

Business Process Management Tools and Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of business process management tools and performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State. Business process management (BPM) was proxied by strategic alignment and employee involvement. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 11,489 small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State. The sample size was determined to be 360. A questionnaire was the main research instrument. The collected data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. It was revealed that strategic alignment had a positive and significant effect on customer patronage. Employee involvement had a negative but significant impact on sales growth. It was recommended that business process management of SMEs in terms of employee involvement should be regularly and effectively evaluated. Small and medium scale enterprises should put into consideration the involvement and engagement of their workforce, as participative management revealed a well-built impact on SMEs performance. The study concluded that the type of business process management adopted by SMEs went a long way to determine their performance.

Keywords: Business Process Management Tools, Strategic Alignment, Employee Involvement, SMEs Performance.

Introduction

Business Process Management (BPM) applications have become more widespread in recent years in response to the demand for more efficient, flexible, and effective business operations. Business process management (BPM) has been considered relatively one of the new topic in management field, and it connects with the knowledge about running current processes or operations, redesigning it in a way that reduces the wasted effort and increase the efficiency, and implement changes in the processes to improve the performance of an organization, where it incorporate and merge the information technology and the processes management structure for the sake of improvement, where the effective management of processes are essential to maximize the value of organizations (Trkman 2010).

Business Process Management is considered as multidimensional implementations of real world activities. They are logically organized into steps that include multiple information

technology systems, resources, documents, and channels. They also include activities that are automated and performed by machines as well as those that are manual and performed by people (George, Euripides, Panagiota & Ilias, 2018).

With intensified globalization, the effective management of an organization's business processes became very important, many factors such as: the rise in frequency of goods ordered, the need for fast information transfer, quick decision making, the need to adapt to change in demand, more international competitors and demands for shorter cycle times are threats to the profitability and survival of SMEs (Simchi-Levi et al., 2000).

The global economic environment has necessitated business enterprises to enhance their capability by engaging in process change and management that bring about efficiency and accuracy to meet customer's needs. In addition to these challenges, businesses in Nigeria operate in a turbulent environment as there are stiff competitions within the environment. Surviving in this type of business environment becomes the main concern for the businesses to survive (Eke & Achilike, 2014).

Klun and Trkman (2018), business processes are simply a set of activities that transform a set of inputs into a set of outputs (goods or services) for another person or process using people and equipment. Business process entails a set of logically related tasks performed to achieve a defined business output or outcome. It involves a wide spectrum of activities; procurement, order fulfillment, product development, customer service and sales (Okafor & Okeke-Ezeanyanwu, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

BPM adoption has been identified as one of the means in which SMEs can maintain and sustain their competitiveness through a continuous focus on processes. The sector faces cutthroat prevalence where BPM is continuously required to boost the performance of industry activities and facilitation of enterprise-wide observation and synchronization (Nikolaidou, et al, 2001). Pritschard and Armistead, (1999) noted that BPM adoption can help companies to improve their competitive position and performance continuously. Eikebrokk et al, (2011) observed that despite the importance of BPM, its uptake as a practice in most SMEs is very low and the reason for this lack of acceptance is not clear.

SMEs are characterized by stiff competition as a result of increased demand and expectations of customers both locally and globally. To survive in this turbulent environment, business organizations have to adapt to changes in their operations. These have necessitated the SMEs to enhance their business capability by engaging in business process management that brings about efficiency and dynamism to meet customers' needs. These initiatives inevitably involve managing alterations of the existing structure, management system and the use of information technology that supports the processes in order to improve organizational performance (Okundi, 2013). Despite the effort of businesses to improve on their performance through BPM practices, SMEs are not performing well to expectation. This is due to their lack of BPM applications.

In order to assess the effect of business process management on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State, the following questions were raised:

- i. How does strategic alignment affect the customer patronage of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State?
- ii. In what way does employee involvement affect the sales growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State?

The main objective of the study is to evaluate the effects of business process management on the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the effect of strategic alignment on customer patronage of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State.
- ii. determine the effect of employee involvement on sales growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State

The hypotheses for the study are as follows:

H₀₁: Strategic alignment does not have significant effect on customer patronage of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State.

H₀₂: Employee involvement does not have significant effect on sales growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State.

Literature Review

Concept of Business Process Management

Business Process Management is an important discipline deriving corporate success (Vom Brocke & Mendling 2018). Since organizations must exploit opportunities and overcome challenges of new technologies, customer expectations, business models, and competitors, modern Business Process Management needs to manage business processes in multiple contexts simultaneously (Harmon & Wolf 2016).

A business process represents the transformation of an input into the desired output of a company, or any other type of organization. Hence, it describes the flow of material and information within a company (Dusan et al., 2021). The customer is the initial point of a process-oriented perception. Business processes enable the achievement of corporate objectives, feature interfaces to market partners and customers, and are composed of a structured succession of cross-functional and cross-organizational value-adding activities (Ajike & Igbinake, 2022).

