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WHY DO MNCS USE PRACTICES WITH DYSFUNCTIONAL OUTCOMES? A PRACTICE THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON HEADHUNTER-ASSISTED RECRUITMENT

Abstract

Despite human resource management (HRM) practices can be accompanied with dysfunctional outcomes, they are neglected in mainstream research focusing on the role of HRM in generating added value. In this paper, we develop a practice theory based approach that elucidates how the prevailing praxis is sustained by specific HRM practices that are linked with the positions and interests of the actors involved. For this purpose, we examine the case of headhunter-assisted recruitment of host country nationals in foreign subsidiaries in Japan. By drawing on interviews, field notes, and secondary data to explain how the problems were sustained by institutionalized HRM practices and the positions and interests of the actors, we make three contributions to HRM research. First, we draw on practice theory to develop a 'third way' approach that complements the managerialist and critical perspectives in HRM research. Second, we add to HRM research by exploring the dynamics of headhunter-assisted recruitment practices and outcomes in foreign subsidiaries. Third, we contribute to research on headhunters by focusing on contingency-based headhunter assisted recruitment in foreign subsidiaries.