Citizens’ Trust and E-government Services Adoption: The Role of Demographic Factors

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ABSTRACT

This article examined citizens’ trust and demographic factors such as age, gender, and education as predictors of readiness to use e-government services. This article also sought to explore the moderating role of these demographic factors on the positive relationship between citizens’ trust and readiness to use e-government services. The data gathered was captured and analyzed with SPSS. The results indicated that citizens’ trust is a significant predictor of readiness to adopt e-government services. However, the demographic factors such as age, gender, and education were all not statistically significant in determining the readiness to use e-government services. The article also found that these demographic factors do not moderate significantly the impact of citizen trust on the readiness to use e-government services. The implications of these findings are further discussed.

KEYWORDS

Demographic Factors, E-government Service, E-Government, Moderating Role, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic government is considered as the second revolution in public management/administration after the concept of New Public Management (NPM) due to its potential to transform the way public services are delivered and importantly the fundamental relationship between government and citizens (Teicher, Hughes, & Dow, 2002). E-government refers to the use of Information and Communication Technologies by government particularly web-based internet applications to enhance the access to and delivery of government information and services to citizens, business partners, employees and government agencies (D. McClure, 2000). For Brown and Brudney (2001) e-government is the use of technology applications to enhance access to and efficiently deliver government information services. Citizens’ demand for quality and improved public service delivery has led governments to adopt modern information and communication technologies as a tool to provide effective and efficient services to their citizens (Mnjama & Wamukoya, 2007). Heeks (1999) enumerates the scopes of e-government into these segments: E-administration which has to do with improving government processes by reducing costs, managing performance, making strategic connections and creating empowerment, E-citizens- has to do with connecting citizens to government by interacting and engaging with citizens through listening to citizens, accountable to citizens and improving public services, E-services – improving services by means of online services and E-society which builds strong interaction between government and businesses, communities and government partnerships.
The central and important determinant to transforming public service delivery and improve efficiency and effectiveness are citizens who are considered the ultimate beneficiary of e-government services (Desouza, 2005). Citizens have been the focal actor in the revolution of public service delivery through e-government adoption, issues of citizen trust and its impact on the adoption and use of e-government services are worthy of investigation. Citizen trust can be considered in two directions; trust in government and trust in the internet. The lack of trust of citizens in these two compartments of trust has been found to be one of the critical issues/challenges hampering the adoption and use of e-government services (Bhattacherjee, 2002; Navarra & Cornford, 2005). Citizens higher perception of technological and organizational trustworthiness, the quality, and usefulness of e-government services as well as internet experience were found to influence trust in e-government and its subsequent usage (Colesca, 2009). The trust of citizens in the ability of government institution to provide online services is critical for the wider adoption and use of e-government services (Colesca, 2009). The lack of trust or low trust in both the ability of government to implement e-government initiatives and the internet would create a situation where citizens would become uncomfortable with the internet and government and this will end up reducing their adoption rate of e-government services (Srivastava & Teo, 2005). The use of technology to improve government public service delivery will not only enhance the interaction of citizen with public services but encourages trust and communication between government and citizens (Choudrie, Ghinea, & Weerakkody, 2004).

This research paper seeks to examine citizens’ trust and its impact on e-government services adoption. It also seeks to find out the extent to which demographic factors such as age, gender, and education has an impact on e-government services adoption. Studies investigating citizens’ adoption behavior of e-government services can provide useful insight which would drive the success of e-government projects (Emrah Kanat & Özkan, 2009). To explore the objectives of this research, the following research questions are formulated:

1. Does citizen trust have a direct significant impact on the readiness to use e-government services?
2. Does age as a demographic factor have a significant impact on the readiness to use e-government services?
3. Does gender as a demographic factor have a significant impact on the readiness to use e-government services?
4. Does education as a demographic factor have a significant impact on the readiness to use e-government services?
5. Do demographic factors such as age, gender and education significantly moderate the positive relationship between citizen trust and the readiness to use e-government services?

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: literature review, research theoretical framework, research model, hypotheses, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Benefits of E-Government

There have been several scholars who have provided a useful definition of e-government which all focus on three core elements: Information Technology, improvement of service delivery and Citizens. For instance, Tung and Rieck (2005) defined e-government as the application of ICT to deliver better government services, improved interaction with businesses and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information and efficient government management. E-government entails the communication between government and its citizens via computers and a web-enabled presence (Evans & Yen, 2006). Also, Gil-García and Pardo (2005) stated that e-government is the intensive use of information technology in government for the provision of public services, the improvement
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