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Resource Integration Mechanisms in Self-Service Business Analytic

TREO Talk Paper

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Introduction

Business Analytics (BA) entails the use of data in conjunction with several analytical tools and techniques to drive employees and organizations. By definition, it involves “the extensive use of data, statistical and quantitative analysis, explanatory and predictive models, and fact-based management to drive decisions and actions” (Davenport and Harris 2007). Generating value from business analytics tops the agenda of practitioners and academics (Gillon et al. 2012; Mithas et al. 2013). Undoubtedly, business analytics has the potential to help organizations understand their market share and create opportunities through the data they can collect and domain-specific analytics they can perform (Chen et al. 2012). For instance, research shows that top-performing organizations — in contrast to lower performing organizations— use rigorous data analysis to define future strategies and daily operations (LaValle et al. 2011). Yet, because of organizational structures and employee’s capabilities, highly trained and experienced technical employees (often part of an IT/BI department) face a huge overload of continuous analytical reports requested by other departments. In contrast, given a lack of general business knowledge, technical employees often face business problems that they cannot address alone. To address these concerns, certain organizations have started to decentralize analytics by enabling a self-service environment as a way of engaging employees in data analytics with the minimum support of technical employees. Self-Service Business Analytics (SSBA) refers to an approach to BA that “aims to give business users access to selection, analysis, and reporting tools without requiring intervention from IT” (Schuff et al. 2016).

In a typical SSBA environment, the technical department provides data, tools and technologies specifically optimized to lower the operational complexity of processing data into information. As a result, the employees become more autonomous in fulfilling their own information needs enabling technical department to focus on more strategic tasks. In such scenario, the value of SSBA is co-created between the different actors (which is in this case business and technical employees). Co-creation occurs mainly as a result of the integration of the employee’s competencies (such as knowledge, experience and technical capabilities) with the previously mentions environment resources enabled and maintained by the technical department. As such, resource integration is considered a central activity in SSBA environment causing value generation or in other words processing data to generate business insights. Thus, through a qualitative approach, this paper aims at addressing the following research question “what mechanisms enable and facilitate resource integration in a SSBA environment”. Understanding these issues is important as more knowledge about what drives resources integration would be highly valuable for managers and IT professionals confronted by the complexity of enabling such an autonomous environment of insight generation.

In such a depiction of SSBA environment where value is co-created by different actors through the process of resource integration, this paper perceives the value of Service Dominant Logic (SDL) theoretical framework. SDL claims that in order to create value, actors engage in interdependent and reciprocally beneficial service exchange (Lusch and Vargo 2014). It implies that value creation emerges in an interconnected network of resource exchange between actors enabled and constraint by institutions, therefore conceptualized as value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch 2008; Vargo et al. 2008). Based on the co-created nature of value generation depicted in SDL, which is in line with SSBA environment and insight discovery, this paper adopts SDL as a theoretical lens to address this paper aim.