Analysis and Implementation of Factors Affecting e-Governance Adoption in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saeed Q. Al-Khalidi Al-Maliki, Department of Management Information Systems, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

For the last five years, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has taken a leading role in the Middle East in providing effective electronic government (e-government) services and encouraging their use. The global average for government website usage by citizens is about 30%. The vast majority of Saudi citizens visit government offices to obtain information rather than making transactions through government portals. However, it is apparent that the rate of global e-government adoption has fallen below expectations, although some countries are doing better than others. Clearly, a better understanding of why and how citizens use government websites, as well as their general disposition towards e-governance, is an important research issue. This paper advances the discussion on this issue by proposing a conceptual model of e-government adoption that places users at the focal point of e-government adoption strategies.

Keywords: Customer Orientation, E-Government, Government-To-Business, Government-To-Citizen, Jazan, Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

The word “electronic”, in terms of e-governance, implies technology-driven governance. E-governance is the application of information and communication technology (ICT) to delivering government services, exchanging information, communication and other transactions, and integrating various standalone systems and services. The latter activity relates to Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B) and Government-to-Government (G2G) communications as well as to “back office” processes and interactions within the entire government framework (Bose & Rashel, 2007). Through e-governance, government services can be made available to citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner.

According to Mittal et al., (2004, cited in Shinu, 2012), e-government has been defined as the process of using information technology for automating the internal operations of government and external governmental interactions with citizens and other businesses.
The three main target groups within governance concepts are government, citizens and business/interest groups. However, according to Garson (2006) in e-governance, there are no distinct boundaries between these categories. In terms of the general application of e-government, four basic models are available: government to customer (citizen), government to employees, government to government, and government to business.

The terms e-government and e-governance are often treated as the same. However, the two are different in a range of ways. “E-government is the use of the ICTs in public administrations – combined with organizational change and new skills – to improve public services and democratic processes and to strengthen support to public” (Rossel & Finger, 2007, pp. 399-400). The problem with this definition is that it is congruent with the definition of e-governance, which has been defined as “the use of the technologies that both help [those] governing and [those which] have to be governed” (Rossel & Finger, 2007, pp. 399-400). While e-government has traditionally been understood as being centred upon the operations of government, e-governance is understood to extend this scope, including citizen engagement and participation within governance. As such, following the OECD definition of e-government, e-governance can be defined as the use of ICT as a tool to achieve better governance.

E-governance is the future, and many countries are looking forward to the way in which technology can help promote corruption-free government. E-government is a one-way communication protocol, whereas E-governance is a two-way communication protocol. The essence of e-governance is to reach the beneficiaries of government and to ensure that desired services reach the intended individuals. There should be an automated response system to support e-governance, through which the government realises the efficacy of its governance.

Establishing the identity of the end beneficiary is the true challenge in all citizen-centric services. Statistical information published by governments and world bodies does not always reveal the necessary facts. The best form of e-governance reduces unwanted interference from too many layers of government while delivering government services. It depends on good infrastructure supported by local processes and procedures within appropriate parameters and includes, for example, services tailored to the needs of individuals, regions or interest groups, who represent the end beneficiaries. Budgeting for planning, development and growth can be derived from well-designed e-governance systems.

The Saudi government currently provides the following e-services via government website portals:

1. Health and Environment
2. Labour and Employment
3. Queries, Reports and Complaints
4. Social Life
5. Traffic and Safety

As Wikipedia Website (2013) introduced “E-Government should enable anyone visiting a city website to communicate and interact with city employees via the Internet with graphical user interfaces (GUI), instant-messaging (IM), audio/video presentations, and in any way more sophisticated than a simple email letter to the address provided at the site”. E-Government also represents the use of technology in order to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, related business and employees (Aicholzer & Schmutzer, 2000). The focus of E-Government services should be on:

1. The use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government.
2. The use of information and communication technologies in all facets of the operations of a government organization.
3. The continuous optimization of service delivery, constituency participation and
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