Learning at Work and Productivity in Swedish Business Firms

Based on the Swedish MEADOW Survey 2009/2010

ANNETTE NYLUND

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Abstract

The background of the thesis is the ongoing struggle for better understanding of driving forces for economic growth. Some important and rewarding new steps have been taken the last decades in the research of economic growth theory. For example, the theory includes not only the use of technology but also the creation and implementation of new technology entwined with management and learning practices at work. However, the development of knowledge on the matter can be described as slow. The explanation is argued to be the lack of data, which complicates and prevents the development of theory. The lack of data and the intertwined dependence with the development of theory in the matter constitutes the starting point for the research in the thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the development of measures of management of work and learning practices at work that can be used in productivity models. The analyses are based on the micro-level data from the Swedish MEADOW Survey 2009/2010, at Statistics Sweden. Factor and regression analysis are performed, other analytical techniques are also used.

Some key findings of how management and learning practices at work can be described and measured show that the business firms use the different practices in bundles. The findings indicate synergy effects on performance when more than one management and learning practice is applied. Two different management approaches are tested, both models predict productivity. However, there is a difference in the productivity model a such when it includes the two management approaches; the measure of the contemporary use has a better fitness then the theoretical model. Focus and delimitations of research questions in the forthcoming doctoral dissertation are discussed, see Future Research – the Logic Next Step, in Chapter 6. Final Reflections.

Key Words

productivity, management, learning, competence, development, practices, at work, bundles, factor analysis, regression analysis