Chapter 70
Quality Approaches for Performance Measurement in Jordanian E-Government Services

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ABSTRACT

Improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of public services has become a growing concern for many governments across the world, and more so with recent popularity of online services, widely referred as e-government services. The application of quality approaches for measuring and improving e-government services has been the subject of much research within the academic world over the last two decades. This chapter discusses the use of key quality approaches to improve services in Jordan's e-government initiatives. As more and more developing countries are adopting e-services as a means of providing quality services to their community and people through the Web, the necessary benchmarking plays an important role. Many traditional quality benchmarking performance measurements have proved futile in improving e-government services due to their quantitative focus. Though qualitative frameworks and measurement approaches such as Six Sigma and Balanced Scorecard have found their success in certain industry sectors, their relevance in the service sector has drawn attention only recently. While some studies have employed such approaches for evaluating projects in information and communication technologies, literature lacks investigations in the e-government sector. To fill this gap, this chapter investigates the application of Six Sigma and Balanced Scorecard approaches to improve quality in Jordanian e-government services.

INTRODUCTION

E-government is considered as a key competitive edge for public sector organisations to cater to the grow awareness of customer requirements as it serves as an opportunity towards electronic service delivery anywhere and anytime as online services or e-services. One of the reasons why many e-government initiatives fail is related to the narrow definition and poor understanding of the e-government concept. There are several definitions and dimensions associated with e-government. European Commission defines e-government as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in public administrations, combined with organisational change and new skills so as to improve public services and democratic processes and to strengthen support to public policies. According to Gartner Group e-government is the transformation of public sector internal and external relationships through internet enabled operations and ICT to optimize government service delivery, constituency participation and internal government operations. The United Nations defines e-government as the use of ICT and its application by the government for the provision of information and basic public services to the people. Recent e-government survey reported by United Nations indicate that with the current recessionary world climate with people becoming even more interconnected, governments are increasingly harnessing ICT in delivering social and economic services to their citizens, shifting towards e-government. E-government could offer benefits for both individuals and organisations (Batagan, Pocovnicu, & Capisizu, 2009). However, achieving the aims of e-government in terms of ensuring efficiency, responsiveness, transparency and participation in the e-service delivery require strategic planning and continuous performance monitoring. While some of the developed countries have successfully embarked on e-government in providing quality services

as a notion of sustainable development for their people, nearly 85% of e-government projects in developing countries, have not been successfully implemented or failed to achieve the desired outcomes) (Holmes, 2001; Dada, 2006). Quality of e-service in any firm plays a major role in establishing its competitive advantage. Hence, firms try to apply quality measures to identify the needs and desires of customers, and the gaps that may exist in their actual e-service. In e-government, project failure in developing countries indicate the gap between the e-service design and the actual e-service realisation of customers in meeting their expectations (Kumar & Best, 2006; Udo, Bagchi, & Kirs, 2010). Identifying and measuring these gaps would help to facilitate an appropriate action plan in improving the quality of e-government service and making it a success.

With digital revolution and the Internet age, e-government has become a necessity for most countries aiming for quality governance as they are able to offer a wide range of information and services online for the benefit of their citizens (Dhillon, Weerakkody, & Dwivedi, 2007). However, defining one single model for the evaluation of the actual impact of e-government programs is not straightforward since the concept of e-government is complex with its heterogeneity covering many diverse topics (Alshehri & Drew, 2010). This chapter investigates the application of quality approaches such as Six Sigma and Balanced Scorecard in measuring the performance of e-government services in a developing country, such as Jordan that is keen in employing continuous improvement strategies for its e-government initiative. E-government success and failure depends on the size of gap that exists between actual outcomes and the initial targets set for any e-government project. Jordan is developing strategies in order to bridge this gap in order to enhance the services of e-government. Hence, this chapter contributes towards bridging this gap by investigating the application of quality approaches

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