäristöä pyrkien henkilöstökysymysten hallintaan. Kolmanneksi hallinnan ongelmat globaalissa maailmassa ovat usein rajat ylittäviä ja monimutkaisia sekä vaativat uusia hallinnan tapoja joita suuntaus kohti kansainvälistä verkostohallintaa osaltaan nähdäkseni edustaa. Seuraavaksi kokoan lyhyesti jotain ajatuksia kompleksisuudesta näillä kolmella ulottuvuudella. Olisi mukavaa kuulla kommentteja siitä miten kompleksisuuteen ja varsinkin sen johtamiseen voisi kyseissä viitekehyksessä päästä käsiksi tai lähestyä?

Basic concepts

This is IHRM research which happens to take place in public sector framework. I tend to follow the broader definition of international HRM that covers “all the issues related to managing people in international context” (see Stahl and Björkman 2006). Broader definition captures the fact that it is the people who do the work in international environments whatever the context or level of analysis might be, and that is what is been studied.

I approach IHRM based on reactions and perceptions of individual actors working in project environments. Therefore concepts (some would say buzzwords) like ambiguity, complecity, uncertainty and even chaos exist in these environments if individuals working there feel that they exist. This feeling occurs quite often in project environments, but the question is how to react and interpret these concepts like chaos. Is chaos our friend? Should we adapt as individuals, somehow seek to govern it as organisations, try to organise it, feel perplexed or just accept it? There are many possibilities and individuals react differently.

Even philosophers have proposed different approaches. For example it was Simone De Beauvoir in the late 1940s who tried to develop ”dialectical ambiguity”, where one could create something from chaos. In the meanwhile French-Romanian cynic philosopher Emile Cioran concluded that ”chaos

is rejecting all you have learned, Chaos is being yourself". Next we briefly look complexity in international public sector project environments.

Studying complexity in international public sector project environments

Analogues between project realities and chaos theory or complexity science are not so far-fetched than one might imagine: projects are quite sensitive to initial conditions, there are multiple interactive feedback loops, and systems are often complex. But how to react to this complexity? Traditional project management literature has aimed to control the complexity with various project management tools to reduce it.

When asked some practitioners have told they recognise the feeling when one starts to collide with problems rather than skilfully navigating between them. In chaos theory this phenomenon is called turbulent flow. This idea provides a way to understand IHRM, because it works as a metaphor of people management challenges encountered in complex project environments. IHRM has to cope with paradoxes, situations where one has to balance between seemingly contradictory demands.

There are some perennial tensions organisations cannot escape and they must constantly search for optimum solutions between Scylla and Charybdis. This can actually sometimes form the mainstay of HRM responses. Examples are not that difficult to find. Projects are unique and temporary by definition, but HRM should still aim towards something lasting and permanent. On the other hand in IHRM literature the challenge is to overcome international talent paradox, where international "globally integrated and yet locally responsive" staff is a rare commodity despite ever-increasing forces of globalisation.

If chaos and complexity can be conceptualised with so many metaphors and using different vocabularies, how one can interpret such things? It looks like that the uniqueness and complexity of interwoven processes make the nature of project environment somewhat emergent (i.e. things arise as an effect of complex causes and are not analysable simply as the sum of their effects). That is why explaining all the processes analytically can be too complex a task for every manager or researcher. Maybe project network governance must be just *understood* rather than explained and that requires building a skills base of international project experience and public sector professionals who can cope with such environments.