Chapter 33
Analyzing e-Government Research in Emerging Economies:
Contextualization and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The research field of e-Government is a broad one, and diverse methodologies have been used to analyse this subject. However, most such 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 the subjects examined, the research methodology applied and the compilation methods used in the e-Government research published in leading international journals, as well as the possible links between these questions. Knowledge gaps and research opportunities are identified from these observations. In addition, the authors highlight changes in the research methods employed, with a greater application of quantitative methods, thus reinforcing the development of a theoretical framework so that the application of e-Government may efficiently contribute to improving management in the public sector and examine the authors' institutional affiliations.

INTRODUCTION

Public administrations need to be more efficient (Rocheleau and Liangfu, 2002), citizens demand more transparency from public administration (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin, 2007), companies require an operative framework which facilitates competitiveness and all social agents expect greater information and participation in public life (Hui and Hayllar, 2010). In this context, the question of e-Government has become one of the most important issues on political agendas today, and is a concept which seems to be constantly developing (Jaeger, 2003). 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 (O'Neil, 2010), allowing a strategic and intensive use of ICT (Dunleavy et al., 2006), both in the internal relations of public administrations (Edelenbos, 2005), and in terms of the relationship with citizens (Taylor et al., 2007) and with companies in the private sector (Callanan, 2005).

This recent interest in e-Government has been reflected in the large amount of research studies and projects reported in diverse academic disciplines and journals, including articles highlighting the usefulness of e-Government as a method to reduce corruption in government through a greater transparency in information and public functions (Maor, 2004), as a means of improving current public services (Hartley, 2005), and as an instrument to enhance performance regarding the accurate, efficient provision of services (West, 2004).

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, except for Asian countries, seems to have been neither meaningful nor homogeneous. In addition, the research field of e-Government is a broad one and different methodologies have been used to analyse this subject. Also, researchers are cur-

rently involved in a range of different research projects, with different interest, within this field of knowledge.

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), 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.

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 44 periodicals– 16 in Information Science and 28 in Public Administration – published between January 2000 and September 2010. 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. Furthermore, we identify the universities and departments that have authored the leading studies, in order to locate and contextualise the research carried out into e-Government in emerging economies and to enhance intercommunication among researchers and thus knowledge in this field.

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.

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