Gender and E-Government Adoption in Spain

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ABSTRACT

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) models, which include trust as a central factor, are currently standard tools for studying the process of new technology acceptance, but some further research is needed to gauge how different variables could influence this process. This is the case of gender factor, given that there is no general accord in the literature as to the role of this variable. Thus, the present research focuses on hypothetical gender-based differences that could affect the explanatory model for e-Government adoption by citizens. The results of the study show that the effects of gender on e-Government involvement are nearly none—probably because these technology-based activities are quite broadly implemented in Spain by now. This in turn implies both, that in Spain e-Government usage level is similar between genders and that the behavior explaining model is virtually the same, with no gender traits acting on it—apart from a slightly particular role played by compatibility in the female case.

Keywords: Administration, Adoption, e-Government, Gender, Government

1. INTRODUCTION

Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) by governments and public administrations contributes to the development of a profound institutional change: from the public management perspective, by improving its efficiency; and from a political perspective, by fostering citizen participation. ICT can be used to build new venues for citizen participation and offers the potential to bring on government processes that are increasingly transparent and receptive to citizen opinion. The interaction between the administration and society aims to redefine the terms according to which the administration relates to citizens. Increased ICT use could aid in improving public services, but in many cases administrations do little more
than publish their information online; the next
time is to use technology to change their internal
processes and develop collaboration between
different institutions (Beynon-Davies & Martin,
2004; Ford & Murphy, 2008).

The term “e-Government” has been coined
to capture this entire potential for change and
to depict the most ambitious dimension of
ICT’s contribution to all levels of public admin-
istration. Electronic government refers to
governments’ use of technology, particularly
Internet-based applications, to enhance access
to and delivery of government information and
service to citizens, business partners, employ-
ees, other agencies, and government entities. It
has the potential to help build better relationships
between government and the public by making
interaction with citizens smoother, easier, and
more efficient (Layne & Lee, 2001). In other
cases, it is defined as a new way of organizing
public management to increase its efficiency,
transparency, accessibility, and its ability to
provide proper responses to citizens with
intensive and strategic use of ICT, both in the
internal management of the public sector and in
its everyday exchanges with citizens and public
service users. According to this point of view,
intensive ICT adoption offers a particular way
of structuring management in public entities
aimed at improving both public service and
internal operations (Rivera, 2006). Successful
e-Government initiatives are not simply tech-
nological innovations, but rather processes that
involve rethinking and redesigning the entire
way in which governments operate (Schaupp
et al., 2010).

E-Government has become an essential
strategy for many governments in their ef-
forts to increase accessibility and facilitate
improved diffusion of public sector services. It
is important to bear in mind that the success of
e-Government initiatives can be determined by
contextual factors associated with the demand
for electronic services and by the organizational
structures and processes that characterize the
administrations in charge of technology main-
tenance (Luna-Reyes, Hernández García, &
Gil-García, 2009). The rapid uptake of new
technologies is occurring among most groups of
citizens, regardless of income, education, age,
and gender. Nonetheless, noticeable gaps still
exist between different levels of these attributes.
Citizens’ adoption of online public services
has been obstructed by factors such as, digital
divide, accessibility, and lack of trust (Akman,
Yazici, Mishra, & Arifoglu, 2005; Al-Sobhi,
Weerakkody, & El-Haddad, 2012).

In Western literature, the digital divide
has been an important academic and policy
concern over the last two decades. While the
first generation of studies of the digital divide
focused on internet access, more recent research
has considered the importance of the skills and
usage gaps (Polat, 2012). Although there is also
a significant gap between genders in internet
usage, most of e-Government initiatives have
been implemented without taking into ac-
count the potential gender-based differences
in technology usage behavior (Sarabdeen, &
Rodrigues, 2010).

Once we have confirmed the possibil-
ity of carrying the explanatory models for
new technology adoption over to the area of
e-Government, we must further explore the
behavior of these models by including the role
of several moderating variables (Rufín, Medina,
& Sánchez-Figueroa, 2011; Venkatesh, Davis,
& Morris, 2007; Venkatesh, Morris, & Ack-
erman, 2000; Zhang, 2009).

One of these variables mentioned in the lit-
erature concerns gender, which has drawn con-
siderable attention in the field of e-Commerce
on account of its interaction with attitudinal and
behavioral variables (Okazaki, 2007). Although
initially gender-based differences were indeed
observed in technology development and adop-
tion (Ahuja, 2002; Ong & Lai, 2004; Sánchez-
Franco, Villarejo, & Martín, 2009), other studies
qualify this view considerably by suggesting
that as technology use becomes increasingly
widespread, the gender gap narrows in terms of
its use (Knight & Person, 2005; Okazaki, 2007).
At any rate, the impact of gender in the use of
e-Government has long been attracting interests
of academics, but in order to establish a secure
trend towards the shrinking of the gender gap
Activate Climate of Change to Motivate Users Toward Using Innovative Public E-Services

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