Factors Affecting Perceived Effectiveness of Local E-Government in Egypt

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ABSTRACT

An important area of e-government research is how different stakeholders perceive the impact and the use of e-government systems on the different channels of governmental services. The objective of this article is to examine the perceived effectiveness of local e-government systems through a survey of directors in different Egyptian cities. The approach to accomplish this objective is to conduct exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis to determine what factors explain e-government effectiveness. This research adopts a model that uses the citizen-initiated contacts with government literature as a way for understanding e-government effectiveness. Results of an exploratory factor analysis reveal that e-government effectiveness is explained by management capacity, security and privacy, and collaboration. These factors were then analyzed through regression models that indicated that management capacity and security and privacy influenced e-government effectiveness. However, there was no evidence that collaboration had a statistically significant impact on e-government effectiveness. This paper fits into the theme of the special issue since it suggests strategies to better design e-government technology for local governments in Egypt through changes in security, privacy, and management capacity.

Keywords: Collaboration, E-Government, Effectiveness, Egypt, Local Government, Management Capacity, Security and Privacy

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic government or e-government has provided a means through which governments can improve citizen interaction with their government and at the same time change the traditional model of government service delivery (Kraemer & Dedrick, 1997; Lenk & Traunmuller, 2000). The vital necessity of modernization of the way governments provide services to its citizens have been realized by governments through the world paving the way to the use of technology that allows governments to serve citizens in a timely, effective, and cost
efficient way (Kraemer & Dedrick, 1997; Ho, 2002; Moon, 2002). Improvements in public service delivery are especially important for developing countries where services are often not provided in a sufficient amount and not delivered effectively.

E-government has been defined in many ways. For the purpose of this study, e-government is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote more efficient and effective government, facilitate more accessible government services, allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens (Traunmuller & Lenk, 2002). This definition focuses on citizens and their interactions with government through various available channels of service, the focus of this paper.

Two key reasons for public sector reform worldwide are due to increase the efficiency of government operations and to provide better and more versatile services to citizens and businesses (Ho, 2002; La Porte, Demchak, & de Jong, 2002). Local government, being closer to citizens and their interactions with the various levels of governments, has been the focus of a noticeable share of e-government projects. In addition, like many other countries worldwide, the local e-government initiatives were set off in Egypt to improve the capabilities of enhancing service delivery to their citizens. E-government in Egypt is especially important to study with the Revolution of January, 25, 2011, where citizens exercised voice in wanting a government to provide for more efficient and effective public service delivery. E-government systems are becoming an essential element of modern public administration (Torres, Pina, & Acerete, 2005), assessing the effectiveness of these systems is becoming a necessity in order to ensure successful implementation (Gupta & Jana, 2003).

Much of the e-government literature to date has examined the overall adoption of e-government in terms of its level of sophistication and breadth of information and service offerings. However, there is much less research that evaluates the effectiveness of e-government for public managers (Streib & Navarro, 2005; Reddick & Frank, 2007). Moreover, when comparing the adoption of e-government in developed countries with developing nations, their experiences are much different (Chen, Chen, Cling, & Huang, 2007). In African nations the status of e-government services are not as well documented compared to developed countries (Heeks, 2002; Rorissa & Demissie, 2010), the need for research that examines e-government experiences of these countries is vitally important.

This knowledge gap in the literature is where this study contributes to this growing and important body of knowledge. This study examines e-government effectiveness through a national survey of city officials (directors) in Egypt. As resources for e-government become increasingly scarce for city governments, this study attempts to address what impact e-government has actually had on city governments.

The following section provides some background information on the local e-government program in Egypt. This is followed by the literature review section demonstrating the model that is tested in this paper. The main part of this paper is devoted to the research methods and explaining the results of our statistical tests. The conclusion summarizes the main arguments of the paper.

2. EGYPT LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE or Egypt) lies in the south-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, mainly in Africa, with the Sinai Peninsula in Asia. Egypt is a unitary country that comprises 29 administrative sections1, called governorates (or municipalities), of various sizes, populations, and resources. Governorates are administratively further divided into cities and districts which are, in turn, divided into smaller entities called neighborhoods (in cities) and villages (in the districts).
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