

The Impact of the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) on the Practices of the Human Resources Management in the Franco- Tunisian Company- Network

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Abstract

This research lays the emphasis on the business process reengineering (BPR) which consists in radically altering the organizational processes through the optimal use of information technology (IT) to attain major enhancements in terms of quality, performance and productivity. A survey of the business process reengineering (BPR) was carried out in three French groups and their subsidiaries in Tunisia. The data collected were qualitatively analyzed in an attempt to test the main indicators of the success of a business process reengineering project (BPR) and to compare the importance of these indicators in the context of France versus Tunisia. The study corroborates that the respect of the inherent principles of the business process reengineering (BPR) and the diversity of the human resources involved in the project can lead to better productivity, higher quality of the goods or services and lower cost. Additionally, our results mirror the extent to which the respect of the principles and the diversity of resources are more important in the French companies than in their Tunisian subsidiaries.

Keywords: Business process reengineering (BPR); Human Resources Management (HRM); Information Technology (IT).

1. Introduction

The position of man in the company was of a great concern in the works of [13] in France, Reference [36] in the US and [39] in Germany.

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These authors certainly evoke, in their research, the social context of the late nineteenth century; however, we can perceive some discrepancies in their ideas. In the late nineteenth century, there was a stern need for a scientific study of the position of man in business. In this specific social context of the early 1900s, Fayol, Taylor and Weber were the first to study and redefine this issue and to propose an approach based on four assumptions:

The work is of an unpleasant nature to the majority of individuals,

- The research of the company's economic performance must be consistent with the satisfaction of the employees,
- The gain is more important than the nature of the work,
- Very few people are eager to do the works involving responsibilities.

Actually, this research had a great impact; i.e., many companies were committed to implement these new organizational forms to improve their performance in terms of cost, time and quality. Indeed, in this context of increasing competition and deregulation, companies need to reorganize and re-evaluate their operations to upgrade productivity and competitiveness. When the 20th century came to a close, the model of business process reengineering (BPR) became the best model for the industrial and the service sectors and, especially, in the financial institutions. Henceforth, human resources have increasingly become the focal point when discussing the causes of the organizational performance. The analysis and the studies also highlight the role of human resources (HR) as a source of the competitive advantage and the business performance. In this respect, many authors have proven that human resources are the corner stone of competitiveness and organizational performance [14,37,19,1,20,29,4]. This, in fact, increases the importance of the decisions and the activities of the human resources management (HRM) in the organizations. Over time, the 'human resources' approach has been transformed and consolidated to grow and further expand to involve a large number of companies implanted in a huge geographical space giving the HRM an extra level. Several studies argue that the human resources management must go beyond the boundaries of the organization and the company-networks [23,33]. In any case, it is now widely recognized that the human resources management (HRM) can help the organizations improve the organizational behavior such as the staff commitment, competence and flexibility through a change [22]. Thus, it becomes increasingly obvious to argue that the organization must now deal with the business process reengineering (RPA). Indeed, to cope with globalization and market competition and to maintain a certain level of efficiency and profitability, the managers recognize that the companies should give the necessary importance to the human resources management [22]. In all business sectors, companies today are experiencing a large number of mutations and changes; for instance, the demographic changes of an aging population of employees, the consolidation of the statutory environment redefining a rich social context with which businesses, employees and their representatives must learn how to cope with the acceleration of globalization, the technological development, and the speed of the daily used information and communication [22]. The success of an organization depends, in general, on the quality of its intangible assets. In this context, Reference [26] argues that the most successful organizations are those that possess an expertise and a knowledge that is hard to be imitated.

2. Literature review

For the companies operating in a network, the HRM practices should incur a reorientation of their objectives and adopt new strategies by applying the trainings and by reorganizing their operating modes through the redistribution of responsibilities and power. They should lead to a full reorientation of their strategies by changing the objectives, encouraging recruitment, re employability and regeneration. However, the social exchange theories are mainly interested in the professional relationship since it ensures the balance of the employees in an environment whereby the company evaluates their contributions and is interested in their welfare. Therefore, these theories are positively related to the representation and the organizational commitment of the employees. Businesses must, nonetheless, take a new knowledge management, an industrial restructuring, a reset and a new information system. But the blur of the organizational boundaries and the presence of the work arrangements add further dimensions and complexity to the HR management in the networks.

