Voter’s Intention to Use Electronic Voting Systems

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ABSTRACT

Electronic government initiatives play a central role in opening doors for potential voters to participate in the political process by using electronic voting systems. Electronic voting is attracting more attention by governments around the world, where many countries have exploited e-voting systems as an alternative to traditional voting in their national elections. Citizens differ in their attitude towards using e-voting. This study extended the technology acceptance model to predict the intentions to use e-voting. This paper explored the intentions of citizens to use e-voting systems by conducting an empirical research. To accomplish the main objectives of this paper, 320 surveys were collected from Jordanian citizens. The findings indicate a significant influence of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use and security. Trust failed to predict intentions to use e-voting systems.

KEYWORDS

E-democracy, E-government, Empirical Study, E-voting, Jordan, TAM, Trust, Security

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) is becoming one of the main forces that drive political, social and economic development. The revolution in ICT is changing the way governments interact with their citizens, businesses, employees and other stakeholders. Governments are utilizing ICT to improve public services through using websites as a channel to communicate with citizens and to deliver transparent and quality services (Al-Zoubi, Sam & Eam, 2011). Changes around the globe have promoted the adoption of electronic government or e-government (Abu-Shanab et al., 2010). The term e-government is widely used nowadays, where it refers to governments’ use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of public information and services to citizens, businesses, partners, employees, and other government entities (Kachwamba, 2011; Alenezi et al., 2015).

From government’s viewpoint, it is important to ensure equal access to e-government services through electronic channels and guarantee full and fair participation in all e-government dimensions. Concepts like e-participation and e-voting need to be embraced to benefit from their advantages and usefulness. Governments should take responsibility to enable all citizens regardless of their age, gender, and religion. Research emphasized the importance of utilizing all channels (i.e. social media) to improve citizens’ political participation (Papagiannidis & Manika, 2016). The objective is to benefit from services and empower citizens to take a leading role in public participation and democracy (Abu-Shanab & Al-Dalou’, 2016). Governments also need to issue the needed policies to reinforce the effective participation of citizens in the democratic process (Alathur et al., 2016).

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According to the Global Information Technology Report of 2014 ranked Jordan in the 26 out of 148 countries in its ICT use for improving the quality of government services to citizens (WEF, 2014). Adoption is an essential aspect for the success of e-government initiatives; however, interest in e-government increases the question about how governments can improve citizens’ adoption and use of online services. Jordanian Department of Statistics conducted a survey in 2012, which indicated that 47% of Jordanian citizens have Internet at homes, and 15% of individuals who had heard about e-government used the e-government portal and benefited from its services (DoS, 2012).

In the era of ICT, electronic democracy is a necessity in which e-voting can be used as a tool to achieve e-democracy. E-voting refers to the use of computerized voting equipment to organize ballots in an election process. An election enables populace to select their representatives and express how they will be governed (Kuye et al., 2013).

E-voting technologies play an important role in facilitating the electronic participation of people in the elections due to various features they offer. In addition to the reliability and accuracy of results, e-voting offers mobility and convenience which make e-voting more popular and easily adopted (Nguyen & Dang, 2013). Remote voting methods, such as Internet voting, are considered the best and most important way to encourage people to participate in the electoral process and make it more attractive and convenient (Henry, 2003).

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Integrating technology with the voting process is becoming a reality in many countries around the world. This innovation can facilitate voting process and solve several problems such as the declining election turnout. Jordan is one of the countries that believes in e-government projects but has not yet started using such technology pervasively. His Majesty King Abdulla II directed his government towards improving e-government services and utilizing new technologies to enrich the political arena (Ammonnews.net, 2016). Such choices show the importance of e-government and e-voting research. Jordan used simple electronic aids, however did not utilize a large-scale technology in voting process. Such politically driven environments call for more research to understand the reason behind this lag in the use of technology for e-government and e-voting. Jordanians are educated but skeptical of the government actions where trust is crucial in e-government context (Abu-Shanab, 2014).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the factors related to e-voting and how they influence citizens’ adoption. It is important to understand if citizens will actually use the electronic channel and participate in the elections to avoid spending unnecessary money. Our extensive literature review indicated that certain factors are responsible for the adoption process; such factors are not explored together in the Jordanian environment. The key factors that affect citizens’ intention to use electronic voting include perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and security. Based on that, the main objectives of this study can be summarized as the following:

- Expanding the knowledge in the e-voting field, its concepts, its benefits, its phases, its technologies, and its requirements.
- Exploring the main factors that affect the voter’s intention to adopt e-voting system as an alternative to the traditional system.
- Extending the technology acceptance model (TAM) in order to examine these factors and their dimensions.
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