STAKEHOLDER ADOPTION OF E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES: DRIVING AND RESISTING FACTORS

Beginning in the 1990s, countries across the world have been impacted by the urge to reform the public sector so that it is less bureaucratic and more efficient. Public sector administrators were forced to be assertive about the issue that socio-cultural reformation in public administration is mandatory for long-lasting sustainability and for competitiveness with the private sector. This reformation is based on the suggestions of the technologists that information and communication technology (ICT) can be applied at the core of public administration to make the system more dynamic, cost-effective, and efficient. Governments of different countries, from the political perspective, realized that good governance is an eternal demand of citizens that cannot be overlooked in the 21st century. Policy makers were reminded that citizens pay taxes and citizens and all other stakeholders of governments have the right to receive higher quality, easily accessible, and transparent service that is available around the clock from anywhere. Policy makers also realized that although this revolutionary change may be costly, it is inevitable. The change will lead to enhancement of national economic performance, capitalization of the enormous benefits of ICT, intra-government collaboration, positioning a country’s image internationally, and utilizing the opportunities of globalization. This epistemological and ontological paradigm change in the government concept, service delivery, interaction patterns internally and externally, and the explicit vision are present in the revolutionary theme of 21st century government — electronic-government or e-government.

As evident from the above discussion, the e-government concept initiated from technological, economic, organizational, socio-cultural, and political perspectives. It aims to cut government cost, make the service delivery system more efficient and participative, and ensure transparency and accountability; ultimately, it leads to a citizen-centric government. Developed countries, as well as developing countries, are determined to set their goal for public service management reformation and reengineering by adopting e-government. But the visions, strategies, initiatives, and final targets of the different countries are not same. Subtle differences are especially noticeable in the implications of visions and the final targets that governments set. For several countries, the implementation of e-government has only or primarily a technological manifestation. Some countries extend their views to include marketing and economic perspectives with the implementing strategies of e-government. Other countries add management and organizational aspects to the perspectives already mentioned as the strategies for e-government implementation. Finally, some countries target the achievement of a political agenda and good governance, in addition to other aspects, as the final destination of e-government implementation. Because different countries adopt e-government from these different perspectives, the overall structure, service pattern,
technological association, interoperability, architecture, and service maturity of e-government also follow different streamlines. Consequently, the functions and interactions of citizens, business organizations, and other demand-side stakeholders of e-government differ significantly. However, the success of e-government – whether it is at the local, regional, or central level – largely depends on user acceptance of e-government.

Adopting the e-government structure can give citizens and governments a competitive advantage. Citizens can receive effective, efficient, and better quality service, whereas governments can reduce operational and management costs, increase transparency, and fulfill their political commitment to establish good governance. The more citizens use e-government websites, the more the operation and management costs of e-government will be reduced. In recent years, there has been extensive marketing by many governments to encourage citizens and other demand side stakeholders to interact with governments via e-government websites. In some countries there has been an enthusiastic thrust to incorporate and present all possible government services available via the Internet so that all stakeholders, including citizens and business organizations, are encouraged to adopt it. However, few researchers have attempted to address and identify the adoption framework for e-government from the demand side, which is the primary source of success for both government agencies and citizens, and the fragmented efforts to do so lack a comprehensive view of e-government adoption and fail to develop a theoretical framework.

E-government projects are initiated to make the public management system effective and efficient and also to develop closer relations with citizens. However, as stated earlier, e-government is far from achieving its full impact and, until it is accepted by the majority of a population, governments cannot justify large investments in e-government. Therefore, it is very important to investigate the critical factors that might influence end user adoption of e-government at the different stages of development of service maturity. This book, *Stakeholder Adoption of E-Government Services: Driving and Resisting Factors*, fundamentally deals with addressing, exploring, and delineating the different concepts of e-government adoption theoretically and revealing the adoption factors and paradigms from empirical investigation in different countries. It provides insight into the adoption of e-government by different stakeholders at different stages of growth from the demand side perspective, i.e. the users of e-government. At the same time, the book looks at the social, economic, technological, cultural, behavioral, and service quality perspectives of citizens, business organizations, and other stakeholders who are the users of e-government. It conceptualizes both resistance factors and facilitating factors for the adoption of e-government by demand side stakeholders in different countries. This book also develops parameters to measure the performance of e-government and the governing structure of e-government.

