Preparedness for Academic Excellence in Higher Education through BPO

Balendu Hamal "Thakuri"

Purbanchal University, Nepal

E-mail: hamalbalendu@gmail.com

Abstract

COVID-19 Pandemic has been a very serious problem worldwide. It has damaged all economic germinate areas. Also the Nepalese higher education field has been disturbed. Our teaching and learning methodologies are conventional. Additionally, politicians, policy makers do not want to change and adopt new concept with high-tech. Academicians and administrative staff are thinking positively, but those people are not techno friendly so that in crucial time they are resistant to change. Still, these situations create a big opportunity in Nepal; thus, the higher education sector would apply the BPO technique to provide quality education for their students with low budgets.

This study focuses on how to professionally manage teaching and learning service delivery over the public or private networks to help students use ICT effectively and efficiently. It is a new concept in the education field of Nepal, but developed countries have practiced from last decade. The 21st century is more competitive, and challenges and opportunities come together, where we live in a boundary-less small village appropriate to the speedy of ICT. Through the use of outsourcing (offshoring), stake-holders can take more benefits than the usual method. Especially BPO procedure helps teachers, students, and organizations to meet international standards throughout academic excellence and smooth operation.

Keywords: Education, business process outsourcing, higher education, human resources, off shoring

Introduction

COVID-19 Pandemic has been a very serious problem worldwide. The world economy has been completely destroyed by the virus. Not only Nepal, even the super power countries like the USA, the UK, and the European Union are in a very sympathetic condition. From the Nepalese perspective, COVID-19 is not only a problem; it has created opportunities and needs to contribute to the development of the nation in every aspect with buildup strong mindset of every person. How to operate smoothly in the Nepalese corporate sector after this pandemic is a great challenge. Challenges and opportunities always come together. Thus corporate, education sector and some other business areas will apply the business process outsourcing (BPO) technique through the smooth use of ICT.

The common concept of quality education is composed of different interrelated factors like inputs, processes, and outcomes. Inputs denote the quality of human and other resources available for teaching and learning. The quality of teaching practices is identified by the process, and the quality of results is measured by outcomes. In the present scenario higher education system of Nepal is running very traditionally. Almost all universities have followed traditional methods of teaching like going to college, attending lectures then preparing for finals. During the impact of COVID-19, all higher education institutions and school education are using ICT to teach their students following the worldwide theme "stay home, stay safe"; this means that every higher education institution has to focus on BPO.

Objectives

To focus on how to professionally manage teaching and learning service delivery over the public or private networks.

To focus on application of various types of out sourcing and off sourcing for skill enhancement.

History of BPO

The history of outsourcing dates back to mythological times. It is said that when Sage Ved Vyasa wanted to write the epic Mahabharata, he looked around for someone who would write down the words as he recited them. He approached Lord Ganesh and asked him if he would do so. Lord Ganesh readily agreed to do so. This framework broadly constitutes the concept of outsourcing (Chp 2 Lit). Information technology has become the backbone of business as well as non-business organizations and plays a key role in all types of activities. Through outsourcing, one company hands over part or whole of its business process to another company, making it responsible for the design and implementation as per the requirements and specifications of the outsourcing company.

Outsourcing as a key business strategy has been used by companies in various industries for many decades. Competitive pressures have forced companies to look objectively and critically during business processes.

Companies have been outsourcing manufacturing operations, business services, and even entire business lines successfully for a long time now. The idea of outsourcing has its roots in the competitive advantage 'theory propagated by Adam Smith in his book "The Wealth of Nations" (1776). Over the years, the meaning of term outsourcing has undergone a sea change. What started off as the shifting of manufacturing of goods to locations or countries providing cheap labor during the industrial revolution, it has taken on a totally new connotation in today's scenario.

Meaning of BPO

Loh and Venkatraman (1992) -External vendors' provision of physical and/or human resources associated with the user organization's information technology infrastructure.

Lacity and Hirschheim (1993) Outsourcing consists of conducting one or more organizational activities, using external agents.

The trend is for global outsourcing relationships to function more and more as partnerships. Outsourcing providers are taking increasing responsibility in realms that have traditionally remained in-house, such as corporate strategy, information management, business investment, and internal quality initiatives (Sinderman, 1995).