Business process is an asset of organization that combines other tangible and intangible assets of business with the purpose to create a change (Seethamraju, 2012; Singh, 2012; Dusan et al., 2021; Ebi, Onochie, Ada-Mac & Chigbo, 2021). Researchers and practitioners distinguish few types of processes. Porter (1998) claims that competitive advantage can be gained through ability to manage processes in efficient and effective manners. Other authors like (Olve et al., 2001; and Singh, 2012) identified three types of processes: management (e.g. corporate governance, strategic management), operational (e.g. purchasing, manufacturing, sales) and supporting (e.g. recruitment, technical support)

processes or critical (e.g. management and control of management systems), key (e.g. planning and improvement, creation and implementation of new serviced) and support (e.g. human resource and infrastructure management).

Strategic Alignment

The concept of strategic alignment was first used by Henderson and Venkatraman (1993), they described it as, 'The degree of fit and integration among business strategy, information technology strategy, business infrastructure, and information technology infrastructure'. Strategic alignment is the process in which the formerly developed strategy is executed and cascaded throughout the organization. It includes the calibration of the organization's culture, staff, structure and governance with the strategy. In the end every member of the organization should know and see his or her contribution to the organization's strategy (Kaplan & Norton 2006).

Strategic alignment is a core Business Process Management component. It involves developing specific strategies to maximize the value from process redesign and improvement (Jiraporn et al., 2017). Organizations must align BPM with the overall strategy of organization, and link between the organizational priorities and organization processes to improve the organizational performance (Hung, 2006). According to Sotiris (2000) the most important action in applying BPR is the company's strategic goal to provide customer-oriented services. Previous researchers have reported that a well-defined strategy is the basis for the optimal alignment with the associated-business processes. Rosemann & Brocke (2010) stated that strategic alignment includes process improvement planning, strategy and process capability linkage, enterprise process architecture, process measure and process customers. According to Abedalsttar (2022), strategic alignment is one of the major pre-conditions for implementing sustainable business process management.

Employee Involvement

Employees are asset to an organization as they are the intellectual capital of the organization. Using this intellectual capital has become a vital source of competitive advantage for any business concern (Ezeanolue & Ezeayim, 2020). Employee involvement in decision making is concerned with shared decision making in the work situation (Ijeoma, 2020). According to Sofijanovska & Chatleska (2013), it is a special form of delegation in which the subordinate gain greater control, greater freedom of choice with respect to bridging the communication gap between the management and the workers. However, Zubair, Bushir, Abrar, Baig & Hassan (2015) defined employee involvement in a more descriptive fashion by stating that employee involvement is a process of given employees opportunity to participate in the critical thinking process that is intended at arriving at decisions that affect the organization. It also means the degree of employee's involvement in a firm's strategic planning activities. Robinson (2004) posits that employee involvement can be described as the affirmative position that an employee has towards the principles of an organization. Furthermore, he emphasized that involved employees are of business context, and work

together with other employees in the organization to boost job performance within the job for the good of the firm. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2009) employee involvement has to do with different actions and processes used to enlist the comprehension and maximum contribution of employees in an organization and their commitment to its objectives which results in increase of organizational performance. An organization can have a high or low degree of employee involvement. A high degree of involvement (deep employee involvement in decision making) means that all categories of employees are involved in the planning process. Conversely, a low degree of involvement (shallow employee involvement in decision making) indicates a fairly exclusive planning process which involves the top management only (Barringer & Bleudorn, 1999). A deep employee involvement in decision making allows the influence of the frontline employees in the planning process. These are the people who are closest to the customer and who can facilitate new product and service recognition, a central element in the entrepreneurial process (Lin., 2006).

Concept of SMES Performance

Business performance is the actual output/results of an organization obtained when measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives). Kenny (2019) propose that organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of organizations' outcomes financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); product market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and shareholder return performance (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.), which are the three primary outcomes of corporate organizations being analyzed. However, production capacity performance is another factor of analysis for organizations. Performance is the end result of activities carried out and for any business it is concerned with the general efficiency or productivity. Two ways to deal with performance have been recognized in literature: the financial or "sales-based" and the non-financial or "firm-based". Whereas the financial is measured with dimensions such as profitability, growth, productivity, level of sales revenue, market share and product, return on investments, product added value; the non-financial is measured in terms of employee development, customer satisfaction, job satisfaction and efficient organizational internal processes (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014). Therefore, the practice of strategic management is justified in terms of its ability to improve organizations' performance (Agha et al., 2011). Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). The performance of any business organization is affected by the strategies in place within that organization (Munyoki, 2005). Strategies determine the long term performance of the firm. Business managers must therefore monitor customer needs and preferences, competitors' actions, technology development, and the performance of internal processes, as well as the overall financial condition of the business and develop appropriate strategies.

