

The link between the conceptualization of e-government and its perceived impacts: an exploratory study in Kenya

Abstract:

This paper examines how e-government is conceptualized and the possible relationship with the expected impacts of e-government in a developing world context. The aim is to shed some light on why e-government initiatives often fail in developing world contexts. This research was based on an exhaustive survey among government agencies and consultants in Kenya. The dimension of e-government impacts was initially operationalized in terms of connectivity, openness, efficiency and effectiveness. Government conceptualizations could be classified under tool view; proxy view; ensemble view; computational view and nominal view. Interestingly, the empirical data yielded very different impact factors than originally envisaged, which were enhanced interactions and accessibility, enhanced cooperation and awareness, a better connected public administration and enhanced citizen opportunities. Canonical function analysis found a supply-side focus which linked connected government to the conceptualization of e-government as an Evolving Artifact. The main contribution of this paper lies in highlighting the fact that the implementation of western information technologies in developing countries will be shaped by how their impacts are perceived. Thus both purveyors of the technologies and researchers can be made aware that, because of the very different expectations and contexts, these technologies may be conceptualized differently than in developed countries. In addition, the paper demonstrates a practical research approach to assist in uncovering these conceptualizations more explicitly.