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Achieving Innovation from Business Process Management

Outline

Since 20th century, business process management has become a hot concept in the academic research and real practice. However it still leaves many points for the further study, especially when the success of business calls for innovation and flexibility as well as efficiency and effectiveness. The goal of this dissertation attempts to address how to achieve innovation through business process management with an emphasis on Business Process Orientation (BPO).

Following the holistic view, BPO supports business process management by reorienting employees' focus from one that centralized on functional performance to one that emphasizes customer value adding. While it is generally believed that BPO improves various aspects of innovation performance, there has been little empirical evidence especially in eastern contexts. From the organization perspective, the first main part in this dissertation tries to fulfill this gap. Based on a survey of organization in Japan, it shows that BPO significantly influences organizational innovation performance and identifies the underlying mechanism for the effect. Interestingly, it is found that process view, referring to process mapping and defining, is not sufficient to enhance organizational innovation performance. While BPO promotes cross- functional integration, the integration may also need to be carefully managed for it to have a significant impact on innovation. In addition, customer integration and employees' innovation behavior are keys for innovation, which mediates the positive relationship between BPO and organizational innovation performance. These findings augment current conceptual understanding of BPO, strengthen the justification for fostering BPO in practice, and offer managerial suggestions for enhancing innovation.

Because innovation is highly knowledge intensive, employees' innovation behavior plays a central role in knowledge creation and distribution in organizations. It is important to encourage employees' innovation behavior, which involves developing, promoting, judging, distributing and implementing new ideas at work, during enhancing BPO for innovation. For the employee perspective, the second main part applies the theory of planned behavior to better understand employees' innovation behavior (EIB), and also extends the theory by considering the effects of two unexamined yet important organizational factors: external information awareness and proactiveness of innovation strategy. Results from a survey indicate that both of these two factors are positively related with employees' attitude towards innovation, subjective norm about innovation, and perceived behavioral control to innovation, which is, in turn, significantly influence employees' innovation behavior. Employees' attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavior control mediate partially the effects of external information awareness and completely the influence of proactiveness of innovation strategy on employees' innovation behavior. These findings strengthen the understanding of employees' innovation behavior, and pinpoint the importance of external information awareness and proactive innovation strategy to innovation.

In contemporary business environment, innovation often associates with adopting information technologies (IT) in a novel way. Since embedding IT into business routines is important for the success of IT-based innovation, business-IT alignment is an important consideration in BPO practice to achieve innovation. However, there has been a lack of tools, methods, and techniques concerning customer and employee issues for the co-design of business processes and IT. The third main part in this dissertation proposed a method by applying Design and Engineering Methodology for Organizations (DEMO) as the basic tool to support business-IT alignment for innovation in the early stage of analysis and design phase. A case study of redesigning aging care system in Central

Finland was used to demonstrate the proposed method. Several business inefficiencies has been identified and potential IT solutions for them has been discussed. This study deepens the understanding about IT capabilities, enriches the evidence of DEMO benefits, and offers a method to consider IT-based innovation.

Overall, through empirically declaring the importance of BPO for innovation, extending the theory of planned behavior to interpret employees' innovation behavior, and offering a DEMO based method to consider IT for innovation, this dissertation gives a contour and direction for organizations to go from business process management to innovation.