Analyzing Influencing Factors on Citizens’ Trust and Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the general linkage between citizens’ political efficacy and their satisfaction with and trust in local administrative units is essential to understand the consequences of administrative decision-making. This article offers a SEM approach that shows how citizens’ political efficacy, i.e. through secure e-Government services, affects satisfaction with and trust in their administrative units. The authors present initial insights into the effects of political efficacy on citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their local administrative units. They show that a high perceived feeling of being able to influence administrative and political work within a local environment increases citizens’ evaluations of both satisfaction and trust.

KEYWORDS

Cyber Security, Local Administrative Units, Political Efficacy, Public Views, SEM

INTRODUCTION

To improve citizenship values, enhance accountability, maintain legitimacy, and make better decisions, practitioners must understand how citizens’ political efficacy in terms of being heard and being able to make a difference in their municipalities influences their satisfaction with and trust in their local administrative units (Bandura, 1977; Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010; Kievik & Gutteling, 2011; Kornhauser, 2013). Trust in the government’s authenticity and satisfaction with politicians, public services and administrative units depend on citizens’ perceived political efficacy (Anderson, 2010; Hoogland DeHoog et al., 1990; James, 2009). Today, one of the most important ways to enhance citizens’ political efficacy, to enhance citizens’ possibilities to take part and to interact with their administrations are e-government initiatives and e-public services (Warkentin et al., 2002). In this context, it is vital to the success of any e-government initiative and e-service to build citizens trust via secure technologies and trust building cyber security developments (Srivastava & Teo, 2015). Citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their administrative units has long been linked to a broad array of political behaviors (Beck et al., 1986; Hoogland DeHoog et al., 1990; Sharp, 1984; Van Ryzin, 2011). However, until now, most researchers have analyzed the relationship between citizens’ political efficacy and citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their administrative units without addressing possible links and effects between these factors. Therefore, administrative and political practitioners do not fully understand the relationships and interdependencies between administrative decisions and citizens’ efficacy, satisfaction, and trust, nor do they understand the associated demands and effects on their relationships with citizens and their daily work.

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This article presents initial insights into the effects of political efficacy on citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their local administrative units and the possible links between these factors. By testing a structural equation model and using collected data, this paper shows if and how citizens’ political efficacy influences citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their administrative unit. We explain the connections and effects between these factors based on established and accepted research. We show that there have been various studies that explain the links between citizens’ political efficacy and satisfaction, citizens’ political efficacy and trust, and citizens’ satisfaction and trust with similar and identical factors and theories. This article combines the literature and theories into one model to display the assumed links and effects between citizens’ political efficacy, satisfaction with and trust in local administrative units. Therefore, this article answers the following research questions: Do citizens’ political efficacies influence their satisfaction with and trust in their local administrative unit? In this context, is there a link between citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their local administrative units? Finally, are there citizen- or municipal-related factors that influence citizens’ perceived political efficacy, satisfaction or trust.

THEORY

Recent research about citizens’ satisfaction with and trust in their administrative units has concentrated either on links between political efficacy - the belief that citizens can make a difference, can interact with their administrations - and citizens’ satisfaction - how satisfied an individual is with local politics and governmental outcomes - or political efficacy and citizens’ trust - how strongly an individual believes in the local administrative units and secure e-Services (Hoogland DeHoog, 1990; Sharoni, 2012; Dutton et al., 2005).

On the one hand, researchers link citizens’ political efficacy to citizens’ satisfaction with their administrative units. For example, Hoogland DeHoog et al. (1990) refer to Talbot (1970), Ferman (1985), Swanstrom (1985), Yates (1978) and Lyons (1977) and offer exemplary individual-level demographic factors (for example, education and income), attitudinal factors (for example, political efficacy), systemic jurisdiction-level framework conditions (for example, centralized/decentralized government structure) or municipal-specific conditions (for example, civic leaders and urban governance) to explain the link and relationship between citizens’ political efficacy and citizens’ satisfaction. All of these sources and factors have been widely used and accepted in recent related research. For example, Lyons et al. (1992) refer to Talbot (1970) to explain how citizens’ satisfaction depends on their political world and actual living situations. Moreover, referring to Ferman (1985), Gissendanner (2004) states that citizens’ satisfaction with governments depends on political culture and local leaders. In addition, referring to Swanstrom (1985), McQuarrie (2013) states that community-based organizations and, thus, citizens who are interested in their administrative units are influenced by municipal-specific conditions. Referring to Yates (1978), Thomas (2012) links individual-level demographic factors (for example, income or employment) to citizens’ satisfaction with administrations. Yates (1987) and Thomas (2012) explain different administrative approaches to increase citizens’ satisfaction with their local administrative units. For example, low-income municipalities could increase citizens’ satisfaction by improving citizens’ participation possibilities and thus increasing citizens’ perceived political efficacy. Furthermore, referring to Lyons (1977), Foster (1997) shows that jurisdiction-level framework conditions (for example, centralized or decentralized administrations and political structures) influence government activities, services and citizens’ satisfaction with their administrative units. Moreover, Hansen (2014), Aars and Christensen (2013) and Parrado et al. (2013) have also recently linked citizens’ perceived political efficacy to citizens’ satisfaction with administrations’ outputs. Thus, it is hypothesized that citizens’ political efficacy influences their satisfaction with their local administrative units. (Hypothesis 1)

On the other hand, there is research that links citizens’ political efficacy to citizens’ trust in their administrative units and e-Government services. Rahn and Rudolph (2005) show that individual-level
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