Evaluating Business Process Management as a Tool in Enhancing Public Sector Efficiency and Effectiveness

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Abstract:
The research is based on the evaluation of business process management as a tool in enhancing public sector efficiency and effectiveness. The literature points out that organizations within the public sector, as well as governments face various issues in service delivery. To advance efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector, the contemporary Business Process management techniques and tools are critical in ensuring knowledge is preserved in information systems, and lessen manual effort through business process automation. The research notes that the business process management holds a lot of benefits for organizations in the public sector. BPM applications currently enable us to ensure efficiency within the government, and public sector as a whole. BPM is also able to incorporate the resources, data and systems within the public sector, aimed at improving service delivery and efficiency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public sector entities in the modern world constantly try to improve their service delivery and operations while offering personalized and consistent services to the people. The organizations are constantly faced with the need to reduce or limit costs to manage their budget cuts. The traditional ways of coping with the cuts was to do away with non-essential services and firing some of the staff. However, this method may leave the organization in ruins if there is no preservation of information held by employees, instead of improving the economic standing of the organization. In the wake of the need for efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector, the contemporary Business Process management techniques and tools are critical in ensuring knowledge is preserved in information systems, and lessen manual effort through business process automation. Smith and Fingar define Business process management as a systematic method used to improve the performance of an organization (2003). The research is based on the evaluation of business process management as a tool in enhancing public sector efficiency and effectiveness. Business process management entails the documentation of the entire approach so as to ensure managerial accountability, management of the whole process while controlling and improving the entire process to ensure efficiency and quality within the entity. The BPM processes are not restricted to a single information system, and are held to be multidimensional enactments of activities within the real world. The process is organized logically into phases that encompass documentation, IT systems and resources. The activities also include tasks performed or automated by machines and those that are manually operated by individuals (Chinosi&Trombetta, 2012). Through the analysis of processes, the BPM assists in the elimination of boundaries and obstacles among the resources, people and information systems. Dumas, La Rosa, Mendling, &Reijers indicate that the implementation of BPM within public sector entities may therefore assist in dealing with different operational challenges in delivering better services to the public with improved efficiency (2013). Business process management as a tool is critical in enhancing public sector efficiency and effectiveness.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

BPM within the public sector is based on two main reasons. One is the need and desire to improve services and ensure they are digitized, while applying a business model that ensures lower costs. The other reason is the need to offer or deliver higher quality services that feature quick execution. The two reasons go hand in hand (Santana, Alves, Santos, & de Lima Cavalcanti Felix, 2011). Public sector entities face many hindrances in BPM implementation compared to companies in the private sector. For the public sector, the forces that push for implementation of BPM in the public sector are significant, offering strong reasons for the adoption of process-based approaches. The processes contribute to the formation of transparent, productive, and effective public entities. Just as in the private sector, there are different forces, which make it difficult to implement public sector process management (Niehaves&Plattfaut, 2010). The limiting forces are correlated to the huge complexity within the public sector, including the political circumstances within which it operates. The intricacy emerges from the diverse range of cultural and customer contrasts, operations within different jurisdictions, and social objectives (Tregear& Jenkins, 2007). The restrictive forces are in the end powered by the classification of information in the processes within public entities, as most of the information withheld is classified. Such type of information is held to be material that is deemed sensitive and needs to be protected for confidentiality and integrity reasons, including its availability (Bouwman, Van-Houtum, Janssen, &Versteeg, 2011). Access to such information or sensitive data is not allowed by regulation or the law. BPM systems that are secure have to be setup to ensure security when accessing such classified and confidential data (Madigan, 2017). Within the private sector, Business Process Management has been applied widely, with specific benefits. On the other hand, BPM in the public sector is not as
popular, and research has been inadequate. There are two major reasons why public organizations choose to apply BPM in their daily activities. The first reason is rooted in public law, where the law determines approaches to process management. Past implementations were based on strict observance to bureaucratic processes that were implemented in a slow manner (Promapp, 2015). The second reason is based on the integration of new technologies within processes for public sector entities. Generally, the information systems offer practicality through adding value to the processes that are conducted by the organization. Business Process Management integrates information technology with management which results in highly efficient operations by the organization (Flowcentric-Technologies, 2012). The public sector compared to the private sector is deemed to be slower in the adoption of new technology. It is also advantageous to the public sector since the best practices or technology is applied or implemented. In a majority of the public entities, systems of approval are slow, complicated and mismanaged, which leaves a huge gap for improvement via BPM implementation (Jurisch, Ikas, Wolf, & Krčmar, 2013). One of the best attributes for BPM is that it may be customized easily to specifically fit the organizational business processes and may integrate various organization sections and IT systems cost-effectively and easily. This will assist the entity in creating a better view of the entity, including its systems and operations of resources (Rouse, 2017). For the public sector, the main benefit of the process is that it deals with bureaucracy, which leads to rising costs, delays and complexity, making it hard for entities to ensure smooth operations.

### III. FACTORS AFFECTING BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

There are various factors that influence Business Process Management efficiency and effectiveness in the Public Sector. The factors are outlined below.

**Strategic Alignment**

Strategic alignment is based on the relationship between the business processes and organizational strategy. It ensures the positioning of governmental processes with the administration’s strategic objectives. The strategic alignment is based on the political objectives, as well as actions that are binding to specific laws and intentions. Process definition has to be in line with the politically driven guidelines and have to abide by the regulations, laws and instructions from the administration.