3. The Role of HRM in the Success of the BPR

The success of the business process reengineering is based on the existence of a common development project and an effective human resources management. The stakeholders must necessarily understand the benefits of regrouping and strive to achieve the objectives. When talking about human management, it is necessary to anticipate and identify the changes needed for the success of the BPR project. At this level, by creating a new company culture that incorporates the positive aspects of each organizational culture, the conflict can be avoided. Thus, the union of companies of different nationalities is an additional source of difficulty. The differences in the organizational cultures are added to the cultural differences between the countries [11].

If the challenge of the 1980s was total quality and the challenge of the 1990s was the process reengineering, the twenty-first century will impose a greater challenge on the businesses: the transition from contemporary business to business-network. The current and the future industrial and commercial realities are increasingly complex. The organization, no matter what its nature is, should face the new realities imposed by the changes in its environment to ensure its survival and its development [8]. This leads to consequences that are both simple and huge for the businesses. They are simple in terms of competition since all companies are subjected to competition, but huge in terms of the changes that the companies must bring to their management practices if they want to survive [15]. Reengineering is one of the last words uttered in the management theory. It allows the company to revolutionize both its working methods as well as its results. In this context, [30] generally defines the business process reengineering as "a method of improving the performance of the company as well as the techniques such as the strategic planning, the management change, total quality and the architectural development which lead to radical changes". According to this author, reengineering is a radical redesign both in the corporate structure and its processes. Indeed, to reach a decisive level in the effectiveness of cooperation, the parent companies must focus on their own employees and on the importance of collaboration between all the partners' at all organizational levels. The HR practices in the networks must move to the foreground before and after any change of business. The pressure on the human resources management professionals is becoming tougher due to the rising competition between the companies. The deep questioning of HRM is due to mergers, restructuring and other business changes. The growing interest in the human resources management as a success

factor for the organizations is explained by different research fields including those carried out in economics, psychology, finance and strategy [5]. Other theories such as the human capital theory [34,6], the agency theory (Jones and Wright, 1992), the theory of transaction costs [10,41,42] and most recently, the resource- based theory [2,28,40], come up with the fact that the different practices of the HRM can have a positive impact on the performance of the individuals and on that of the organizations. Large companies employ new technologies to organize the work space and its geography [25]. In this context, Reference [27] introduced reengineering as an organizational development approach that aims "to create dramatic improvements of the process and performance by giving an objective and holistic vision of the activities, the structures, and the resources used to achieve the goals of the company. " Accordingly, reengineering is characterized by the innovative use of technology and covers a wide variety of activities ranging from the change of a particular process to a global transformation of the organization. It is, in this perspective, a technique of partial or comprehensive organizational change. Reference [24] take the definition of Amacom, "*Reengineering is the rapid and radical redesign of the added-value strategic processes, the systems, the organizational policies and the structures that support this re- design in order to optimize the work-flow and the productivity of the organization.*" In this respect, Reference [35] says that the company succeeds only when the management of its human resources is considered as an important and unavoidable issue together with the management of skills and knowledge, the adequacy of the profiles with the positions and the revision of the measurement and the evaluation systems. It is important to reorganize the company. The information and communication technology (ICT) that support the organizational change are liable to create hidden costs: the change-resistance phenomena impose a cautious attitude and remind the contingency of the social phenomena.

4. Methodology

Before proclaiming our research methodology, we must highlight the epistemological position that underlies this study.

As the number of research dealing with the question at hand is relatively limited in Tunisia compared to countries in which the BPR project studies are carried out, we can say that this study is exploratory. In this article, indeed, we explore the field, at once, in France and in the evolving subsidiaries in Tunisia. The constructivist paradigm, which advocates the construction of knowledge by exploring the demand of the fields through an inductive approach, is used.

