Exploring Data Use and Co-Creation in Smart Public Governance: Insights from the Slovenian Administrative Context

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Abstract

This paper examines data use and co-creation as two interrelated dimensions of organisational maturity within the framework of Smart Public Governance (SPG). SPG, is an emerging governance model that fosters an environment in which governments collaborate with citizens. The model consists of four pillars:1) ICT-enabled innovation for public sector governance, 2) institutional change, 3) empowered citizens, and 4) outcomes: public value creation. While all four pillars are essential for assessing SPG maturity, this paper focuses on data use and co-creation, exploring their interconnections and the challenges public organisations face in developing these capacities. The research addresses the question: What are the key benefits or challenges public organisations face in using data and engaging in co-creation? The paper adopts a broad understanding of data use, encompassing both Open Government Data (OGD) and other types of data relevant to policy-making. Focusing on the Slovenian public administration, the study employs qualitative interviews with 15 policymakers from 8 ministries.

The paper first provides a theoretical overview of the SPG model, highlighting the role of data use and co-creation as two critical pillars. It then outlines the research methodology and presents the empirical findings. The discussion interprets these results through the lens of the concept OGD-driven co-creation, while the conclusion outlines research limitations and directions for further inquiry. Conducted within the project Open-Ready – An Evidence-Based Model for the Assessment of Organisational Maturity for Open Government Data (funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency under no. J5-50166), this study advances theoretical understanding of OGD-driven co-creation by providing evidence from the Slovenian public administration.

Keywords: smart public governance; data use; co-creation; Open Government Data

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