Data Discovery Systems for Not–for–Profit Organizations

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1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society is an information society characterized by a high level of technological advancement, where information management, the quality of information and the speed of information transfer are major competitive advantage factors in both industry and service sectors (Hiranya,2017). Modern techniques for information gathering, processing, transfer and utilization are in widespread use. In a society like that, information constitutes a significant part of the added value of most goods and services, and information-intensive activities are pursued by households and citizens alike. Information has joined the classical triad of production factors (Zbroińska,2012), and has been recognized as a dominant resource of contemporary organizations and one of the major drivers of the socio-economic development (Makulska,2017; Toffler,1985). Also, recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the idea of civil society and a rise in the socio-economic potential of the third sector and its role in social services and social capital creation (Edwards,2012). The study is aimed at the not-for-profit organizations which belong to the third sector organizations. Third sector organizations function in a specific way – they are established as a result of social initiative, and are motivated not by a desire to make a profit, but a wish to serve people by satisfying their needs (Defourny,2014). In many respects, however, they are not properly adjusted to the current situation. They are in need of organizational, financial and technological changes in order to fulfil their mission and build their potential effectively. Under existing circumstances organizations are forced to efficiently use data and information in resource management. They have to understand/acknowledge that modern information and communications technologies bring internal benefits and contribute to higher efficiency as well as enhanced quality of the services they provide. The aim of the study is to verify a hypothesis that Data Discovery Systems (DD) are one of the modern technologies which help in achieving these goals, and to present the possibility of using DD systems in effective resource management of not-for-profit organizations. The chapter is structured as follows: Section 1 is an introduction to the subject, based on literature review. Section 2 looks at the characteristics of the third sector organizations (especially not-for-profit organizations) and their operating rules. It also presents Data Discovery systems as a new generation of Business Intelligence systems, which support business analytics, and help in building visualizations and dashboards that show insights for the donor, beneficiary and society. They are self-service IT tools which can be used by employees lacking specialized IT knowledge. Section 3 describes the research methodology. Section 4 discusses the findings of the study on the possibilities of using DD systems in resource management of selected not-for-profit organizations. There is also a presentation of a resource management dashboard designed for Volunteer Fire Departments. The analysis of the data on the physical, human and financial resources proved the DD systems to be the tools that can effectively support efficient[1] resource management in this group of

organizations. The chapter concludes with discussion of the research findings, implications and limitations of this research, and avenues for further studies.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Characteristics of the Third Sector Organizations

The concept of the division of the socio-economic activity of modern democratic countries assumes the existence of three sectors of the national economy (Defourny,2014; NGO,2017; Palonka,2016):

- the first sector is the state sector, which includes institutions making up the state agencies and offices, i.e. public administration,
- the second sector is the private sector, which comprises institutions and organizations operating for profit, i.e. for-profit entities,
- the third sector is made up of organizations that neither operate for profit nor are part of the state institutional structure, which are social, not economic, in nature, and independent of state, i.e. non-profit entities.

The subject literature review (Evers,Laville,2004; Salamon,Sokolowski,2014) does not allow for clear identification of entities belonging to the third sector because this sector's scope is deeply rooted in the institutional and socio-cultural contexts specific for a particular country or region (Dudzik, Hausner, Izdebski, Kucharski, Laurisz,2008; Skrzypiec,2015).

In Poland, it encompasses, i.a. (Palonka,2018): foundations; associations and their unions; political parties; organizations regulated by separate legal acts, including hunting clubs (Polish Hunting Association), Polish Red Cross, volunteer fire departments, social committees (e.g. social committees for the construction of roads and waterpipe networks); labour unions; employers' organizations, employers' associations; faith-based organizations; groups, such as community clubs, support groups or self-help groups, etc.

In the EU, the third sector is predominantly perceived as the social economy, which comprises both non-profit organizations and social enterprises (GUS,2014; Defourny,2014; Skrzypiec,2015). In broad terms, these organizations can be divided into two categories (Rachunkowość non-profit i not-for-profit,2017):

- non-profit organizations - they must not conduct any economic activity, which results either directly from the legal regulations or the organization's statute, and their assets come from donations, legacies, grants and bequests,
- not-for-profit organizations (NFP) - they can carry economic activity, but all the proceeds generated during its course must serve the organization's statutory goals; the organization's statute should spell out the possibility of conducting economic activity and specify its scope.

The classification indicates that some entities can conduct both statutory and economic activities; the former, however, should not be profit-oriented, while the latter should exclusively serve fulfilling the needs arising from the statute. Organizations operating in the third sector of the national economy (except political parties) can conduct economic activity as long as there are relevant provisions in their statutes. An important point is that not-for-profit entities commencing their economic activity are not

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