5. Sample selection and description

The choice of the case study is explained by the existence of a new unfamiliar empirical phenomenon. This research is based on the study of the business process reengineering in an industrial group. In this section, we present three business groups in various activities which have adopted reengineering; namely, RENAULT Company, SIVO laboratories and Paribas banking group.

Table 1: Synoptic table of the groups studied

Criteria Groups	Legal forms	Activity sector	Capital (EURO)	Workforce
RENAULT	Simplified joint stock company (SJSC)	Automotive industrie	533 941120€	34611
ESSILOR SIVO	SA	Manufacturing glasses	38 860 655,04 €	1300 to 1399
PARISBAS	SA	Banking activities	2.491.915.350,00 €	1500

5.1 Regression Result

The obtained results are related to the conditions of settling reengineering in the 3 French groups and their subsidiaries in Tunisia. The collected data signify that other factors, such as the leadership style adopted by the director of each group, often have a great impact on the implementation of the changes and on the reaction of the employees. The information presented here as well as their discussion are organized around the issues arising from each of the three cases mentioned above. We sometimes try to compare the observations to highlight the differences and similarities in the conditions of implanting the changes. More than ever before, the policy met by the companies must be adjusted to the needs of each group in order to optimally use the available resources in each segment. Nevertheless, these companies may face obstacles that prevent them from achieving their goals. To reduce these risks, the companies need to take strategic initiatives to satisfy their employees by adopting a new concept of HRM. The practices of the Human Resources (HR) should now strive to satisfy the employees; it is a prerequisite to achieve the organizational goals. Indeed, the human resources management strategies need to morally boost the employees and to keep the best and the most qualified ones among them. In our model, the French companies and their Tunisian subsidiaries seem to adopt this strategy and seek to profit from their business. Table 2 presents a summary of the strategic initiatives and practices of the innovative HRM of the French companies, but Table 3 summarizes the strategy of their subsidiaries in Tunisia. The three targeted companies have actually attempted to create a new approach to HRM. Nevertheless, Essilor Sivo does not show any interest in knowledge sharing. In contrast, Renault seems to be eager to share new knowledge to improve its performance. Yet, BNP Paribas promotes a culture of ethics and performance. It adopts a flat structure and gives a growing importance to communication. We notice that the new knowledge yielded by the use of ITC by enterprises have modified the human resource management approach. They favored growth. Since ICT influences knowledge management to ensure the success of the BPR, the acceleration of the development of information and communication technologies stimulates the change. The speed affects not only the sequence of new knowledge, but also the speed of transmission of that knowledge. We are now right in the snapshot (collaborative and integrative ITC). The desired performance is qualitative. The staff has to be provided with a

lot of information and with the ways of improving the creative abilities. The acceleration of technological innovation and globalization bring a new dimension and induce an increase in the performance of information and communication systems. Actually, neither the technical acceleration nor the globalization of innovation is new. Traditionally, advances in information technology always allow people to transmit more data with better quality in short time and over long distances. The reengineering project remains a project of higher level in various international groups. In some subsidiaries such as those located in Tunisia, its design is also drawn from the top of the pyramid. Despite the specific nature of each subsidiary, it corresponds to the top-down approach advocated by the American designers of the concept [16,17,18].

Table 2: The innovative practices of the HRM adopted by the three French companies

Criteria Groups	Strategic Initiatives	Practices of HR
RENAULT	Rationalize the manufacturing process Training of the personnel Launch of new ranges for various markets: Reduce costs and increase the operational efficiency) Increase the distribution network	Reinvent the business process flat structure (horizontal) that encourages teamwork Recruit professional human resources managers Hire a HR manager for internal communication Creating an excellent remuneration policy
ESSILOR SIVO	capacity for customer orientation Increased productivity and product quality	Business process reengineering Control of the productive process Innovation of the work procedures
PARISBAS	Collective capabilities for customer orientation Creation and distribution of wealth. Culture of ethics and performance. Collective capabilities for customer orientation	Homogeneity of ideas and relational practice Flat structure Common ground and favorable communication