Performance is normally measured using standards which are usually detailed expressions of strategic objectives. They are also the measures of acceptable performance results. Measures used to assess organizational performance depend on the organization and the objectives that need to be achieved. These objectives are normally established in the strategy formulation stage of the strategy management process and they could include: profitability, market share and cost reduction among others. Thompson et al., (2007) identified two distinct performance yardsticks. They are those relating to financial performance and those relating to strategic performance. Those relating to strategic performance are the outcomes that indicate if a company is strengthening its market standing, competitive vitality and future business prospects.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the dynamic capability theory because business process management is considered as firm specific process, activities and routines and also put the imitability of the firm capability to build and reconfigure the resource base as the key to attaining competitive advantage. Dynamic capability theory provide novel analytical tools and approaches for understanding business process management behaviors that can be used by SMEs and that is the reason why dynamic capability theory is chosen for this study.

Empirical Study

Benneth, Saidi and Emmanuel (2019) investigate the effect of business process reengineering on the performance of insurance firms in Nigeria, by employing two components of business process reengineering. Survey research design was adopted, through the administration of structured questionnaires on some selected staff of Insurance Companies at their head offices in Lagos, Nigeria. The research instrument was validated through content validity index (CVI), while the reliability of the research instrument was tested through test-retest method. The findings revealed that, the two components of business process reengineering adopted for this study have individual positive significant effect on insurance firms' performance and adoption of new process. The F-statistics revealed that the two components of business process reengineering adopted for this study have positive significant combined effect on insurance firms' performance in Nigeria. The adjusted coefficient of determination implied that, change in insurance firms' performance is explained by the combined business process reengineering components. It is therefore, concluded that, business process reengineering components are important drivers of insurance firms' performance. It is recommended that, insurance firms should introduce new technology that will aid insurance penetration, especially information communication technology (ICT). The deployment of ICT tends to make it easier for existing and new customers to pick-up insurance policies through their smart phones or personal computers. Furthermore, insurance firms should equally come up with reengineered processes. The process of serving their customers should be enhance

Bassam, Ashraf & Husam (2018) investigated the impact of business process management on Job performance in Jordan. The study aims to examine the impact of business process management on employee's job performance at the Social Security Corporation (SCC). The study's sample consists of (390) employees who will be answering the study's questions and hypotheses. In addition, the researcher developed a questionnaire to detect the impact of business process management on job performance. The most important findings and conclusions of the research are: the arithmetic means of employees' estimates at the SCC towards job performance were moderate and the arithmetic mean of employees' estimates at SCC towards business process management were high too. Regression results indicate there were statistically significant effects for BPM on job performance at the SCC, and process improvement influence came first concerning the size of the effect. The study recommends the SCC to adopt strategic objectives, to increase the concern and interest about IT, and provide electronic services.

Lehnert, Roglinger (2016) studied on the future of business process management in the future and work. The study revealed that BPM will require businesses to be effectual and methodical in their work. In the future, BPM will have deal to with processes that over time are becoming responsive, create awareness and data driven. Organizations will progressively make use of market principles, have fewer management structures and distribute the decision-making channels.

Methodology

The design that was adopted for this study is a descriptive survey design; this was employed to empirically investigate the relationships among variables of the research. The descriptive design is preferred because it largely focuses on vital facts, beliefs, opinion, demographic information, attitudes, motives and behaviors of correspondent giving responses to the research instrument. The design was based on primary source of data (Questionnaire). It is an appropriate method because of its uniqueness and relevance as it concentrates on the event. For this study, quantitative approach was used in analyzing the data that was collected. In addition, cross sectional research design was used in the study because it involves collection of information from a given sample of population only once and at different location and at the same period of time. The population for this study comprises all the registered SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. SMEDAN (2013) recorded a total number of 11,489 registered SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Population was selected from three sectors (trading, manufacturing and services) as a sample size for the study based on formula suggested by (Taro Yamane, 1967).

This study used stratified random sampling. In this technique, a population is stratified first and then random sampling is done. Primary data was employed. The data were collected with the aid of a questionnaire that was properly drafted using the 5 scale Likert system for questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections, A, B and C e.g Section A covers the information about the respondent's bio data. Five points rating scale was used to measure the response. The scales range from 5(Strongly Agree) to 1(Strongly Disagree).

The data was analyzed with the use of both descriptive and inferential statistical method. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to present demographic data and inferential statistical technique was used to evaluate the effects and relationship between the variables. Regression analysis was also used to analyze the relationships between two or more variables with dependent variable (multiple regressions).

