Social Aspects of Strategizing Industrial Digitalization

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING
som med tillstånd av Forsknings- och utbildningsnämnden vid Högskolan Väst, för avläggande av doktorsexamen i Informatik med inriktning mot AIL, framläggs för offentlig granskning.

Onsdag 20 december 2023 klockan 14.00 i sal J111, Högskolan Väst

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Abstract

Title: Social Aspects of Strategizing Industrial Digitalization

Keywords: Industrial digitalization; Social aspects; Dynamic Capabilities; Organizational capabilities; Strategizing; Texturizing; Industrial Work-Integrated Learning


This thesis aims to contribute to understanding how contemporary Swedish manufacturing organizations can strategize industrial digitalization with an emerging focus on social aspects. It complements earlier research by highlighting Swedish manufacturing organizations as they stand at the intersection of Industry 4.0 and Industry 5.0.

The thesis is a longitudinal case study of interviews and focus groups between early 2019 and spring 2023. The case study follows an explorative approach to give texture to industrial digitalization and to understand the social aspects of strategizing industrial digitalization. It is limited to the Swedish context and the characteristics of original equipment manufacturers.

The thesis contributes by texturizing industrial digitalization through three social aspects, which are argued to be a way for manufacturing organizations to give shape to industrial digitalization. The social aspects elaborated on and presented in this thesis are: to look beyond digital technologies, to formalize a shared understanding, and to transcend organizational structures. These social aspects are thematic but also interlinked. Together, these social aspects bring insights into how managers can guide the organizational capabilities to ensure synergy between an organization’s actions and objectives when strategizing industrial digitalization. Strategizing industrial digitalization should, therefore, be texturized by each organization to define and redefine its organizational capabilities. This means each organization's social aspects are unique, making the manufacturing organizations' capabilities unique.