

E-Government Service Adoption and the Impact of Privacy and Trust



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INTRODUCTION

The importance of privacy and trust for e-Government services has been evidenced in numerous past studies, but there is a paucity of research regarding the effects of these factors on the acceptance and use of e-Government services in a developing economy. This study fills into the void by aiming to conceptualize the proposed constructs of privacy and trust to examine the factors that can influence future use intentions for e-Government services in the context of Bangladesh. To pursue this purpose, the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) model has been used. Findings will provide further insights into understanding and managing current and potential users of government services via the online platform. This study can also assist various government authorities to consider the idea of providing appropriate

e-Government services to aid the urban people for communicating and conducting transactions in a timely fashion.

BACKGROUND

In recent times, e-Government services are a breakthrough of communication and transaction between the government and citizens. The communication of e-Government broadly has three

categories, namely Government to Citizen (G2C), Government to Business (G2B) and Government to Government (G2G) services. Among these, it is basically the G2C services which most of the governments from developed and developing countries are focusing upon today.

G2C services relates to the ability of government and citizen to communicate information to each other in an efficient and electronic manner. Its sole purpose is to provide information and assistance to citizens including links to renew a passport, download visa forms, file tax returns, etc (Schaupp, Carter & Hobbs, 2009). In fact, G2C has enabled many governments to become more responsive to the needs of its citizens, ultimately resulting in less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and cost reductions (Suki & Ramayah, 2010).

In Bangladesh, a task force of information and communication technology (ICT) was formed in 2001 in order to introduce e-Government services. However, due to lack of proper planning, e-Government services for G2C could not be implemented on a large scale. Today, the present government of the country has again initiated a priority-based project regarding

e-Government services in order to promote their vision of a 'Digital Bangladesh'. Under 'Digital Bangladesh' the aim is to increase momentum in efficiency and technological enhancement in government system and its performance (Islam

& Khair, 2012). For this reason, the government has started pilot e-Government projects in various sectors of Bangladesh and it is being implemented under the Ministry of Planning. Also, the government is arranging substantial foreign co-operation in terms of financial assistance and technical collaboration for realization of e-Government services in the country at a national scale (Alam, 2012).

Despite being a developing country, Bangladesh has come to a fast realization that ICT is necessary for promoting economic growth as well as good governance. The primary goal of

e-Government projects in Bangladesh is therefore to establish a relationship between government officials and citizens by providing greater access to government information and services from all parts of the country. Moreover, increasing government accountability by making its operations more transparent can reduce the opportunities for corruption and support sustainable development goals by providing business, rural and traditionally underserved communities with information, opportunities and communications capabilities (Hassan, 2013). Due to this growing phenomenon of e-Government services, Bangladesh even managed to attain the 148th position in world e-Government ranking compared to its 2012 ranking of the 150th position (UN, 2014).

Although e-Government services is potentially a route to the provision of better services delivered to citizens at a lower cost, there is still a low level of acceptance of such services in many developing countries, particularly Bangladesh. Since the success of such services largely depends on citizens' perceptions of the offered services, it is important to explore the factors that may influence the adoption of e-Government services by the citizens of Bangladesh.

ISSUES, CONTROVERSIES, AND PROBLEMS

Today, information technology is the driving force for reform and change in the globalized

world and it is necessary that institutions at all levels employ this trend to become more effective and accessible. The issue of e-Government thus gained momentum since government is an important instrument of public administration that is used to render services for the citizens. Use of technologies in delivering public services can improve the capacities of government institutions as well as the quality of life of citizens by redefining the relationship between citizens and their government. Initially, this may seem as another option for communicating with citizens; however, in the face of rising demands from demographic, economic, social and global trends,

e-Government no longer appears to be a matter of choice, but a necessity for any country.

Many developed countries today have achieved significant progress in implementing e-Government services, but it is particularly a challenge for the developing nations to make government services easily available and accessible over the electronic network to their citizens. This is because of social issues like lack of awareness or Internet access, IT literacy and language barriers, along with financial and political constraints or technical complexities like the need of a strong infrastructure for information technology (Chowdhury & Satter, 2012). All these factors largely impede the implementation of e-Government services in developing countries.

Moreover, there are very real concerns about turning over personal information to the government. While the government may seem like a benevolent organization, it is possible that threats can come from external sources, like professional hackers, criminal or terrorist organizations, intelligence and investigation agencies, etc who may misuse citizens' information for financial or other gains (Alam, 2012). Citizens therefore need to be assured that this information will be treated in an extremely secure environment, so that the information they have listed with the government cannot make them the victims of reprisals by disaffected government workers.

Many citizens may also be reluctant to adopt e-Government services in a developing country

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