

Understanding the Factors That Influence the Adoption of BPM in Two Brazilian Public Organizations

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Abstract. While the increasing interest in BPM by private and public organizations confirm the relevance of process-centric philosophy, it also increases the expectations and uncertainties on how to introduce and evolve a BPM initiative. This paper investigates how BPM practices are adopted by Brazilian public organizations. We conducted case studies with two Brazilian public organizations to investigate how the interaction of barriers and facilitators influence the evolution of their BPM initiatives. A System Dynamics approach is proposed as a diagnosis tool to analyze the current performance of BPM initiatives. Systemic archetypes were created to represent specific combinations of virtuous reinforcement and balancing cycles among barriers and facilitators. We identified that support from top management and lack of team skills and competencies in BPM are key factors influencing the evolution of BPM initiatives. The implications for practice lies in the fact that systemic archetypes are generic structures repeatable in different contexts. Due to their predictable behavior, the recognition of archetypes can inspire effective action strategies to handle problematic situations that may occur in BPM initiatives facing similar situations.

Keywords: Business Process Management, Public Sector, Barriers and facilitators, System Dynamics Analysis.

1 Introduction

Business Process Management (BPM) has emerged as a holistic management approach. While the increasing interest in BPM by private and public organizations confirms the significance of process-centric approach [2], it also increases the expectations and uncertainties of how to initiate and evolve a BPM initiative. BPM is often associated with new technologies aimed at modeling and automating business processes. However, recent research suggests that the adoption of BPM philosophy involves complex cultural and organizational changes [6]. In recent years, we have observed an increasing adoption of BPM by Brazilian public sector. Two main reasons motivate public organizations to pursue a process-centric perspective. The first reason relates to the demand from citizens to increase the quality of public services. The second reason is the need to adopt digital technologies to create new service delivery channels. Brazilian public organizations face continuous pressure for

accountability and transparency of their activities. Successful examples of e-government initiatives are online submission of tax returns and electronic voting. Besides serving the public interest, governmental organizations have other distinctive characteristics compared to private organizations, such as: machinery of government changes, low flexibility and innovation, stiffness of a hierarchical structure and influence of political factors. A number of studies have highlighted the growing interest of BPM by the public sector [1,2,3]. However, low attention has been paid to the evolution and overall success of BPM initiatives. Motivated by the previous scenario, this research investigates how BPM practices are adopted by Brazilian public organizations. In particular, we aim to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the facilitators and barriers faced by BPM initiatives in Brazilian public organizations?

RQ2: How the interaction of facilitators and barriers influence the evolution of BPM initiatives in Brazilian public organizations?

In this paper, we report on results from two case studies conducted with Brazilian public organizations. To explore the barriers and facilitators faced by studied organizations, we designed and performed a System Dynamics Analysis approach based on the Systems Thinking discipline proposed by Senge [4]. This approach treats barriers and facilitators as factors that can interact with each other to create patterns of dysfunctional systemic behaviors, which may slowdown the success of BPM initiatives. This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the research background. Section 3 describes the research method. Section 4 describes research results. Section 5 presents a discussion of findings and limitations of this study. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper and provides directions for future research.

2 Background

2.1 Maturity of BPM Initiatives

The introduction of BPM in organizational environment aims to promote increased agility, efficiency and innovation in operation [1]. However, organizations still struggle to realize a comprehensive adoption of BPM [10]. This challenge is mainly due to the fact that BPM initiatives are affected by contextual characteristics of each organization. Therefore, the effective adoption of BPM approaches needs to be carefully instantiated to the specific needs and characteristics of each organization. Rosemann and Bruin [5] propose a comprehensive BPM maturity model. These factors were further refined by Rosemann and vom Brocke [7] to build a framework for BPM. The model describes six core factors to BPM success, which are:

- Strategic alignment – BPM initiatives must be aligned with strategic goals of the organization through a bidirectional link. Business process improvement efforts have to be defined according to strategic priorities.