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Abstract

The quick information society and globalization development makes demands for both the local entrepreneurship and decision-makers if they are to survive in the most competitive decision making environments. Response mechanisms, such as the computerized decision support systems (DSS) and business intelligence (BI) systems have emerged within the private market to meet these challenges. Public organizations on national, regional and local levels have been slower to respond, but at present there is a wide interest to follow the example and adopt similar methods. The purpose of this research was to study the possible computerized decision aid of the DSS and BI systems to improve the quality of local government strategic decision making.

Planning decision making support systems for local governments is, however, complicated because of the top political bodies' and administrators' strategic decisions commonly involve qualitative aims such as wellbeing and equity. This research suggests a modified framework of local government strategic decision making process, in which both politicians and administrators - as decision-makers - are seen to gain support within all the four "strategic" decision making dimensions - mission, policy, administration and management - according to the proportion of power exercised on specific levels of government. Specific decisions and processes are influenced by indicators and background information according to the special task in question.

Investigation of 19 articles proved that BI systems can improve the decision making efficiency of managers, the decision making effectiveness of the council and strategic decision making process outcomes. According to the reported empirical cases there is evidence of improvement in the performance of environmental and in socio-economic respects by BI systems: the challenge seems to be in improving the local government's environmental performance while raising their spatial and socioeconomic qualities. In addition, it can be said that, with regard to the theoretical framework where it was assumed that the BI curve is an indicator of local government's societal impact of activities, an improvement of strategic decision making process outcome can be partly proved.

This study explored awareness about local government strategic decision making computerized support, but could not assert a prospect to generalize those results. It could be appropriate to carry out further research of the technology-methodology angle and also to test the local government strategic decision making framework, for example, in local governments in the same country and within the same legislation and rules. Then many other factors that can maximize or minimize the effects of information technology use could be eliminated.

Key words	Business intelligence systems, decision support systems, local government, strategic decision making
Further information	

