

Chapter 6

The National Plan of E–Government: How the UAE Government Modernized Citizen Services

Badreya Al-Jenaibi
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the readiness of federal authority employees and their current skills, adoption, and knowledge about e-government. It also examines the new technologies and e-technologies in GCC and UAE. The researcher has collected information and opinions from different areas in the country creating a survey analysis in this research. The study aims are to discover the experts among the employees, explore the developments of e-governments in the UAE federal agencies, gain information about the strategies of the services, and gain knowledge about training and challenges that face the employees who work in federal positions. Research questions include, Are federal organizations employees prepared to adopt and use the e-government? What are the struggles that face them?

INTRODUCTION

The concept of e-government has been introduced in many countries with the corporation of ICT to transform several systems to make them more reachable, effective, and efficient solutions for the government (Garson, 2006, Digital Government 2018). With financial crisis facing many countries, they transformed their agencies and departments using a “CITIZEN-CENTRIC”(Abhichandani, T. (2008, p. 1) model. Garson (2006) stated that it is expected that the quality of citizens’ life would be enhanced and they will avail themselves more of government services. Miller and Walling (2013) added that the government wants to efficiently and effectively improve and deliver services to their citizens.

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On the other side, Bertot, Jaegar, and McClure (2008) wrote that evidence shows it is quite difficult to achieve these goals and focusing on the needs of the citizens who are disconnected from the initiatives of the government. In this tough situation, the government needs to take an integrated approach to deliver the needs required by their citizens (Chan, 2017). Moon (2002) agreed that e-government programs have been conducted around the world and achieved success with them. It is not an easy task to transform the services of the government so the existing systems are completely automated and updated. This study focuses on the growth of e-government and its needed function within the UAE government. In this study, an analysis is also conducted about the current situation of e-government in the UAE and the administration's objective toward the transformation. It is a detailed approach that will address strategies related to technology and the awareness of the need of transitioning into e-government. It will also discuss why the global government needs e-government at this time in human history.

Smart or electronic government refers to the delivery of national or local authorized information and services via the Internet or other digital means to citizens and businesses or other governmental agencies (Garson, 2006). It facilitates in many ways better service delivery to citizens, empowerment of the people through access to information without the bureaucracy, and improved productivity and cost savings in doing business with suppliers and customers of the government (Al-Khouri, 2012). Radan, (2012) indicated that the smart government refers also to the improvements or streamlining in internal processes through changes to the risk approach taken, underpinning law or regulations, procedures, processes, forms, channels used, and job functions, that, in turn, improve information and service provision.

The UAE is one of the countries planning to embrace the concept of electronic governance. Mohammad Abdullah Al Gergawi, UAE Minister of Cabinet Affairs said: "The UAE government has embraced innovation and set high benchmarks in government efficiency and trust. We are happy that the Government Summit partnership with WEF has led to a tangible and positive outcome as the Smart Toolbox, which takes trust in government as a unifying theme" (Weinzierl, 2014, p. 1). Recently, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was briefed about the distinctive features and services in pending in the next period and steps for complementing transformation to the smart government by mid-2015 as per the strategic plan announced during the recent government summit. He said that, "The aim is to make smart services part of the daily life for all populations, and more accessible and direct. The more services that are smart, the happier people become" (Jivani, 2014, p. 2). The UAE has become one of the leading countries in this field and some of its citizens are still not familiar with this term of "smart" governance.

Research Aims

This topic was chosen according to its importance in developing the UAE and improving the efficiencies of the employees' performance in using the new services of e-Government. Furthermore, it is one of the latest achievements in the United Arab Emirates. In this research, the researcher will focus on the employees and the available experiences in UAE governmental arrangements used for e-government services, the main resources for e-government initiatives in the work place, discussions about the e-government development level, the training courses available in e-government, the challenges for e-government, and, finally, the importance of e-government and its rules and regulations.

The researcher has collected information and opinions from different areas in the country creating a survey analysis in this research. The study aims are to discover the experts among the employees, explore the developments of e-governments in the UAE federal agencies, gain information about the strategies

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