


Exploring the Possibility of Managing Knowledge With Business Process Management Software (BPMS)

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management (KM) is a term that has existed since the 1980s and can be defined as a systematic and intentional creation, updating and using knowledge to maximise the efficiency of an organisation (SlavĀcek, 2011) generating a common language and improving communication across it (Nadarajah and Latifah, 2016). This topic has received particular attention because it offers a means for organisations to develop competitive advantages (Wang & Yang, 2016). Among other issues, questions related to individual knowledge and its externalisation or formalisation, or the dissemination of knowledge in organisations has been deeply investigated (Kalpic & Bernus, 2006).

Organisations concerned with knowledge management focus on creating organisational knowledge to achieve efficiency, generate innovative products and improve customer service (Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2010). These organisations, upon making better success, come to realise the importance of knowledge as a resource that generates organisational benefits (Bitkowska, 2016). On the other hand, business processes are a fundamental part of daily work in organisations (Giacosa, Mazzoleni, & Usai, 2018). Business Process Management (BPM) is considered an important area of organisational design and a recognised source of business performance. At the same time, BPM research has paid a lot of attention to the development capacity of process management in organisations (Lehnert, Linhart & Röglinger, 2016). Currently, BPM has reached a certain maturity. This is justified in the amount of literature about it and, the existence of specialised journals, for example, The Business Process Management Journal and conferences, for example, The BPM-Conference in the seventh year, as well as the institutionalisation of specialised BPM degree programs in several universities, show that it is not a temporary fashion but an orientation encompassed in the science of management (Houy, Fettke Loos, 2010).

Since the 1980s, the management of business processes has been an intensely discussed topic in the field of information systems research (Houy et al., 2010). In previous decades, many organisations have embraced technological initiatives that allowed them to make changes, manage their businesses and improve their performance (Harmon, 2010). These initiatives had been extended through departmental and organisational boundaries, including clients and suppliers, resulting in a transformation of functional organisations into process-led organisations. The latest phenomenon in flexible technologies to changes

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in market trends are known as BPMS (Wong, 2013). BPMS represent a type of software that allows the promulgation and management of business processes of an organisation (Aalst et al., 2003), through the design and modelling of these processes (Smith & Fingar, 2003). Thus, BPMS paved way for the faster adaptation of organisations to continuous changes in the market and its consumers. Companies, that adopt this technology, are interested in the value that these systems generate through the continuous improvement of business processes. This enables them to position themselves at the forefront of a competitive market (Wong, 2013).

Wu, Kao & Chen (2015) indicate that knowledge creation is strongly linked, among other aspects, to processes. Based on this, it is implied that, if the knowledge of an organisation is used and linked to the processes, BPMS play an important role in knowledge management when these processes are automated through this technology. In this way, process management and knowledge management are two interconnected paradigms that can generate synergies, for example, the speed and agility with which knowledge can be managed and standardised once BPMS is incorporated in a company. The main objective of this article is to present a transition analysis, through previous literature, knowledge management, process management and automation, as well as the possible relationship between knowledge management and BPMS.

BACKGROUND

In modern times, the competitiveness of organisations is derived mainly from intangibles instead of tangible resources (Matayong & Mahmood, 2013). The intellectual capacity of individuals, that is, their knowledge, is considered an intangible resource possessed by the organisation in which these people work (Šajeva, 2010; Van Looy & Van den Bergh, 2018). In general, knowledge resides in the minds of people and organisations have to ensure their availability whenever necessary (Tseng, 2008). Knowledge is considered such a valuable resource for an organisation that it is very important to manage it, in the same way, that any other business resource, whether human or capital, is managed. At present, it is perceived as a strategic resource within the company, therefore, it should be subject to constant identification, measurement, acquisition, development, utilisation and protection (Bitkowska, 2015). Thus, in the era of the knowledge economy, organisations have a great interest in managing such knowledge (Wang & Yang, 2016). The term “Knowledge Management” is seen as an organisational activity that leads to success and is a stimulus for debate, since it is subject to a wide range of interpretations (Rechberg & Syed, 2014). This discipline, in organisations, evolved around the need to increase sales, improve work practices and make decisions, as well as shorten development time, improve customer service, train employees and innovate (Dotsika & Patrick, 2013). Knowledge Management (KM) provides efficient procedures which enhance value creation in organisations (Šajeva, 2010). As knowledge is the central element of this management, the competitiveness of organisations will depend on how they are applied, exploited and integrated into them (Alavi & Leidner, 2001, Šajeva, 2010). KM refers to a deliberate and systematic approach to ensure the full utilisation of the base knowledge of an organisation (Han & Park, 2009).

Knowledge management is creating a growing concern in the field of management research and practice (Giacosa et al., 2018). It develops a very important role in the innovation capacities of a company and also improves the quality of the working life of the workers (Wang & Yang, 2016). In contemporary companies, observation has shown a decrease in the interest for assets, such as inventory or capital, and an increase in the importance of non-material assets, such as skills or professionalism, which are

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