Chapter 11

A Central Asian View of E-Government Services Adoption: Citizens’ Trust and Intention to Use E-Services

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ABSTRACT

Results of survey from a snowball convenient sample of Kyrgyz respondents (N = 216) showed that employees of private sector are more likely to use government websites than those of government employees themselves and level of knowledge about security issues directly related to intention to use of Kyrgyz government websites. Specifically, higher level of knowledge about security issues leads less likely to use government websites. Factors such as ease of use and usefulness, relative advantage of using web sites, and compatibility with respondents’ lifestyle have also great impact on intention to use government web sites. Image, given by using internet technologies to communicate with government also has a direct relation on people’s intention. The findings also suggest about the gender role in if and under circumstances men and women tend to use government websites. The findings are explained via the investigation of diffusion of innovation model and technology acceptance model in relation to use of government websites in the context of Kyrgyz Republic.

INTRODUCTION

Growing internet penetration in wider developing countries including in Central Asia has heightened the need for examination of electronic government and e-government services and how such services lead to efficiency in the public sector. For example, there are studies about factors that influence consumer adoption of e-government services in the United Arab Emirates (Rodrigues, Sarahdeen & Balasubramanian, 2016), use of e-government services in various contexts and countries such as Turkey (Kurfali, Arifoğlu, Tokdemir & Pacin, 2017), Jordan (Zawaideh, 2017), Estonia (Björklund, 2016), Thailand (Gunawong & Gao, 2017), Indonesia (Choi, Park, Rho, & Zo, 2016), Pakistan (Rehman, Kamal, & Esichaikul, 2016), India (Kumar, Sachan, & Mukherjee, 2017) as well as comparative study of the United States and the United Kingdom (Carter, Weerakkody, Philips & Dwivedi, 2016), comparative study of the democratic and non-democratic countries (Stier, 2015) just to name a few. However, Kyrgyzstan and other countries in Central Asian region still remain under-reported or lacking in scholar studies (Freedman & Shafer, 2012) in part because internet and other new communication technologies are at their nascent stages in the region. Assuming that internet is relatively new to the region, Freedman and Shafer (2012) argue that “there is no shortage of potential research [in wider Central Asia]..., given globalization and the rapid changes in communications technologies, such efforts would be particularly timely” (p. 124). To fill this gap, the study focuses on examination of seven research questions related to e-government services in the context of Central Asian Kyrgyz Republic. Specifically, this chapter examines citizens’ intention to use government websites based on their perceived usefulness and ease of use.

Contextualization/Background on Kyrgyzstan

It is important to understand the context of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan gained its independence from Soviet Union in 1991. It has about six million of population and currently, approximately 35% of Kyrgyzstan population has access to the Internet (International Telecommunications Union, 2016; Freedom House, 2017). But the number of internet users is gradually increasing because Internet companies have grown in capital Bishkek city over the years, and now there are local internet chains whose computer equipment is virtually world class (DeYoung, 2010). Kyrgyz government has actively started connecting all educational institutions of the country to internet and opening free public wifi spots across the country. Furthermore, private transportation companies in major cities are offering free wifi connections on public transportations increasing availability of internet connection to wider population at little or no costs. And, a special internet club provides internet access for people with disabilities in Bishkek capital city (Gazeta.kg, October 22, 2015). In spite of the low internet penetration rate in the Kyrgyz Republic compared to the developed countries, young people especially students in higher education institutions are using Internet very frequently. They access internet though lab PCs, laptops, but mostly through cell phones (Muhametjanova & Çagıltay, 2012).

In recent months, there has been an increasing interest in Kyrgyz government to increase e-government services both to its own citizens and foreigners as well. For example, a new recently launched e-services portal include application for a newly introduced biometric passport, request and obtain for a criminal and non-criminal record certification, apply for and obtain marriage certificate, vehicle and property registration services and people can also pay taxes and other state services fee online. Also, Kyrgyz government introduced electronic visa for foreigners wishing to visit the country for a short-term and facilitated electronic registration of such foreign citizens in the country. Other major areas of