But one has to bear in mind that this research should lead us to a "ground" with the concept of reengineering. Many elements make us believe that if the strategic goal of the leaders of the three groups is probably to increase the profits by an increase in the sales volume, they should control these products before and during the reorganization by taking into account their specific nature. As a matter of fact, the design and planning of reengineering usually stem from the French headquarter of the different groups. If the Tunisian regional management of these groups has a margin of discretion to determine the conditions of implementation, we notice that the employees as well as the staff are not involved in these strategic choices because the project comes from the top. Unsurprisingly, the local control of the changes to be made may be lost. The three groups and their subsidiaries are particularly affected by the difficulties of finding experienced consultants. Also, in the ERP case, in particular, it is almost impossible to find expert consultants in more than one ERP module. Therefore, to successfully start a project, they must coordinate a group of external consultants. Most of the surveyed people share in common the idea that a particular attention should be paid to communication since the required changes are of a growing importance. In the groups studied in France, the personal experience in

participating in the BPR project is high during two years. The members of these groups, about 56% of the employees, received sufficient training on reengineering. This enabled them to better adopt and optimize the project approach and methodology. Whereas, in Tunisia and exactly in their subsidiaries there are only 33% of the employees who received only mediocre training for a short period, sometimes less than one year. This is likely to explain the rejection of the project in these subsidiaries.

Table 3: Innovative practices in HRM adopted by subsidiaries located in Tunisia

Criteria Groups	Strategic Initiatives	Practices of HR
RENAULT	Orientation of the personnel. Reduce costs and increase productivity. Align the employees' behavior with the company culture. Improve quality. Transformation and evolution of the product	Development of management to improve the ability of the managers to think strategically, manage their time effectively and improve the working methods and quality Implement healthy communication by removing the emotion and using data
ESSILOR SIVO	Develop the happier and more productive employees. Aggressive use of data and tests based on ideas Commitment of the employees	Automation and integration of human resources Better hiring by: - Relaxation and entertainment - Innovative Technological tools can be used by all aspects of the HR Use people with distinctive capabilities to create an unequal competence in a given area
PARISBAS	Decrease in the rate of the staff turnover Discipline and confidence	Open management policy Transparency and sharing between the staff learning program and leadership development

The main ways of resisting the change are: rejection, recriminations, paralysis by analysis, conflict, partitioning, timing, emphasis, mind, dispersion, deviation, and refusal of training and information.

All of these factors can lead to serious malfunctions of the relevant service in the French groups and their Tunisian subsidiaries. These hesitations are, in fact, brought about by either the manager or the employee; in other words, these hesitations are caused by habits, fear of the unknown, the need for stability, justified distrust, satisfaction of the needs, the personal perception of the change, and the loss of the benchmarks. Similarly, for reasons of conformity to the norms of the group, the value system, the representation of reality, threats, rituals, taboos, structures, the working conditions, the organizational functioning, the consistency system, and the acquired rights and interests, we emphatically insist on the rejection of what is outsider. This resistance may

also be related to the process through the lack of explanation, misunderstanding, the lack of time, credibility of the actors of the change, lack of consolidation or the lack of visibility of the objectives '. Therefore, the fundamental duty of the manager is, first, to change the attitudes of the employees who refuse to go along with the change and, second, to ensure the proper change that is more likely to fulfill the project.

