

Preface

Business Process Management (BPM) has become a widely adopted management approach, prompting significant investments by private and public companies since 2000. BPM has its roots in various process improvement methods such as Business Process Re-engineering, Lean, Total Quality Management, and Six Sigma. In addition, the technological developments of Enterprise Resource Planning, Customer Relationship Management, and Workflow Management Systems have evolved into what can now be called Business Process Management Systems (BPMS), which are enablers of modern BPM.

Business analysts and researchers have published positive forecasts about the prospects of BPMS adoption. In addition, BPM researchers have claimed that there is a linear and one-directional path to more mature BPM, which in turn leads to improved firm performance outcomes. However, neither the concept of BPM nor the factors leading to successful BPM initiatives are grounded in theory, and they also lack empirical support. Consequently, fundamental problems have remained unsolved in current BPM approaches; in particular, what business value BPMS can bring has remained largely unexplored. Therefore, this research answers the question of “What constitutes a path to improved firm performance with BPM and BPM Systems?”

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review method as an exploratory tool for empirical support about BPM initiatives that include BPM Systems, as well as about the adoption of BPM Maturity (BPMM) models to achieve improved firm performance. The literature review covers the major sources in the BPM community, including the BPM Journal and central scientific journal/conference databases. Additional backward searches based on the relevance to the subject deepen the analysis. The theoretical basis of this research is socio-technical systems theory. The empirical part of this study includes a case study and an action research. Accordingly, this study emphasizes a goal-driven philosophy and is grounded in the mainstream world-view of science.

On the one hand, my literature reviews reveal both a very low number of scientific empirical studies about the benefits of BPM initiatives using BPMS, and contradictions to the unidirectional, sequential, and deterministic progress im-

plied by BPM maturity models. On the other hand, my case study and action research provide empirical evidence how to improve firm performance with BPM and its Systems. Based on these results, I suggest an alternative path to improved firm performance derived from the principles of socio-technical systems theory and driven by the empirically supported approach of customer-centricity. As the main result of this study, I have constructed a model for achieving organizational process change aided by BPM and its Systems. The success factors for this change are explained within a socio-technical system context. The empirical results of my research provide novel insights into technology-enabled change, information technology flexibility, and customer-centric business processes.

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