The book is organized to provide readers with the necessary background information, revolutionary concepts, and initiatives of public administration reformation and e-government implementation and adoption. The book also examines the stakeholders of e-government and reveals the stages of growth or service maturity levels. Then it sheds light on the paradigms and fundamental discourses of the e-government adoption process from the demand-side stakeholder, i.e., the users. The book examines some empirical studies in different developed and developing countries to discover perspectives, issues, and critical factors that lead to acceptance and adoption of e-government by the users. In this scope, it proposes a citizen-centric governing framework for e-government. Finally, the book provides measuring tools to evaluate the performance of e-government projects and gives inferences from some implemented projects of e-government.
The book contains four main divisions to explore and delineate the sequential conceptualization of the epistemological and ontological paradigms of e-government adoption by the demand-side stakeholders. The first division discusses the background and general concepts related to e-government development, adoption, and implementation as a global phenomenon. The second division explains the related concepts and frameworks of e-government development from the supply side and the adoption process from the demand-side stakeholders focusing particularly on citizen preferences. The third division identifies the service maturity levels of e-government and its functionalities, and conceptualizes e-government adoption criteria and the effect of diffusion and resistance in connection to both developed and developing countries. It also presents a governing framework for the successful implementation of e-government. The fourth division reveals some explicit paradigms of e-government performance providing evidence from some practical and diverse initiatives. Each of the four divisions is divided into 3 independent but sequential chapters. So, there are total 12 chapters in this book. Each chapter contains a few sections and sub-sections, an abstract, and a list of references. The book sequentially gives the main issues and concepts of the e-government adoption process, the growth stages of e-government service maturity, the present status in developed and developing countries, and the technological, socio-economic, cultural, and political aspects as the scope and barrier for this global trend to e-government proliferation. A brief description of each division, chapter, and section is provided below.

To conceptualize the adoption process of e-government and barriers and resistance from behavioral, technological, socio-cultural, and political orthodoxy, the first division begins by addressing the visions, functions, interactivities, service maturity, and e-government planning framework as a global phenomenon. This division of the book presents a general introduction and the related concepts of the e-government adoption process. This division has three chapters to integrate these issues.

To conceptualize the functions, characteristics, and development stages of EG, some related issues, concepts, and paradigms must be explained. The first chapter provides the general introduction to e-government, conceptualizing the revolutionary business process engineering in public service reformation globally and the political commitment towards this reform for good governance, which is an appealing component of the 21st century. The first chapter also identifies the different types of e-government initiatives aimed at interactions with different government stakeholders and gradual development models of service maturity through e-government.

The second chapter deals with the concepts of an e-government strategic planning framework. It postulates the strategic alignment of public sector organizations with e-government initiatives. This chapter provides a detailed literature review and synthesis of related e-government development models. It proposes a framework to understand the business-ICT linkage and analyzes and prioritizes the gaps of project management in the public sector.

The third chapter addresses several management issues of e-government and ICT and identifies their intertwined relations with e-government adoption. It reviews literature on e-government adoption and service quality and reveals different perspectives, conjectures, and theories of e-government adoption behavior. This chapter has divided into sections to deal with these adoption-related managerial issues.

The second division explains the distinct characteristics of e-government, how it is developed, and the supplementary issues in conceptualizing the adoption preferences of e-government. This chapter also focuses on strategic directions towards developing a citizen-centric e-government. These issues are accomplished in three chapters.
The fourth chapter makes a contribution to the literature by documenting the digitization of services in Indian cities and their preparedness. Since India is a leading country in the world in adopting and diffusing ICT, Indian digital preparedness has significant implications for other countries in setting their digital strategy. This chapter study uses metrics such as e-government services and ICT orientation of the cities in India. It shows that the larger cities, especially those with more than 10 million inhabitants, fare relatively well in their march towards becoming digital compared to smaller cities.

The fifth chapter has highlighted the central significance of intermediaries in the e-government context in developing countries, represented by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s e-government development. The role of intermediaries is very important in the adoption process of e-government, which is an alternative channel to deliver traditional government services; however, it has not yet been explored rigorously. This chapter opens a new window by addressing this issue with a governing framework. This study analyzes socio-cultural factors as impediments in Saudi Arabia as the venue of this study to provide empirical evidence. It also describes the intermediaries, and their role, responsibilities, efficiency, and other related factors of the e-government adoption process.

Chapter six examines and reshapes different aspects of the diffusion of e-government. It organizes information about the situation of e-government in Turkey, in particular, the citizens’ perspectives on and intention to use the e-government services in Turkey. The outline of this work follows the importance, priority, and necessity of paying attention to the citizen side; it aims to improve our understanding and better address the citizen demands and expectations of e-government.

