

Chapter 1

Comparing E–Government Research in Developed vs. Emerging Economies: A Bibliometric Study

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ABSTRACT

Many countries have implemented changes in public sector management models based on the strategic and intensive use of new information and communication technologies. However, most research has focused on developed countries, with the area of emerging economies being neglected. This chapter offers a framework to help public administrators and researchers evaluate the field of e-Government research in emerging economies, identifying research gaps and possibilities for improvement in the context of e-government research in developing countries. The findings reveal the existence of various research gaps and highlight areas that should be addressed in future research, especially in developing countries. Indeed, the research approach to e-government remains immature, focusing on particular cases or dimensions, while little has been done to produce theories or models to clarify and explain the political processes of e-government.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) in the field of public administration has aroused widespread interest in the search for mechanisms enabling the public administration

to make a more positive impact on daily life. This tendency is understood to be one of the forms of expression of the information society, in addition to being a central part of the process of the modernization of public administration (Park & Joo, 2010), allowing a strategic and intensive use of

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ICT (Dunleavy et al., 2005), both in the internal relations of public administrations (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007) and in terms of the relationship of these organizations with citizens (Kim et al., 2011) and with companies in the private sector (Callanan, 2005).

In consequence, e-government has become a key issue in political agendas concerning public administration reform (Jaeger, 2005). To date, most e-Government research has focused on developed countries, neglecting the area of emerging economies. Indeed, up to now, e-Government research on emerging economies seems to have been neither meaningful nor homogeneous. In addition, the large number of studies and research projects published in this respect draws upon various reference disciplines, including public administration, computer science, political science, management, and library and information science (Manoharan, 2013). Since its appearance, e-government researchers have explored the past, present and future development of the field (Banister & Connolly, 2012).

In view of this heterogeneity on the question of e-Government in emerging economies, and in the belief that scientific evidence is not the result of a single research study but rather the aggregation and accumulation of knowledge supported by the foundations of prior research (Rodríguez et al., 2010; Alcaide et al., 2012), in our opinion it is necessary to perform critical integrative reviews of literature in this field in order to enhance our knowledge of e-Government and to acquire a broad view of the current state and possibilities in e-Government research in the future. For this purpose, we propose a descriptive bibliometric methodology (Cocosila et al., 2011) that has been comprehensively tested in the field of information science (Chang & Huang, 2012; Tseng & Tsay, 2013), and more currently used in the field of public administration (Lecy et al., 2013; Raadschelders & Lee, 2011).

Accordingly, this paper constitutes a bibliometric study analysing the journals with greatest

international impact (according to Journal Citation Reports) listed in the fields of Information Science and Library Science and of Public Administration. This review process involved the analysis of 114 journals catalogued by the ISI as belonging to the areas of *Public Administration* or *Information Science & Library Science*, published between 2000 and 2013. This procedure highlighted, among other factors, the most significant approaches, the subjects which have aroused most interest, the journals in which studies have been published and the methodologies used to analyse this phenomenon.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, a literature review related to relevant bibliometric studies is performed. In section three, the research methodology used is outlined, and then the results obtained in the empirical research are analysed. Finally, the main conclusions of this study are summarized and some questions on future trends in this area are highlighted for discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON BIBLIOMETRIC STUDIES

Bibliometric reviews enable members of the academic community to identify the historical roots of a particular field of study (Atkins, 1988), to predict future research trends (Löfstedt, 2005), and to discern the direction taken in a discipline, possible inadequacies in methodology, weaknesses, trivial approaches, etc., - in summary, they provide a starting point which greatly facilitates the enhancement of knowledge.

This tool has been widely used in research field such as Library Information Science (LIS) (Chang & Huang, 2012; Tseng & Tsay, 2013), allowing the knowledge of the evolution of this interdisciplinary field, journals taken as a reference by researchers, the input knowledge, research gaps, trends and future opportunities. Similarly, there are studies that present the profile of the research-

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