Institutional Arrangements in E-Government Implementation and Use: A Case Study From Indonesian Local Government

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ABSTRACT

E-government implementation and use within local government organizations is complicated by a number of institutional arrangements. Previous studies highlight that institutional arrangements influence the success and failure of e-government. While some studies claim that institutional arrangements constrain e-government implementation and use, other studies argue that institutional arrangements enable the implementation and use of e-government. Current findings show a lack of understanding of institutional arrangements in e-government implementation and use. Present studies also tend to simplify the government organization as a subject of institutional pressure. Through the lens of institutional theory, this study intends to explain how institutional arrangements emerge and influence e-government implementation and use within two local governments in Indonesia. The findings show that institutional arrangements (legitimacy, regulation, standards, and socio-economic environment) have emerged and significantly influence the implementation and use of e-government. These findings contribute to understanding of the influence of institutional arrangements in e-government implementation and use.

KEYWORDS

Case Study, Central Government, Citizens, Legitimacy, Regency, Regulation, Socio-Economic, Standards

INTRODUCTION

Electronic government (e-government) has become an important issue for public organizations worldwide. The emergence of e-government has been possible due to a combination of information technology (IT) and a new paradigm in public administration services (Yuan, Xi, & Xiaoyi, 2012). The application of technology-based services within government organizations enables citizens to access government services 24/7. These online services are beneficial to both governments and citizens. For example, governments implement and use e-government to deliver information and services, improve relationships between government leaders and citizens, increase public participation in government policies and democracy, and improve efficiency in service delivery (Feeney & Welch, 2013). At the same time, citizens can benefit from greater access to information and are able to participate in government decision-making (Carter & Belanger, 2005; Chadwick & May, 2003; Ndou, 2004).

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Previous studies (e.g. M. Lynne Markus, Dax D. Jacobson, Quang “Neo” Bui, Kevin Mentzer, & Olivier Lisein, 2013) have found that e-government implementation and subsequent use, particularly in developing countries, are influenced by a number of institutional arrangements. For the purpose of this study, institutional arrangements are defined as “…the policies, systems, and processes that organizations use to legislate, plan and manage their activities efficiently and to effectively coordinate with others in order to fulfill their mandate…” (UNDP, 2016). Institutional arrangements are required as mechanisms to ensure the coherence of policies and investments across all government actors (Hanna, 2006).

Institutional arrangements include standards (e.g. Lam, 2005; Nawi, Ibrahim, & Rahman, 2013), regulations (e.g. Al Nagi & Hamdan, 2009; Kuschu & Kuscu, 2003), and legitimacy (Heeks & Bailur, 2007; Heeks & Stanforth, 2007). The institutional arrangements regulate and standardize e-government implementation and use through influencing the policy capabilities of government organizations by encouraging or discouraging certain types of attributes of decision-making processes (Eom, 2012).

A number of studies (e.g. Altameem, Zairi, & Alshawi, 2006; Dong, Yu, Wang, & Zhang, 2012; Gil-García & Pardo, 2005) have indicated that the success of e-government implementation and use is determined by institutional arrangements. Those institutional arrangements can function as “control regimes” (Lynne Markus, Jacobson, Bui, Mentzer, & Lisein, 2013, p. 2095) to regulate or standardize the processes and procedures of e-government implementation and use. For example, regulation is required to avoid resistance from government employees (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2009) toward utilizing the e-government in daily work practices.

While the majority of studies have indicated the roles of institutional arrangements in e-government implementation and use, scholars are yet to explain what and how the institutional arrangements play a role in the implementation and use of e-government, particularly within a local government context. This may limit our understanding of technology implementation and use within government organizations as a subject of institutional pressure (Frumkin & Gelaskiewicz, 2004) and has oversimplified e-government implementation and use as a process in a complex institutional environment (Yildiz, 2007). The lack of understanding of the relationship between technology and institutional arrangements may also result in the failure of e-government project implementation (Luna-Reyes & Gil-Garcia, 2011).

Therefore, this study intends to explore how the institutional arrangements emerge and influence e-government implementation and use within a local government context. In this study, institutional arrangements include administrative rules, norms, laws, and conventions that society uses to legitimize, regulate, and coordinate the actions and expectations of the individual, which make them predictable (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Van de Ven & Garud, 1993). Understanding institutional arrangements in e-government implementation and use can enhance our understanding of how institutional arrangements govern and shape behaviors, practices, and patterns of interaction in terms of an information technology (IT) context (Garud, Sanjay, & Arun, 2002).

We will also be able to make sense of how institutional arrangements emerge, and how constrainers enhance innovation within government organizations. Innovation within public sector is characterized and shaped dominantly by continuous interplay with institutional elements (Weerakkody, Omar, El-Haddadeh, & Al-Busaidy, 2016). The institutional elements enable and constrain the technological development and change through a continual and reciprocal interaction between organizations and its environment (Garud & Rappa, 1994). To achieve this aim, this study addresses the following research question: What institutional arrangements exist and how do they influence the implementation and use of e-government within a local government context?

This paper is structured as follows. The second section presents a theoretical review which includes e-government implementation and use and institutional arrangements. The third section discusses the research methodology, while the fourth section presents the case description, followed by findings in the fifth section. Sections eight and seventh present the discussion and conclusion respectively. Future research and limitations are addressed in the final section.
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