

DEFINING BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

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Abstract: *Globalization has made possible the simultaneous competition among business organizations from any country of the world on every market. This is why companies have sought to rethink their strategies, identify and implement innovative and enduring business models, and use appropriate concepts, tools and methods in their business processes. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of a new concept, entitled business process reengineering (BPR), aimed at allowing companies to reinvent themselves in order to boost their performance. The aims of the paper are to review and analyse several key definitions of this concept, and to emphasize its main characteristics. The study is based on a qualitative research method. The paper provides a better understanding of the BPR concept and highlights its importance both in theory and practice.*

Keywords: *business process reengineering, business processes, company, improvement.*

JEL Classification: *L25, M00.*

1. Introduction

Today's turbulent global business environment imposes companies, irrespective of their size and industry, to face various and difficult challenges, such as increasing hypercompetition, climate change and decreasing natural resources. Since the fall of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the pace of change has accelerated all over the world (Toma, 2013; Toma and Marinescu, 2015). The rapid spread of the economic globalization process led to an unprecedented economic integration worldwide (Sideri, 1997; Toma, 2005) and the expansion of multinational and transnational corporations at a global scale (Grădinaru and Toma, 2018; Toma, 2019). It is said that companies have clearly benefited from globalization due to new business opportunities, lower production costs and higher productivity (Erixon, 2018; Marr, 2022).

On the other hand, globalization has made possible the simultaneous competition among business organizations from any country of the world on every market, either local, national, regional, or global. To contend with this tough confrontation, companies have sought to rethink their strategies (Hatzichronoglou, 1996), identify and implement innovative and enduring business models (Tohănean and Toma, 2018; Toma and Tohănean, 2019), and use appropriate concepts, tools and methods in their business processes, such as Six Sigma (Truscott, 2003; Toma, 2008a), balanced scorecard (Toma et al., 2010; Perkins et al., 2014) and agile management (Denning, 2017; Toma, 2023a). The 1990s witnessed the emergence of a new concept, entitled business process reengineering (BPR), aimed at allowing companies to reinvent themselves in order to boost their performance (Hammer and Champy, 1993). Since then, there has been a widespread interest in the BPR concept all over the world.

The aims of the paper are to review and analyse several key definitions of the BPR concept, and to emphasize its main characteristics. The study is based on a qualitative research method. The structure is as follows: the next part deals with the literature review. The third part of the paper illustrates the research methodology. Results and discussion are shown in the fourth part. Conclusions are displayed at the end of the paper.

2. Literature review

Since its appearance, the concept of BPR has become a topic of interest for many researchers and practitioners all over the world. It is worthy to notice that during the time it has been defined in various ways from different perspectives (Table no. 1).

Table no. 1. Definitions of BPR

No.	Period	Definitions
1	1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service and speed” (Hammer and Champy, 1993, p.32). „an approach to achieving radical improvements in customer service and business efficiency” (Talwar, 1993, p.23). „a well-known managerial approach for increasing firm competitiveness” (Paolucci et al., 1998, p.196).
2	2000s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „redesigning business processes using a radical IT-enabled approach to organisational change” (Al-Mashari and Zairi, 2000, p.11). „the implementation of hard solutions dealing with soft problems, thus suggesting that the use of IT for instance will go a long way to making businesses more effective and securing future competitiveness” (Al-Mashari et al., 2001, p.439). „methodologies to change their internal business processes in response to environmental change requirements or internal needs” (Holland et al., 2005, p.1000).
3	2010s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „a technique by that organizations basically rethink and improve their work to dramatically improve client service” (Sunil Kumar and Harshitha, 2019, p.2766). „a radical redesign of processes in order to gain significant improvements in cost, quality, and service” (Ozcelik, 2010, p.7). „an approach that seeks to redesign processes and practices in order to support the organisation’s mission, reduce costs and improve efficiency” (McGrath and Bates, 2017, p.20).
4	2020s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> „the radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in productivity, cycle times, quality, and employee and customer satisfaction” (Bain & Company, 2024, p.1). „a strategic management approach that is focused on fundamentally rethinking and redesigning core business processes to achieve significant improvements in performance and efficiency” (Finio and Downie, 2024, p.1). „an integrated set of management policies, project management procedures, and modeling, analysis, design and testing techniques for analyzing existing business processes and systems; designing new processes and systems; testing, simulating and prototyping new designs prior to implementation; and managing the implementation process.” (Gartner, 2024, p.1).

Sources: Hammer and Champy, 1993; Talwar, 1993; Paolucci et al., 1998; Al-Mashari and Zairi, 2000; Al-Mashari et al., 2001; Holland et al., 2005; Sunil Kumar and Harshitha, 2019; Ozcelik, 2010; McGrath and Bates, 2017; Bain & Company, 2024; Finio and Downie, 2024; Gartner, 2024

The above-mentioned definitions have shown the historical evolution of the BPR concept since the 1990s. Their analysis in the fourth part of the paper leads to the identification of the main features of this concept.

3. Research methodology

In order to achieve the purposes of the paper, the author utilised a qualitative scientific research method based on a desk research. In the beginning, he searched the information in the main secondary sources of data, such as articles and books. Then, the author classified, analysed and synthesised the information within the literature review. Finally, the author elaborated the study.

4. Results and discussion

Starting from the 12 definitions of the BPR concept enumerated in the section Literature review, this part of the paper highlights its main features. The analysis of these definitions reveals the following issues:

- There is no universal definition of the term BPR. It is defined differently by numerous authors in a plethora of books and articles published in the last three decades.
- As a multifaceted construct, BPR is considered not only a concept but also an approach, a methodology, a technique, and a set of policies and procedures (Figure no. 1).

