Chapter 5

Transformation of Government and Citizen Trust in Government:
A Conceptual Model

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ABSTRACT

The continuing erosion of citizen trust and confidence in government has been attributed to a number of factors. This chapter examines the potential role of digital transformation of government in reversing this decline. Based on a systematic literature review, key factors that influence citizen trust and confidence in government as an institution are identified, including citizen satisfaction and expectations, government transparency and accountability, transformation of government, and government performance. The review of the literature also reveals a lack of knowledge and understanding of how transformation of government can influence the growing decline in citizen engagement with government. To address this gap, a conceptual model capturing the key constructs is proposed to support a better understanding of strategies for rebuilding trust and confidence in government administrations through transformation of government.

INTRODUCTION

Governments are implementing measures to improve their processes to provide more efficient and responsive services to their citizens. Rapid developments in information technology have radically altered the way government organizations interact with citizens, and e-government has become a mainstream service delivery method in the public sector. The transformation of the service delivery system by the Internet has enhanced government services and their operations for the benefit of citizens, businesses, employees, and other stakeholders. However, regardless of global enthusiasm for e-government, most endeavors have fallen short of their potential (Bannister and Connolly, 2011), particularly in developing countries. Among the challenges faced by governments around the world in implementing various e-government projects, the greatest is lack of adoption and use by citizens. Researchers have attributed this lack of willingness to use e-government to declining trust in government and government practices (Aljazzaf, Perry, & Capretz, 2010; Colesca, 2009; Teo, Srivastava, & Jiang, 2008). This chapter examines the influence of digital transformation of government on citizen trust and confidence.

Government authorities have sought to incorporate information technology into their operations to increase competitiveness, support economic development, reduce costs, increase transparency, improve accountability and reduce the unemployment rate, among other goals. In addition, citizens expect government or public servants to serve the public interest with fairness and manage public resources in an efficient manner. Fair and reliable public services can act as a catalyst to improve public trust and create a favorable environment for business. The Internet is viewed as a medium that can facilitate potential improvements in the performance of government agencies. Thus, proponents have argued that e-government can play an important role in rebuilding the loss of public confidence in government performance as well as improving citizen satisfaction with public services in a country (Morgeson, VanAmburg, & Mithas, 2011; Tolbert and Mossberger, 2006). However, a comprehensive understanding of the relevant drivers and factors for rebuilding citizen trust via the use of e-government practices remains lacking (Abu-Shanab and Al-Azzam, 2012; Alateyah, Crowder, & Wills, 2013; and Carter, 2008; Colesca, 2009).

To address this gap, this chapter identifies and examines factors that impact citizen trust related to e-government practices as well as citizen trust and confidence in government through digital transformation. This is pursued by critically reviewing various published research studies as well as secondary grey literature. Concepts related to trust in technology (or the Internet), e-government, and government are examined to develop a conceptual model based on appropriate theoretical underpinnings provided by the existing literature. Finally, based on the literature review, hypotheses are developed to test the relationships formulated in the

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