Model Specification

$$Y = f(X)$$

Y = Dependent Variable

X = Independent Variable

Where:

X = Business Process Management

Y = SME Performance

$$X = (x_1, x_2)$$

$$Y = (y_1, y_2)$$

Where:

X_1 = Strategic Alignment

X_2 = Employee Involvement

Y_1 = Customer Patronage

Y_2 = Sales Growth

$$Y = f(X)$$

$$y_1 = f(x_1) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 1}$$

$$y_2 = f(x_2) \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 2}$$

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + e \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 3}$$

The variables in Equation 1- 3 are the working Equations evaluated in this study.

$$y_1 = a_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + e$$

$$y_2 = a_0 + \beta_2 x_2 + e$$

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + e$$

Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 1: Analysis of Variance ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.449	4	6.612	82.044	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.013	360	.081		
	Total	55.462	364			
a. Dependent Variable: SME Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Alignment, Employee Involvement						

Source: Field Survey 2023

The study carried out ANOVA assessment to calculate the extent to which business process management items (such as Strategic Alignment and Employee Involvement) can significantly predict performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State. Thus, the value of 0.000 (sig value) shows that the model is a significant fit as it was less than the p -value of 0.05. Notably, a framework uses Strategic Alignment and Employee Involvement can significantly predict performance of small and medium scale enterprises (customer patronage and sales growth). Table 1 shows the result of the analysis of variance. (ANOVA) with a $F = 82.044$, $sig = 0.000$.

Table 2: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.691 ^a	.477	.471	.28389

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Alignment, and Employee Involvement

Dependent Variable: Performance of small and medium scale enterprises

Source: Author's Fieldwork Computation Using SPSS 21.0, (2023)

Multiple regression analysis was conducted in this study to predict the performance of small and medium scale enterprises which was based on two independent factors. The two independent predictors (business process management determinants such as strategic alignment and employee involvement).

The output of regression as contained in Table 2 above revealed that a model summary predicting performance of small and medium scale enterprises with an R-value of 0.691, R square of 0.477 and adjusted R square with 0.442. This result shows that 47.7 percent of SMEs performance can be predicted by determinants of business process management (such as, strategic alignment and employee involvement). This shows that the model is good enough to explain (47.1%) of the variance in performance of small and medium scale enterprises.

Table:3 Model Fit Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.276	.176		7.269	.000
	Strategic Alignment	.220	.042	.280	5.260	.000
	Employee Involvement	-.055	.047	-.064	-1.174	.241

a. Dependent Variable: SME Performance

Source: Author's Fieldwork Computation Using SPSS 21.0, (2023)

The results of regression coefficients in Table 3 shows that all two determinants of business process management are significant enough to influence the performance of small and medium scale enterprises based on *Beta* coefficients. Specifically, the findings show a positive relationship between strategic alignment and SMEs performance such that a unit rises in strategic alignment scores induced about 0.220 unit to rise in performance of small and medium scale enterprises scores which was statistically significant at a 1 percent going by p-value (sig=0.000). Furthermore, there is a negative relationship between employee involvement and performance of small and medium scale enterprises such that a unit rise in employee involvement scores induced about -0.055 unit rise in performance of small and medium scale enterprises scores which was statistically significant at 1 percent going by the p-value (sig= -0.241). Furthermore, the standardized regression coefficients indicate the degree of strength of the effect of business process management determinants has on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Strategic alignment shows a coefficient of 0.280, and employee involvement with coefficient of -0.64.

Conclusion

The study analyzed the effect of business process management on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State. The study used quantitative technique to determine the aggregate components to that improve SMEs performance. The result from this study revealed that the type of business process management adopted by SMEs went a long way to determine their performance. Therefore, based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made;

- i. The study revealed that strategic alignment has a significant effect on customer patronage of small and medium scale enterprises. This was confirmed by the direct effect of the regression analysis carried out which showed relatively high values. The study shows that strategic alignment plays a very important role on performance of small and medium scale enterprises competitiveness of large scale enterprises.
- ii. Finally, in research objective two, it was employee involvement has no significant effect on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Despite its insignificant, the study revealed that employee involvement provides a sense of belonging to the organization and as a result, they become more dependable. The study further revealed that employee involvement can improve SMEs performance if it is properly explored by small businesses.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made

- i. It is recommended that strategic alignment as one of important predictor of business process management should give much attention by small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos so as to be able to explore its benefit. The study shows that strategic alignment plays an important role on customer patronage of SMEs. It is recommended that there is a need for SMEs to embark on effective strategy

implementation practices to be able to improve their performance. Strategic aligning itself will form genesis of their capacity building as it will help them know the needs and wants of the customers and adjust to address these needs.

- ii. It is also recommended that business process management of SMEs in terms of employee involvement should be regularly and effectively evaluated. Small and medium scale enterprises should put into consideration the involvement and engagement of their workforce, as participative management revealed a well-built impact on SMEs performance.

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