**Governance**

Governance refers to organized BPM leadership and control via established and proper guidance of decisions, as well as processes. Because of the hierarchical structure and legal guidelines of public administration, the factor imposes huge requirements. Assignment of responsibilities and roles generally abides by the set guidelines because of the rules, which limits its flexibility. In order to set BPM standards, rules have to be set by administrators. Monitoring compliance to rules in the implementation of BPM is not easy. Identifying the appropriate metrics may be problematic. Administrators have to apply BPM capability measurements as per the standards, and analyze the conformity to the rules, as well as other issues.

**Information Technology**

Information technology is critical to the realization of BPM advantages. In the public sector, information technology appears as outdated and heterogeneous. There are special needs for information technologies that are regarded as important in the implementation (Gabryelczyk & Jurczuk, 2016).

**People**

People are critical if organizations want to realize BPM efficiency. In the public sector, there is a high standard of specialization and division of work. The knowledge of the process is confined to a few workers. This means that the approach to assess the knowledge of the process necessitates a higher level of employee involvement, to understand the steps of the process in detail. Additionally, the process organization implementation in the public sector is complex since it needs to convince the concerned individuals that better process orientation is necessary.

**Culture**

Culture in respect to BPM encompasses the reaction to process beliefs, values, and changes, including the strength of BPM leadership. Organizational culture is critical to the implementation of BPM in the public sector. Organizational culture is held to be the composition of assumptions that are shared by a specific group of individuals, that has been set, or developed to aid in finding solutions within an organization. Generally, the organizational culture is affected by the culture of hierarchy (Gabryelczyk & Jurczuk, 2016).

**Challenges of BPM Application in the Public Sector**

Internal challenges to the application of BPM in the public sector are based on the organization’s willingness to set up a process-based approach for the entity. BPM needs the government entity to be structured in a manner that deals with different functions based on the products or services that are offered to clients (Singh, 2017). The efforts to set up BPM successfully are normally hindered by the lack of commitment and unwillingness of some members of the organization to support the required changes that are critical in the facilitation of business processes. Additionally, the organization may not be motivated to embark on improvements of the processes although they are critical to BPM working properly. The external challenges are based on the external parties that the BPM technology and tools interact with. BPM requires strict knowledge and skills in its application. BPM requires knowledgeable and skillful individuals who work with a variety of business processes and understand the nature of such work. BPM expertise in the market is limited, and there is a spike in demand for such people as process oriented technologies continue to be developed. The challenge is worsened by the fact that the knowledge is by nature implicit, meaning it is not easily encoded or formalized. Expansion demands is another challenge that arises in the course of the organization dealing with its mandate of proper and complete service delivery. Clients from different locations and cultural backgrounds have to be dealt with equally. Cultural challenges are based on the change-management aspects which arise in the course of BPM implementation. For instance, the people may feel resistant to the implementation if they feel that the new technologies might replace them as a result of the deployment of the technology.
IV. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

The twenty-first century is regarded as the age of efficiency. Due to the economic downturn of 2008, it forced organizations within the public and private sectors to rethink their strategies in the markets. With huge technological advancements in the past years, the government, as well as entities in the public sector seek ways to do away with bureaucracy and apply technology in improving the ways in which individuals access public services. Reorganizing the public sector is not easy and needs the officials to highlight the specific areas that need to be dealt with (Tregear & Jenkins, 2007). Just as the private sector, entities can use Business Process Management to improve efficiency. Most of the governments have implemented the process through moving their services to on-line platforms. The move is meant to connect the organizations with the people, through ensuring that they are more approachable as per their communication with family and friends. The government is specifically focused on using the power of the internet to facilitate government services provision. Through this move, the government is actively looking for ways to process and retain large databases of information, aimed at creating user friendly experiences (Papadopoulos, 2018). For instance, the governments within America are using BPM to simplify cases that are complex. In Humboldt County, within California, the governments are applying BPM in redesigning the permit system, from the traditional paper-based system. Before BPM use, the citizens of the county relied on applications done via paper in order to get the required permits. The county grew in number and the licensing office was overwhelmed with paper-based applications which did not have the required processing resources. The public was frustrated since they were not able to track their application statuses. Through the analysis of the issue using software and BPM to transfer the forms to an online platform, the county was able to improve the process significantly. Currently, apart from reducing the number of papers that the licensing office processes, the public may access the government database and receive an immediate update on the status of all permits that are pending. These are some of the illustrations on the importance of the BPM to the government. As each year passes, more governmental entities are seeking ways to examine their processes and improve the ways in which critical information is accessed and stored (Papadopoulos, 2018). BPM application currently enables us to ensure efficiency within the public sector as a whole. Although we have not achieved the goal of a complete online government, the application of BPM proves that technology may be applied in ways that are effective and facilitate citizen interaction with services offered by the government, and simplify its processes.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The research is based on the evaluation of business process management as a tool in enhancing public sector efficiency and effectiveness. Governments, as well as public sector entities in the contemporary world are faced with a host of problems in delivery of much needed services to the citizens. As a result, organizations within the public sector find themselves constrained and under extreme pressure to incur the least possible expenses in their activities. The organizations are required to change their structures, optimize resource use, and transfer their operations on-line. In public sector entities, the goals may be implemented via the incorporation of BPM processes and tools within the organizations. The research notes that the business process management holds a lot of benefits for organizations in the public sector. BPM application currently enables us to ensure efficiency within the government, and public sector as a whole. The appeal for the application of BPM in the public sector is attributed to the problems that the entities are faced with including bureaucracy, inefficiency and lack of focus on the clients involved. BPM is able to incorporate the resources, data and systems within the public sector, and improve service delivery and efficiency through reducing costs, resources and time spent. It was also necessary to highlight some of the challenges that affect the implementation of BPM in the public sector, in assessing the effectiveness of the technology. The research also pointed out that BPM in the public sector encompasses different factors that have an impact on organization operations.

VI. REFERENCES


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