Division three is designed to impart specific knowledge about the adoption process of e-government from the demand-side stakeholders and different perspectives of this process that need to be considered and integrated while designing the adoption framework. It also examines adoption factors, relates those factors with service maturity of e-government, and provides the governing structure of e-government to ensure citizen-centric facilitating factors. This division is organized into three chapters to conceptualize these paradigms of adoption and the e-government governing framework in a generalized fashion.

Drawing on the e-government adoption framework, chapter seven describes the evolution stages of adoption and proliferation. The evolution of e-government through different service maturity stages presents a progressively increasing value proposition for governments as well as for demand-side stakeholders such as citizens and businesses organizations. This chapter shows that each stage of the e-government evolution is associated with unique challenges and opportunities with respect to proliferation and adoption by stakeholders.

Chapter eight gives a fundamental, conceptual framework for the adoption of e-government by the demand-side stakeholders, i.e., the end users or citizens. This study has been conducted among the residents of New York City, US. The chapter shows the criteria to adopt e-government by citizens at different levels of service maturity from a statistical analysis and interprets the findings. Finally, the chapter presents generalized EG adoption models for different levels of service maturity. The sections of the chapter, with sub-sections, present the theoretical design, methodology, analysis, discussion, and conclusion of the study.

Barriers to e-government do not prohibit the emergence of the system; rather, they necessitate the development of a citizen-centric governing structure for e-government. Chapter nine discusses the existing literature to get a solid insight into the governing structure of e-government. A good governing structure is essential for the successful operation of e-government. Without such a citizen-centric
governing structure, e-government will fail to maintain the system accountability, transparency, and responsibility that are prerequisites for creating a facilitating environment for continuing usage of the system. Public administrators face considerable challenges in their quest of reforming government to provide citizen-centric service. Reforming government is a very challenging part of developing a successful e-government structure with good governance. It is a two-sided effort that affects both the internal and external environments of the government. Internally, the government is affected by organizational problems such as inter-agency collaboration and responsibility; externally, it is affected by societal problems of service/information delivery and accountability. However, ultimately, the objective of e-government is to set good governance, so that stakeholders of a government, in particular citizens, can adopt the system and be satisfied.

Division four deals with the applied side of e-government implementation. This division is engaged in evaluating the performance of e-government projects. Evidences of findings are provided by some case studies. The division addresses some practical e-government projects — their design, development strategies, and facilitating features to support user requirements. This division has three chapters. They deal with the theory of performance parameters to realize the performances of some practical e-government projects while anticipating future trends and implications.

The aim of chapter ten is to provide insights into the performance evaluation of e-government projects. Across the world, almost all governments are implementing EG projects powered by ICT and trying to capture the benefits of dynamic, effective, and efficient public service system. Therefore, evaluating the performance of EG implementation and suggesting future direction can be a potential strategy to realize the purposes, strategies, and goals of implementing an EG system in any country. This chapter is divided into sections to discuss different performance measuring parameters and their implications.

The real benefit of e-government lies not in the use of technology per se, but in its application to the processes of transformation. As one of the most topical issues, chapter eleven explores the performances of land revenue administration in India through e-government initiatives. It employs e-governance maturity models to assess the status of projects implemented in different states of India.

Chapter twelve addresses the development of e-government in Oman. This research conceptualizes the value of e-government factors that influence performance in the context of the e-Oman initiative. It explores the public administration of the Omani government which is involved in e-government implementation. This research identifies a number of factors such as management support, integration, infrastructure, and ICT workers’ skills as influencing the government’s efforts towards implementation of e-government services.

This book provides exhaustive coverage of different issues of e-government concerning development, implementation, adoption, resistance, and performance and citing real e-government projects. The editors hope that this will be a valuable contribution to the area of public administration reformation, ICT application in public service management, in general, and, specifically, to the adoption, diffusion, and reduction of resistance to e-government globally.

However, in order to make further research progress and improvements in the area of strategic initiatives, development, implementation, adoption, diffusion, and resistance of e-government, we earnestly welcome constructive feedback and suggestions about this book from the readers based on experiences
with actual e-government projects. Comments and constructive suggestions can be sent to us care of IGI
Publications Inc. at the address provided in the beginning of the book.

Sincerely,

Mahmud Akhter Shareef
McMaster University, Canada

Vinod Kumar
Carleton University, Canada

Uma Kumar
Carleton University, Canada

Yogesh K. Dwivedi
Swansea University, UK