

Chapter 5

The Roles of Intermediaries in E–Government Diffusion and Adoption: A Case Study of Madinah City in Saudi Arabia

Faris Al-Sobhi
Brunel University, UK

Vishanth Weerakkody
Brunel University, UK

ABSTRACT

E-government diffusion and adoption is a global topic that concerns many developed and developing countries worldwide. However, global efforts to provide e-services to different stakeholders (citizens) differ from one country to another in terms of readiness, challenges, adoptions, and diffusions. These differences are due to the variation of technological, political, cultural, economic, and social differences. A numbers of studies on e-government have focused on the technological, economic, and political aspects of implementation while others have examined factors that influence citizens' adoption of e-government services such as availability, accessibility, usability, and trust. This study will focus on the influence of intermediary roles played by a third party in helping diffusion and adoption of e-government. This chapter will use a case study approach to reflect the roles of intermediaries on e-government realms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The chapter will aim to address the research question, "What are the roles of an intermediary in adoption and diffusion of e-government services?" This study will explore the most salient factors that determine diffusion and adoption in Saudi Arabia and contribute to the literature on intermediary roles in an e-government context. This study will use a qualitative approach and interview key managers in intermediary agencies and the officials responsible for e-government implementation in a Saudi context. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings will be discussed, offering recommendations and future research directions.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-60960-601-5.ch005

INTRODUCTION

Information communication technologies (ICTs) are an important component in delivering services, and they play a key role in new government services (e-government). Governments worldwide have attempted to use new technologies to communicate with citizens online. With the potential of e-government systems to reduce government spending (Al-Khouri & Bal, 2007; Aydinil et al., 2007), time saving, and increasing access government services around the clock (Huang & Bwoma, 2003; Reffat, 2003), there are delays in e-government readiness due to many challenges. These challenges may be divided into categories related to technologies, policies, social, individual organisational requirements, circumstances, readiness, structure, size, and cultures (Kamal et al., 2008; van Dam et al., 2005; Lam, 2005). Although developing countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region have invested heavily in e-government implementation (Al-Shafi & Weerakkody, 2008; Al-Shafi, 2007), several researchers argue that these implementations have resulted in varying results and delayed outcomes (Al-Shafi & Weerakkody, 2007; Kurunananda & Weerakkody, 2006). In Saudi Arabia's e-government context, these delays have been categorised under many aspects closely related to factors impeding the diffusion and adoption of e-government services. Therefore, a number of initiatives have been implemented to overcome the difficulties accompanying the new e-government. Recent developments in e-government have heightened the need for other service channels to communicate with their citizens, adopting a multi-channel services delivery "intermediary organisation" to simplify using of e-services for public, equal access and help diffusion of e-services to society (Al-Sobhi et al., 2010; Janssen & Kilevink, 2009). These channels are working as a mediator between the service provider (government) and the clients (citizens), with a promise to bridge the gap between two parties (Janssen & Kilevink, 2009). However,

there is a little discussion about the intermediary roles in relation to e-government diffusion and adoption. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the roles of intermediaries in e-government services delivery and highlight the usefulness of intermediaries in minimizing the challenges that obstruct e-government diffusion and adoption.

This chapter reviews the literature concerning the usefulness of using intermediaries' organisation in e-government realm in the context of Medina city in Saudi Arabia. Using interviews with managers of intermediaries in Medina this chapter hopes to explore the impact of intermediaries in facilitating e-government and the key factors which need to be considered for developing e-government in Saudi Arabia.

This chapter is structured as follows: the next section illustrates the e-government definitions and challenges in literature and the roles of intermediaries according to the new e-government. In the third section, the authors present the research methodology used in this study. Section four presents the research findings and discussion. Finally, the paper summarises the key findings and outlines recommendations for further research in section five.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researchers have offered different definitions of the e-government phenomena. These definitions differ depending on e-government interests and perspectives, as well as on the community's goals and values (Lowery, 2001). The literature indicates that the main focus has been given to relational perspectives such as G2G, G2B, G2E, and G2C related to e-government service delivery. Some scholars in the e-government realm define e-government from an innovation point of view where technology is one part of e-government system innovations, stating that successful innovation needs to be implemented to increase outcome efficiency and the effectiveness

11 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/roles-intermediaries-government-diffusion-adoption/54122

Related Content

The Challenge of Designing User-Centric E-Services: European Dimensions

Patrizia Lombardi, Ian Cooper, Krassimira Paskaleva-Shapira and Mark Deakin (2009). *Handbook of Research on Strategies for Local E-Government Adoption and Implementation: Comparative Studies* (pp. 461-478).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/challenge-designing-user-centric-services/21475

Exploring the Relation Between the Digital Divide and Government's Effort to Develop E-Participation: A Global Longitudinal Analysis

Rosario Perez-Morote, Carolina Pontones Rosa and Esteban Alfaro Cortes (2020). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 26-44).

www.irma-international.org/article/exploring-the-relation-between-the-digital-divide-and-governments-effort-to-develop-e-participation/265512

The Scholarly Literature on E-Government: Characterizing a Nascent Field

Donald F. Norris and Benjamin A. Lloyd (2006). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 40-56).

www.irma-international.org/article/scholarly-literature-government/2022

Foundation for Citizen-Oriented E-Governance Models

Auli Keskinen and Tuomo Kuosa (2008). *Electronic Government: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 477-488).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/foundation-citizen-oriented-governance-models/9728

Application of Machine Learning and Blockchain Technology for Smart Healthcare Applications

J. Brintha Jei and S. Behin Sam (2023). *AI, IoT, and Blockchain Breakthroughs in E-Governance* (pp. 62-71).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/application-of-machine-learning-and-blockchain-technology-for-smart-healthcare-applications/323758