Table 4: Human resources reorientation

Business Process Reengineering	
Workforce Management	In the case of PARIBAS group, the positions were grouped under the functions "management," "advisory sales" and "administrative support". Each manager was responsible for the formulation of the staff-plan by taking account of the workforce in place and objectives. In all cases, the positions are abolished and replaced by new positions to meet the current and future needs as well as the major objectives. Thus, four performance areas have been designated: sale, profitability, resource performance and the cooperative aspect.
Downsizing Strategy	Downsizing has been a part of the "daily" discourse of the business leaders especially in RENAULT Company. In recent years, there has been a miscellaneous media event that has kept complicating the organization management.
Human resources development	The favorite approach of the group Essilor SIVO aims to harmonize all the human resources practices around the identification, acquisition, promotion and development of the skills required for each employee. The selection of the new employees is made to focus on this aspect. Meanwhile, the organization has paid attention to the competence in distinguishing between the skilled employees and those who are not. The programs dedicated for human resources are (training, remuneration, staffing, etc.) put the emphasis on the identification, development and reinforcement of these skills.
Precariousness of the employees	For the employers of all the groups studied, the repositories of reengineering are used by the local managers and are either unknown or unused by the CEOs and HR managers.
A social turnaround plan	The recruitment and dismissal of the employees are made on criteria by the institutions that define the profiles, use the relation-experience criteria, knowledge of the public, ease, and adaptability. The consensus on the social turnaround plan related to the business process reengineering is based on the rationality of the choices made with regard to the efficiency and effectiveness criteria (cost, time, quality and improved customer service).
Social Reintegration	It is not important to understand the unproductive processes and repair them, but it is significant to destroy and rebuild them. The marginal value of the repairs of the proposed social reintegration is estimated at 10% by the leaders of the three groups. They confirmed the need to organize the work according to the results of the process rather than according to the tasks. The business process reengineering is achieved through greater devolution within an organization.
Social Dialogue	Reengineering, including its contributions to the project, evaluation, communication, institutional dynamics and operation of the organizational policies, prepares the employees for the new working environment within which the job is done through dialogues and communication.

The manager must be aware that there are two sources of resistance to change: individual sources and organizational sources. In this, the individual sources of resistance to change can be summarized in habits, safety, the economic factors, fear of the unknown and the selective processing of information; while the organizational sources of resistance to change are essentially the structural inertia, the inertia of the groups,

limited interest in the change, the threat to the expertise, the threat to establish power relations and the threat to the establishment of resource allocations. Hence, the directors of these groups should forecast the various. In Tunisia, we must recognize the willingness of the managers to be involved in the strategic management of the change and, in the cooperative subsidiaries, they claimed that the involvement of the employees in the design of the business plan is significant; in contrast, the surveyed employees indicate that their contribution to comment on a ready-made business plan was limited. We believe that this obvious contradiction stems from the fact that the employees are involved only in the formulation of the means of achieving the objectives which are pre-possible responses and identify the individuals with regard to these reactions to decide the appropriate policy according to a predetermined action-plan. In the French groups, 75% of the most resistant personnel are essentially employees and 25% belong to the middle managers.

Nevertheless, in Tunisia all hierarchical categories of the employees, from the managers to the employees, are involved in the decision making and are against the business process reengineering (Fig 2). Thus, it seems that the material and the educational levels of the staff are liable to pave the way to the adoption of the Business Process Reengineering. The Business Process Reengineering is mostly used by the young staff. In contrast, in France the adults who have long work experiences undoubtedly agree to use the Business Process Reengineering. In the French groups, also, the number of the personnel who have access to foreign information systems is higher than that in Tunisia. The directors also find it difficult to reassure the employees. They feel themselves more or less informed and involved and, on the other side of the coin, the employees have never been included in the transformation planning process covered by the process reengineering. Regardless of the status of the senior or salaried staff, it seems that the realization of the change is getting more and more difficult. We, therefore, cannot declare the validation of our first proposal in Tunisia since there is no involvement of the employees in the strategic planning for the change.

What can be suggested stems from the speculation over the results that the French headquarter could have achieved by involving the employees in planning the change or decentralizing certain characteristics. It is, therefore, not surprising that the employees' concerns are focused on the employment protection.

In this research, we could distinguish between three types of resistance to change created by the implementation of the BPR project in the 3 French groups and their subsidiaries located in Tunisia.