BPO is a set of professionally managed teaching and learning services (out located or outsourced) delivered over public or private networks to help clients use information technology effectively, reduce cost through labor arbitrage, and improve teaching and learning performance through economies of scale.

Relevance with Higher Education

The teacher/student ratio is very unbalanced with limited teachers. The quality of education has decreased because of the existing faculty, the rapid brain drain of talented young faculties to developed countries and the reluctance of talented youths to opt for the teaching profession. While education cannot directly reduce unemployment, except by requiring more teachers, a reform of the educational system could help alleviate its impact, especially on youths. There is a serious gap between disciplines taught and market demand for skills in various sectors of the Nepalese and global economy. The globalized market demand for new courses has been less recognized by universities.

Lockdown and social distancing are core measures of covid-19, which would be followed for a long time to control this pandemic. University is a place of gathering students, teachers, and staff to teaching and learning activities for the betterment of their future through academic excellence as well as contribution to nations with tie-up international levels. University has to unite those people who are academically sound, interested in teaching and learning through the BPO technique by the use of ICT. BPO also emphasizes Nepalese people from outside to indulge in teaching and learning.

Most of the universities have two types of HR, teaching and non-teaching staff. Outsourcing is a university's decision to use external companies to provide services that it used by itself. It is an effective strategy, as it leads to cost cutting to achieve strategic focus, thereby enhancing competitive advantages. HR outsourcing (HRO) is the purchase of ongoing HR services from a third party having competence to manage the HR functions for organizations. Specially focus is on teaching staff how to outsource academically sound people who are interested in teaching and learning activities in terms of cost benefit and effectiveness compared to full-time staff. The office of staff administration is committed to recruiting, retaining, and motivating to devoted and talented employees. It provides information and expertise as internal consultants for faculty and staff in the fulfillment of the institutions and the university's mission.

Outsourcing Vs Contracting

First, we have to understand the differences between outsourcing and contracting, because somebody says both terms are the same, but academicians, research scholars, and practitioners views are quite different. So, the comparison factors and differences are as follows:

| Comparison factors	Outsourcing	Contracting
Types of entity	An arrangement	A legal agreement
Definition	Outsourcing generally involves transferring some of the tasks to the outside company, consists of a contract which is agreed by both the companies.	Contract is a legal binding existing between two or more parties. It is a type of commitment which is made regarding a course of action.
Types	Business process outsourcing Knowledge process outsourcing	Fixed price contract Requirements contracts Multi term contract Lease/ purchase contract Installment purchase contract
Reasons	Focus on core activities Improve quality Reduce cost Conserve capital Faster renovation	Validation for agreement Legitimate under the law Used as evidence Prevent disputes Professional approach
Focuses	More result oriented	More process oriented
Example	A pen manufacturing company outsources its work of advertising to an advertising firm.	A supplier and buyer sign a contract document specifying the terms and conditions of the purchase activity like number of items to be purchased date of delivery.

On the basis of the above comparison table outsourcing act provides input, defined desired output, but the process, ways and means to achieve it are at the sole discretion of the service provider. Similarly, contracting is a complete process-input stage, steps to be followed, and the resultant output is defined by the outsourcer and the service provider needs to provide manpower and infrastructure to carry out such activities.

Why BPO?

One of the reasons universities choose to outsource staff administration is because it helps reduce cost. It cuts the cost of hiring and training employees, but still satisfies all the academic and administrative needs. Also, there are fewer activities involved in the business, which means less money, more time and energy to be spent on core tasks and important decisions. University can reduce their budget as a result of cost reduction and gain significant academic advantages.

Strategic Factors

● Competitive pressures:
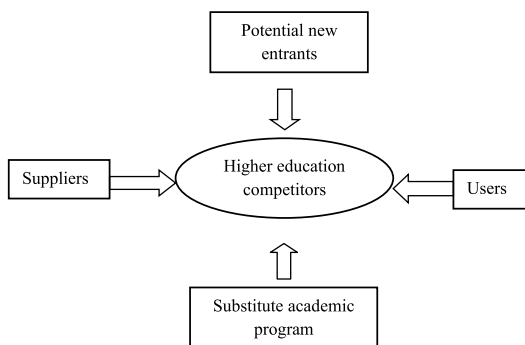
● Speed of innovation and technology advances:

Pace of innovation is the speed at which technological innovation or advancement occurs, with the most apparent instances being too slow or too rapid. Both these rates of innovation are extreme and, therefore, have effects on the people that get to use this technology. The description of technology moving too fast is that innovation is proceeding faster than expected or than the consumption rate of the goods due to a quick rate of production.

