Using A Positivist Case Research Methodology To Test Three Competing Theories-In-Use Of Business Process Redesign

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Abstract
We test three practitioner theories-in-use of business process redesign derived from the business process reengineering (BPR) literature using a positivist case study of a U.S. company that undertook BPR. The evidence refutes the dominant technocentric theory-in-use that gives a determining role to IT in achieving effective business process redesign. The evidence also refutes an alternative sociocentric view—one that gives a determining role to just the social/human aspects in achieving effective business process redesign. Instead, the study provides support for the sociotechnical theory-in-use. For critical researchers and skeptical practitioners, the overarching lesson of our case study is that business process redesign is but the latest arena in which researchers and practitioners are relearning old lessons by repeating the past mistake of adopting a technocentric approach and sociocentric approach to designing and managing organizations. The future direction we suggest for researchers and practitioners interested in areas such as BPR, ERP, and e-commerce implementation, all of which involve business process redesign, is to adopt, from the beginning, an orientation that is not just technocentric or sociocentric, but gives equal consideration to the technical and social dimensions, and the interactions between the social and the technological.

Recommended Citation