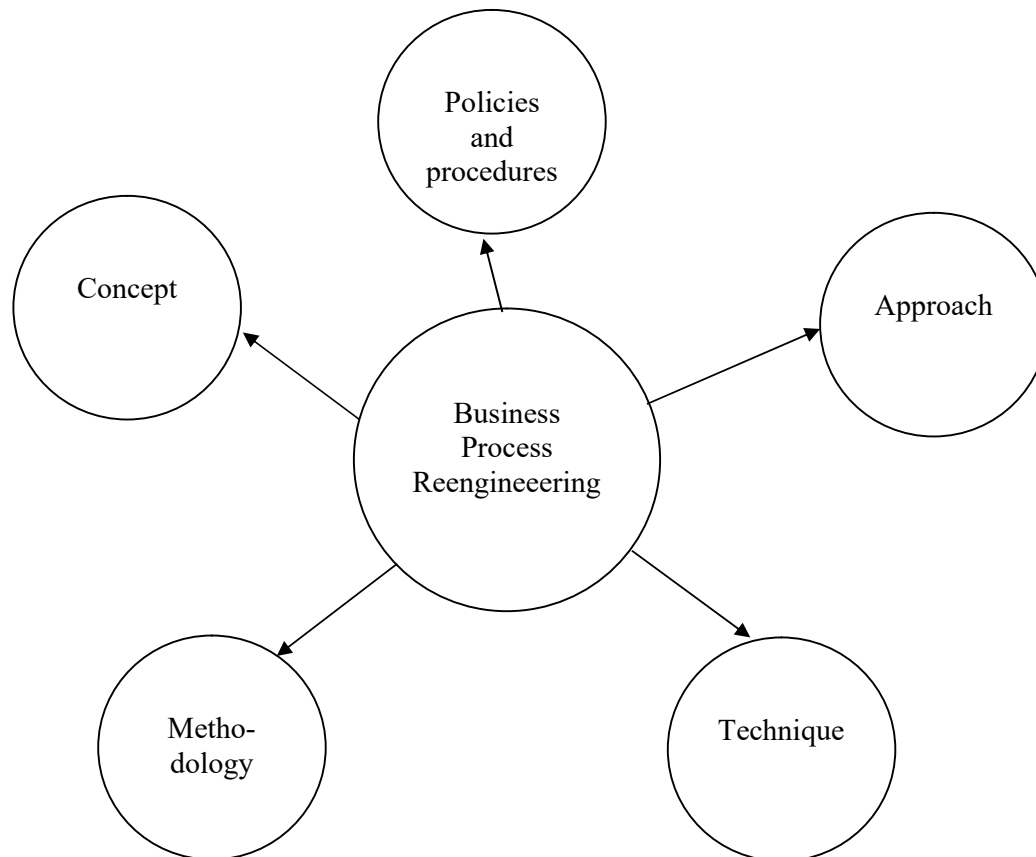


Figure no. 1. BPR: a multifaceted construct

- BPR aims at attaining profound improvements in several domains:
 - efficiency,
 - organizing,
 - competitiveness,
 - productivity,
 - employee satisfaction,
 - cycle time,
 - cost,
 - quality,
 - customer satisfaction,
 - service,
 - speed
- The implementation of BPR leads to radical changes within the business organizations.
- BPR means the rethinking and redesign of business processes within an organization in order to obtain significant improvements.
- BPR is related to business strategies (Toma and Grădinaru, 2016; Toma et al., 2016a; Toma et al., 2016b; Toma, 2023) and models (Toma and Marinescu, 2012; Marinescu and Toma, 2015).
- BPR often involves the use of information technology (IT) in an increasing digitalized business world (Tohănean et al., 2018; Toma and Tohănean, 2018).
- In order to achieve business success, BPR should be combined with other concepts, methods and techniques, such as lean management (Naruo and Toma, 2007; Marinescu and Toma, 2008), quality management (Toma, 2006; Toma and Naruo, 2009), creativity (Toma et al., 2013; Toma and Marinescu, 2017) and innovation (Toma et al., 2016c; Toma and Săseanu, 2017), marketing mix (Grădinaru and Toma, 2017; Catană and Toma, 2021a; Catană and Toma, 2021b) and customer experience (Toma and Catană, 2021a; Toma and Catană, 2021b), employees' motivation (Marinescu and Toma, 2013; Săseanu and Toma, 2019) and organizational learning (Toma, 2012).
- The deployment of BPR within companies, regardless of their size, requires in a mandatory manner the existence of a strong and transformational leadership (Săseanu et al., 2014; Grădinaru et al., 2020).
- By embracing the interests of several stakeholders (e.g., employees, customers), BPR illustrates its socially responsible approach (Toma, 2008b; Marinescu et al., 2010; Toma et al., 2011; Imbrișcă and Toma, 2020).

These characteristics show the complexity of the BPR concept and its widespread use in the activity of business organizations.

5. Conclusions

Since the 1990s, the dramatic expansion of the globalization process has led to worldwide hypercompetition in any industry. This is why increasing performance has become a business mantra for companies, irrespective of their size and field of activity. Consequently, companies have been constrained to design/identify and implement suitable techniques and methods to boost their performance. BPR has proved to be one of them.

The paper tries to provide a better understanding of the BPR concept. Also, it identifies its main characteristics on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of numerous definitions. Finally, the paper emphasizes the importance of BPR concept both in theory and practice.

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