● Educational change:

Educational organizations are among the aspects that are experiencing a lot of change in the whole world. Hence, information concerning how this change should be led and managed is of great importance. There are different ways that are used in bringing the changes in educational systems. Many researchers and scholars have stated that bringing about change is one thing and leading and managing that change is another aspect. Traditional settings need to be changed in order to incorporate the aspects of advanced technology in education (Harris 2007, p.316).
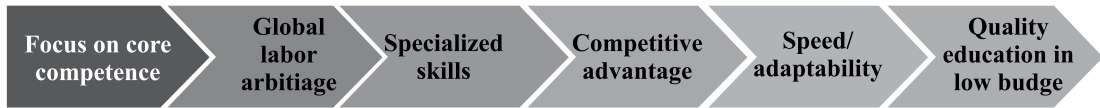
● Globalization:

Globalization is the boundary-less process of interaction and integration among people, companies, education institutions, and governments' worldwide.

● Knowledge transfer:

It is a process of transmission of knowledge, skills, technology, and methods with in personalization, from

one generation to another generation.

Implications for Institutions

| Focus on core competence | Global labor arbitiage | Specialized skills | Competitive advantage | Speed/ adaptability | Quality education in low budge |

Types of Outsourcing

Outsourcing	Offshoring	Nearshoring	Onshoring	Inshoring
Transfer operational activities to external location	Relocation of operating activities to another country	Outsourcing of business process to nearby countries, often sharing a border	Relocation of business process to a lower-cost location inside national borders	Support of operating activities within the same institutions in case of wide-ranging branches

TYPICAL REASONS INSTITUTIONS ARE ADOPTING OUTSOURCING SERVICES

| Outsourcing	Offshoring	Nearshoring	Onshoring	Inshoring
• Flexible/ scalable model • Leverage economies of scale • Improve education system/quality • leverage best practice • Leverage technology • Adopt Academician and skilled manpower	• Cost, the key driver • Consolidate operations • Quality • Standardization	• A lower cost of labor • The ability to scale quickly • Lower travel costs • Closer cultural compatibility • Political similarities • Good language skill • Economic similarities	• Cost indifference • Infrastructure advantages • Domain/ process expertise • Operational superiority	• Cost indifference • well known organizational objectives, rules, norms and procedures • Same envionment • Feeling ownself

OUTSOURCING POTENTIAL
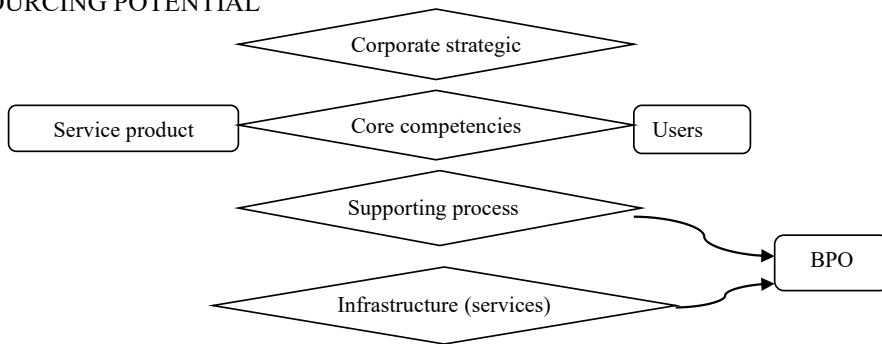
Outsourcing - Offshoring: why Offshoring

- Win -Win for both
- Round the clock
- Decreased cost
- Improved communication

- Money chasing smart people.
- Relative cheap capital
- Quality economic growth
- Better technical standards

SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS

Finance and Accounting	HR	Quality and Training	Information technology
1)Statutory reporting 2)Receivable and payables management 3)Tax compliance 4)General ledger, TB, financial statement 4)Accounting services	1)Hiring and recruitment 2) Payroll procedures 3) Compensation 4) Training and development 5) Benefits management	1)Project tracking 2)Program design 3)Research and development 4) Good governance 5) Web based training	1)Application and development 2)Application and maintenance 3)Tech support/ helpdesk

BPO Lifecycle
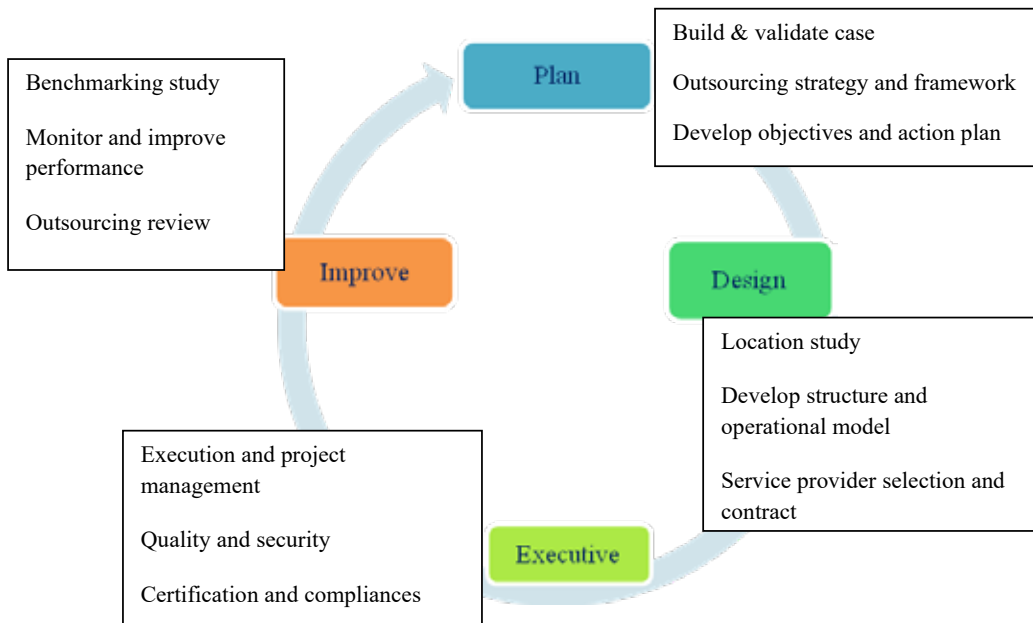
Enchasing the opportunities skill enhancement

Hard skills:

- Expert knowledge of international standards
- Perspective on the international education system
- Enhanced knowledge of information systems assurance areas
- Knowledge of working on ERP systems
- Customer country-specific key regulations that affect BPO operations.
- Soft skills:
- Development of academic excellence
- Development of negotiation skills
- Develop multilingual capabilities to serve global clients.
- Communication and presentation skills

Booming areas of BPO

Voice (Inbound/outbound call centers): complaint center calls, reminder calls for credit card company, etc.

Data (data processing, web research, and accounting services centre): finance and accounts, taxation processing, etc.

Software services: developing and writing software modules, etc.

Risk benefits analysis: outsourcing

Sunrise sector of the 21st century

- Global focus and importance-concept economies

- Changes in education model-focus on core

- Huge opportunities enabler across education institutions

- Changes in world economy-global manpower

- Cuts across all types of organizational entities.

- Data vertical fastest growing in offshore

- Solid understanding of process or staff functions

Best shoring

Finally, there is 'Best shoring' - or 'Right shoring' - which involves taking an objective, highly analytical approach to identify the best location for your required areas. The best shoring solution means making decisions that are solely based on quantifiable criteria, omitting any subjective or political bias from the process. As such, it is often carried out by third-party analysts. Because it avoids speculation and seeks to weigh up all aspects, best shoring is highly regarded by many industry experts, including academicians. Even though most things, this is an area that requires a lot of research and investigation.

Conclusion

This study is relatively a new type with less prior research work and even the existing ones do not answer the question that was being dealt. Thus for understanding the topic and for future use this work provides base work. Since it is a non-structured study, the findings from this study is of qualitative nature making the study subjective and difficult to analyze.

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