

Chapter 104

Implementation of E–Government and Reforms in Public Administrations in Crisis Periods: A Scientometrics Approach

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ABSTRACT

The importance of e-Government in the reform of public administrations has made it an essential element on political agendas and an important question to be addressed in the current economic crisis that we are witnessing. The consequent drastic reduction in public revenue has made e-Government a key element in the promotion of renewed and sustainable growth with the aim of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the management of procedures and boosting service provision. In this respect, the considerable amount of research that currently exists in academic literature requires a comprehensive review that allows for improvement in this field of knowledge, offering a broad vision of the current situation and the research possibilities for the future. The authors believe that their findings will allow public managers to be more aware of the need for a cost-benefit analysis of the new technological initiatives proposed.

INTRODUCTION

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, reducing corrupt behaviour through more thorough control and monitoring by public managers (Bertot et al., 2010). The use of new Web 2.0 technology encourages the empower-

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ment of citizens in public affairs and can offer a greater amount of information that will improve the decisions taken in public problems and affairs (Tapia & Ortiz, 2010).

The importance of e-Government in the reform, modernization and efficiency of public administrations has made it an essential element on political agendas, a fact which is reflected in the considerable growth in studies and research projects that have appeared in different publications (Rodríguez et al., 2010; Alcaide et al., 2012).

In this respect, the latest research deals with the impact of ICT on the reform of Public Administrations in the face of difficult economic periods which are characterized by a drastic reduction in public revenue, its increasing importance in the promotion of renewed and sustainable growth, seeking to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of management procedures through the reuse of computer applications and further adoption of interoperability (Pardo et al., 2012). In the same way, it should be highlighted that the implementation of e-Government means a boost for productivity in service provision where there is a modern and shared infrastructure, which is a crucial question in order to maintain recovery and lay the foundations for greater long term competitiveness (Smith, 2011).

In this regard, it would be interesting to know if the empowerment provided by new e-Government initiatives has been reduced or interrupted as a consequence of the reduction in budgets for this type of initiatives, as all of this could create problems in terms of efficiency in the implementation of public policies for the improvement of quality in infrastructure and quality in the decision making carried out by public managers (Montecinos, 2009). There has also been an increase in the pressure exerted on governments as a consequence of the greater demands made by citizens to show greater value for the taxes that they pay whilst also requesting results of a consistent and predictable quality in the provision of public services.

In this context, previous studies have shown that there have been many articles published in the field of e-Government in a variety of journals and these studies have been characterized by the wide range of topics analyzed (Alcaide et al., 2012; Rodríguez et al., 2012). Therefore, we need a comprehensive review of this question which will allow us to obtain a critical overview of the literature on e-Government and, more specifically, its implementation and the associated reforms in Public Administrations that are being carried out in periods of economic crisis. This would promote greater knowledge in this field and a broader vision of the current situation, and also offer research possibilities for the future and some findings that will allow public managers to increase efficiency and effectiveness in e-Government procedures, to boost productivity and flexibility in service provision, to face the multiple pressures exerted by citizens to increase transparency in public expenditure and, consequently, to increase accountability.

Thus, the aim of this article is to help researchers to develop e-Government in periods of economic crisis, analysing the research topics and the methodology used. Therefore, we will attempt to answer each of the following research questions:

- RQ1:** How many e-Government articles focused on periods of crisis have been published in JCR journals in the fields of Public Administration and Information Science? Which journals publish such papers most frequently?
- RQ2:** Does observation of this record of publications reveal any trend?
- RQ3:** What research methodology is used in analysing e-Government?
- RQ4:** Which universities and departments make the most important contributions in this respect?

This article is organized in the following way. In Section 2, we review the main scientometric approaches developed in the field of e-Government.

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