

Erik Døving, Odd Nordhaug*

Investing in Human Resource Planning: An International Study**

In this paper we study drivers of firms' human resource planning practices. This is done by analyzing two central parts of personnel planning, formal HRM strategies and analyses of competence development needs. Data collected from 3,877 firms in 21 countries are applied in the analysis. Nine out of ten firms conduct analyses of needs for competence development to some extent, while every second firm in the sample has elaborated a formal HRM strategy. Results indicate that resources (size, having an HRM department and corporate affiliation) and to some degree cost-benefit considerations are the main determinants of these human resource planning arrangements. Moreover, institutional factors have an impact on firms' use of competence needs analyses.

Key words: **human resource planning, HRM practices, strategy**

* Erik Døving, (corresponding author), Oslo University College, P.O. box 4, St Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo, Norway. E-mail: erik.doving@sam.hio.no.

Odd Nordhaug, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Breiviksveien 40, 5045 Bergen, Norway. E-mail: odd.nordhaug@nhh.no.

** Thanks to Beate Elstad, Åge Johnsen, Fred Strønen, Holger Steinmetz, Sigrid Brevik Wangsness and anonymous reviewers for constructive comments to an earlier version of this paper.

** Article received: July 7, 2009

Revised version accepted after double blind review: April 15, 2010.