

Chapter 24

Users Behavioral Intention Towards eGovernment in an African Developing Country

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ABSTRACT

Ever since international emergence of the internet, huge amounts of money have been invested in e-government globally. Nevertheless, many African countries have recorded unsuccessful e-government initiatives. Optimal results are not exclusively dependent on technological innovation but also on a combination of technologies and active participation of citizens. There is a plethora of qualitative discussions on e-government with inadequate substantial quantitative study on the influence of trust on the adoption of e-government services in African developing economies. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) and the web trust model was integrated to investigate citizens' intention to use e-government services. Data relating to the constructs were collected from 310 respondents that participated in this study. Performance expectancy, effort expectation, facilitating conditions, and trusting belief emerged as significant determinants of intention to use e-government services. Lastly, practical implications of the results are reported with discussion for further studies.

INTRODUCTION

Sequel to successful implementation of electronic commerce in the private sector, huge amounts has been invested in e-Government globally. Nevertheless, evaluating results of the investments using numerous metrics shows disappointment in most developing countries. With impending failures of e-Government initiatives in developing nations (Maumbe, Owei & Alexander, 2008), it is important to note that implementation of e-Government without redesigning the processes is tantamount to waste of public funds and resources. Having targeted users in mind brings about efficient and effective e-government services, not bureaucracy. Importantly, the accomplishment of e-Government initiatives hinges on rethinking and redesigning processes that the government operates. Also, as critical as technologies is to e-Government,

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its' optimal results is not exclusively dependent on technological innovation, but the combination of technology and end users. Furthermore, channels of distributing government solutions ought not to make the difference, but high quality of services through the channels.

Presently, public sector of many developed nations utilizes the power of the Internet as an outlet for public service provision. Flavin, Guinaliu, & Torres (2006) iterated that arrival of internet came with substantial advantages for all stakeholders concerned. After a successful e-commerce exploits by the private sector, government of many countries sort after provision of public services over the internet. e-Government comes with enormous gains to the governments, including reduction in delivery cost of public services with a wider reach to the people. Furthermore, citizens can have access to varieties of solutions because operations are no more time bound by office hours. Although lots of funds have been spent on building e-Government systems, studies have shown that citizen may not use the systems for many reasons (Olasina, 2012). The most important stakeholders (citizens) in e-Government are often left behind while crucial decisions are made. Interestingly, the greater impact is on the citizens, because their behavioral pattern will have to change. In addition, there have always been resistant to change, thus citizens acceptance of e-Government can be complicated, because it affects human behavioral patterns (Meuter et al., 2002). Therefore, reviewing factors that influences human behavior towards technology cannot be overemphasized. The objective of this paper is to investigate behavioral intention towards the use of eGovernment service in Nigeria, a developing country.

BACKGROUND

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was initiated by the Nigerian government as a passage for eGovernment to bring government closer to its citizens and facilitate national strategies for the spread of e-society / e-government (NITDA, 2001;Obasanjo, 2003, 2004). The expectation of the eGovernment initiatives is to use Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) for breaking "barriers of hierarchical traditions, secrecy, and bureaucracies" (Obasanjo,2004;p1) associated with public services. Numbers of eGovernment initiatives were rolled out to prepare citizens for the change towards eGovernment, encourage citizens to use eGovernment applications and build trust in citizens to reduce future resistance (Ifinedo,2007). The implementation of eGovernment was also foreseen as a way to curtail the effect of corrupt practices as eGovernment initiatives were employed in India to combat corruption (Ifinedo,2007). Also, e-government initiatives were expected to improve culture, transparency and accountability in the country.

Recent studies shows that the implementation and the use of eGovernment in Nigeria is less than desirable while some of the challenges facing eGovernment initiatives are yet to be resolved (Ifinedo, 2005; 2007). A research survey conducted by Awoleye, Oluwaranti, Siyanbola & Adagunodo (2008) revealed that the use of eGovernment application is low and 20% of the respondents out rightly lack interest in visiting government websites. The current state of eGovernment in Nigeria is beyond preliminary stages. There are several eGovernment services available across the country at local, state and federal level, many of which are not patronised due to workers negative attitude to change and citizens' negative perceptions about eGovenment (Olasina, 2012). Some of these services could be found on the website for government services "services.gov.ng". Nigerian immigration eservices are one of the surviving and successful eGovernment initiatives in Nigeria. The targeted population in this study, undergraduate and post-graduate students, are individuals who have used online services provided by the

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