Citizen Use of E-Government Services Websites:

A Proposed E-Government Adoption Recommendation Model (EGARM)

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the factors influencing citizens' adoption of e-government services through the open government/data concept by proposing and validating an e-government adoption recommendation model (EGARM). The data was analyzed with Smart PLS-SEM. The results show that the intention to use e-government website is positively related to the intention of citizens to recommend the adoption of e-government services. Trust in government and the internet were significant predictors of the intention to use e-government services. While information quality was significant in determining the intention to use, it was however not significant in predicting the citizen's trust in government. Also, information accessibility and accountability were both significant predictors of trust in government but not the intention to use. Additionally, collaboration was found to predict the intention to use but not trust in government. Finally, empowerment was a significant determinant of the intention to use and trust in government.

KEYWORDS

Accountability, E-Government, E-Government Services, EGARM, Empowerment, Recommendation Model, Transparency

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, many citizens, civil society organizations, and development partners around the world have insistently called on governments to be more open, transparent, and accountable to citizens and other stakeholders in society concerning the affairs of the state. Citizens and key stakeholders demand public administration systems that are highly transparent, accountable, responsive, participatory, and collaborative with other sectors to design policies and services to meet their concerns and needs (McDermott, 2010; OECD, 2018). Demanding and achieving principles of greater openness, transparency, accountability, and collaboration in government affairs is termed open government. Open government is defined as the publishing or dissemination of public sector or government information in an interoperable and standard format to ensure unconstrained citizens' rights to access data (Abu-Shanab, 2015). Open government strategies according to OECD (2018) are important to renewing citizen's relationship with the government and its public officials and to

repose their confidence as well as trust in government. Open government data is designed to make government data highly accessible and usable by its citizens and the general public and it should drive greater transparency by government, citizens' engagement, and collaboration (Gascó-Hernández et al., 2018; Harrison et al., 2012). The open government initiative is an important element or portion of the concept of e-government. The open government strategies or initiatives relate to the broader conceptualization of e-government which is basic and more concerned with information development and dissemination (Abu-Shanab, 2015; Abu-Shanab & Osmani, 2019).

E-government is defined as the application of appropriate information and communication technologies (ICTs) to ensure open government and availability of data, information, and communication to all stakeholders (Abu-Shanab, 2015). It is also the use of internet technology as a medium for exchanging information and providing services and transactions with citizens, businesses, and other sectors of government (Kamal, 2009). E-government applications can guarantee that public policies are implemented with a high degree of transparency and accountability, provide quality public services and improve the government's performance (Abu-Shanab, 2015). E-government can also be a strategic tool to enhance maximum participation of citizens in the political and social development of a country through effective participation, consultation, and empowerment process (Abu-Shanab, 2015; Lee & Huang, 2014). E-government, therefore, became the strategic backbone for the development of the open government principle of openness, accountability, transparency, participation, and collaboration. The important factors for government agencies to undertake to create an open government include the publishing of government information online, improve the quality of government information and create, maintain and institutionalize a culture of open government (McDermott, 2010). Based on that, e-government success is intertwined with open government concepts, where the adoption of such technology and service is influenced greatly by citizens' perceptions.

The enabling environment created by e-government is an important pillar for the development and diffusion of the ideals of open government through e-government. Greater government openness can be achieved by the dissemination of quality information to citizens through e-government in a transparent, open, accountable, and collaborative manner. While the diffusion of open government principles through e-government services is important for an open government to be considered successful, the adoption and patronage of citizens of e-government services are equally important as well. Hence studies seeking to explore the factors determining the adoption of open government e-government services are of important considerations. Previous studies have shown that open government principles such as transparency, accountability, collaboration, and empowerment are positive determinants of the adoption of e-government websites (Abu-Shanab, 2015).

The objective of this study is to examine the citizens' adoption of e-government services website by proposing and validating an E-Government Adoption Recommendation Model (EGARM). This study integrates trust in government, trust in the Internet, and intention to recommend as an extension of a previous model/study (Abu-Shanab, 2015; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Janssen et al., 2018; Naranjo-Zolotov et al., 2019). The validation of the proposed model is expected to provide a comprehensive explanation of the factors accounting for the adoption of e-government services through the open government (OG) concept. This study seeks to contribute to the e-government adoption literature by demonstrating the extent to which OG concepts such as transparency (information quality and accessibility), accountability, collaboration, and empowerment influence citizen trust in government which in turn impact the adoption of e-government services. As far as the literature is concerned, while studies have examined trust in government dimensions of e-government (Banghui et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020), limited studies have empirically validated the OG principles as an antecedent of trust in government. The research questions to be investigated are: RQ1: To what extent do the open government dimensions determine the adoption of e-government services and RQ2: What is the significant impact of these factors on the intention to adopt e-government services?

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