6. Conclusion

The real on-going technological revolutions compel the company- networks to combine the change and complexity in their development strategies and management methods. In an uncertain environment, complex and fluctuating, the companies alter their traditional organizational structures (hierarchical and functional) and establish more appropriate ones. The implementation of such structures gives the stakeholders more flexibility in the policy management [3] but requires greater cooperation and coordination between them. Reference [9] argue that the HRM activities prefer the creation of a favorable organizational context to the coordination and use of the knowledge held by the employees. Reference [38] confirm that the human capital is the business central capital. It is through this human capital the other forms of capital (innovation, structural or relational) can have a

positive influence on performance. Reference [43] show how the HRM practices such as recruitment, training, remuneration and evaluation of performance, contribute to the development and enhancement of the intellectual capital, knowledge management and the ability to renew the organizations.

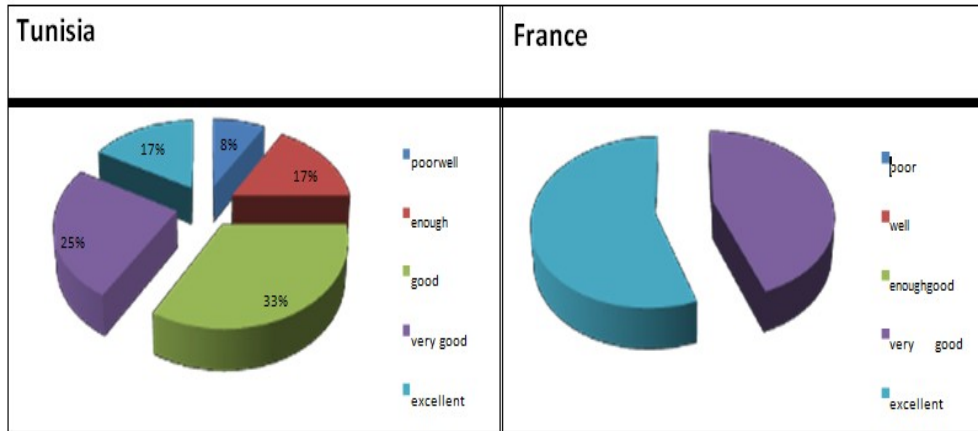


Figure 1: The impact of training and communication on the adoption of the business process reengineering

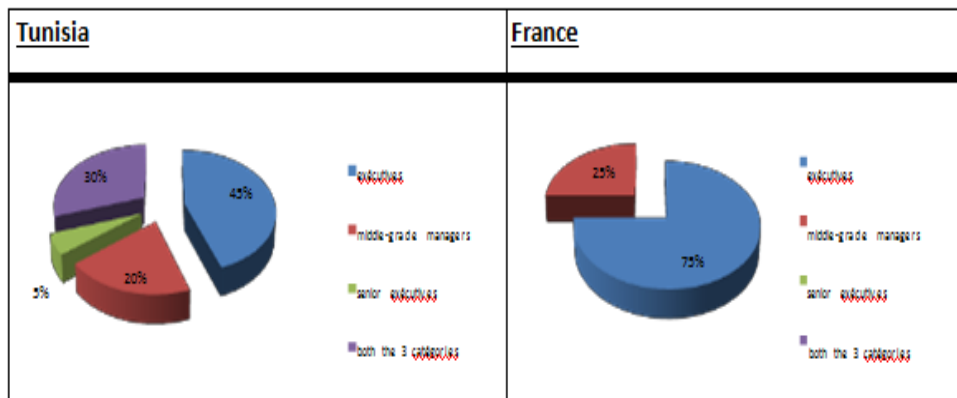


Figure 2: The resistance to the change

The human resources management instruments, in particular, can be handicaps rather than incentives for the change [32]. The HRM participates in the management of organizations and its effectiveness. The HRM generates new production models and new management standards. Management is interested in the conduct of the activities, the development of the structures and the behavior of the employee in the workplace. Finally, it means how to make an organization survive. The evolution of the business practices show that the human resources management has become a vital dimension in the company's overall strategy.

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