Chapter 108

Research and Experiences in Implementing E–Government Endeavors in Emerging Countries:
A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of e-Government is of particular importance in developing countries because it constitutes a central element in the process of modernizing public administrations and strengthening governance within democratic societies. This chapter seeks to analyze the research efforts and directions in the field of e-Government performed in developing countries as well as past experiences in the implementation of e-Government in developing countries to learn some lessons for improving future implementation of e-Government, which could help to achieve more transparent, participative and democratic societies. Analysis indicates that e-Government implementations need to be analyzed from a systemic thinking approach, which suggests the use of strategic planning for e-Government success. International bodies should fund activities that allow developing countries to achieve political and social changes needed to make e-Government implementations successful and should monitor e-Government efficiency in developing countries with the aim at improving economic, democratic and social development of these countries.

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to make public administrations more efficient and responsive to managing change, e-Government has led to a transformation in management systems, offering more transparent, democratic and participative models aimed at meeting social needs (Bertot et al., 2010). Therefore, it is considered an effective tool to reduce corruption through the promotion of good governance and reduction of corrupt behavior by enforcing thorough control and monitoring of service delivery practices by public managers (Bertot et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2009). The use of new Web 2.0 technology encourages the empowerment of citizens in public affairs and can offer a greater amount of information that will improve the decisions taken in public problems and affairs (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2014; Tapia & Ortiz, 2010). Further, the emerging of Web 3.0 and Semantic Web brings forth opportunities in governance that were never perceived a decade ago especially in the realm of pervasive government information access.

To date, most e-Government research has focused on developed countries, neglecting emerging economies. Nonetheless, this analysis is of particular importance in developing countries because prior research has indicated that e-Government constitutes a central element in the process of modernizing public administrations (Chan & Chow, 2007) and strengthening governance within democratic societies (Calista & Melitski, 2007). It is therefore imperative to investigate how developing world countries can also implement e-Government in order to benefit from its perceived advantages.

In addition, this analysis could be relevant if it is performed from a double point of view. First, it is necessary to analyze the research on e-Government performed in these countries. From the analysis of prior research, it can be observed that the volume of scientific research can affect the gross domestic product of the country (Serenko et al., 2010) and the focus on e-Government concerns could indicate the interests of researchers in this field of knowledge as well as their mature grade of e-Government research. Also, research into e-Government could advance this field of knowledge, promoting the achievement of open government and thus a more democratic society (Justice et al., 2006).

Second, the advance in a particular field of knowledge is usually supported by the experiences in that area. In the particular case of e-Government, it has been demonstrated that countries which invest more in e-Government achieve larger reductions in levels of corruption (Andersen et al., 2011; Kock & Gaskins, 2014) and increases citizens' trust in governments, improving the evaluations made concerning political management (Lee & Levy, 2014). Nonetheless, history of e-Government implementations in developing countries show that most of them fail because a great deal of them were not implemented, were implemented but immediately abandoned, or were implemented but major goals were not attained and/or there were undesirable outcomes (Heeks, 2003). Successful implementation of e-Government is essential owing to the fact that most of the developing countries have limited resources at their disposal, and cannot afford to wastefully spend large amounts of money typical of such projects (Weerakkody et al., 2009). In this regard, there is need to examine past experiences in the implementation of e-Government in developing countries with the aim at identifying mistakes in order to correct and prevent them from happening in the future.

The perceived importance of e-Government to improving public service delivery can be seen by the considerable growth in studies and research projects focusing on e-Government that have appeared in different publications (Rodríguez et al., 2010; Alcaide et al., 2012). Although this is the case, it is evident that research has not centrally focused on e-Government especially in the developing world contexts. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to analyze the research efforts and directions in the field of e-Government performed in developing countries as well as past experiences in the implementation of

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