

E-GOVERNMENT MODEL AND SERVICE DELIVERY: A TOOL FOR ATTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

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Abstract

Countries world over are struggling to better their existence through the process of good governance and effective and efficient service delivery which to many can only be well attained through e-governance. This paper assessed the impact of e-governance services as an instrument for realizing organizational objectives. The paper argues that e-governance services has become an integral part of New Public Management, in the contemporary world, as it emerged for the sole aim of providing services to the people at optimal level. The paper found out that e-governance model has fallen short of its capacities to transformed service delivery and community trust in government. It does however, have the opportunity of enhancing democratic responsiveness and improving the belief that government service delivery is efficient and effective. The paper recommends that, effective and proper manpower training should be put in place for e-governance to be able to serve it purpose.

Keywords: E-Government, service, service delivery, ICT, Organizational performance.

Introduction

Less develop countries (LDC) have seen the implementation of Information Technology (IT) and its planned execution as an important element in the success of IT efforts to foster rapid national development through greater productivity. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which comprises of electronic technologies that enable easy access to information such as the internet, wireless network and mobile phone (World Economic Forum, 2012).

The current implementations of ICT allow the governments to boost rapid productivity increases through different economic sectors of the nations. Countries now believed that information and communication technologies is an approach that enhances rapid national development through ICT focused productivity (Masanet & Mathews, 2010). Accordingly, the coordinated effort of those in authority is required in this direction to accept and execute a strong and integrated ICT platform for an effective and efficient system of service delivery (IDB,2009). It is imperative to emphasize that countries world over requires an integrated ICT plan to sustain its national aspirations (World Economic Forum,2002), as the implementation of ICT permits public sector workplace productivity which influences business efficiencies leading to effective resource efficiency, improved customer interface, cost control, energy savings, and minimizing negative environmental effects through ICT applications. Borisov (2012) pointed out that the

implementation of e- governance will serve as a tool that will be used to assess and efficiently deliver public services to all shareholders and as well facilitate easy access and contact between government and its followers. Thus, the implementation of ICT has offered government with new plan that will facilitate the development of an efficient and effective system to manage public service toward enhancing public trust in government activities. Thus, the adoption of ICT has avail the government with new strategies that will facilitate the development of an efficient and effective system to manage public services toward improving public trust in government activities. It is on this basis, that the paper assesses the impact of E-Governance service in enhancing the attainment of organizational objectives.

Concept and Nature of E-Governance

The term E-Governance is define as the delivery of government information and services online through the internet or other IT ways. Unlike traditional arrangements which are hierarchical, linear, and one-way, IT systems are non-hierarchical, nonlinear, two-way, available twenty four hours a day and seven days a week (Markoff, 2000). The non-hierarchical nature of internet delivery allows citizens to look for information at their own suitable time and place. The collaborating features of E-Governance permit both citizens and government officials to send and receive information about government services at will. By enabling two-way interactions, E-governance has been acclaimed as a means that will increase service delivery and responsiveness to citizens, thereby creating more public trust in government (Raney, 2000).

This unique aspects of digital technology led Read Hunt to argue that “the central lesson of technology in our time is that the internet modifies everything. The change applies to the economy, education, health, community, democracy and other sectors (cited in Darrell, 2004). Furthermore, Thompson (1999) argues that even in the political realm IT bring about changes because it reduce the factionalization that waves political systems. E-governance improves government activities by overcoming geographical distance, promoting ideological variety, opening citizens to more different views, and encourages discussion. The collaborative nature of the IT and its capacity to speed communications has the potential to make governance functions well than it was before. Scholars such a Fountain (2001) argues that IT has the capacity to transform government organization for improved service delivery. Fountain (2001) highlighted the ways in which information technology (IT) changes the capability and control features of traditional organizations. IT, she argues, has the abilities to significantly redistribute power, functional responsibilities, and control within and across government department, units and between and among public and private sector organizations. By encouraging officials to work together and develop cross-agency “portals” – web sites that integrate information and service offerings – E-Governance deals with the prospects of significant change on how the government organizations functions for improved service delivery.

E-Governance Transformation Steps

Darrell (2004) highlights four (4) steps of E-Governance development and transformation. These are:

1. The bill board stage.
2. The partial service delivery stage.
3. The portal stage.
4. Interactive democracy with public outreach and accountability enhancing features.

However, scholars argue that not all government web sites go through these steps of E-governance transformation or that they assume them in this specific order. It is clear from looking

at hundreds of government department web sites, that there is a widespread change in the ways that E-Governance has developed in different part of the world. Notwithstanding, according to a study conducted by Darrell (2004) this classification appears to be a dominant course of transformation in most government units and departments. The harmony of this steps, allows scholars to determine an organization's progress based on how far they are at integrating various web site features.

Looking at the first step, officials treat government sites much the same as highway billboards, meaning static tools to display information. They post reports, government publications and offer data bases for viewing by people. In this step, there is little chance for individual interactions or two-way communication between citizens and bureaucrats. People can see and read government report, see the text of proposed legislation and find out who works in specific organizations but, they cannot influence information or interacts with it in any way other than viewing. The citizens are only limited in seeing information in the form put together by bureaucrats.

The second step is the stage of partial service delivery. In this step people can order and execute a handful of services online and start to influence informational data bases. Citizens can search web sites for materials they want to access, as against the information bureaucrats want to present to them. This will assist them access information in the manner they choose. Besides, online service possibilities are periodic and limited to a very few places. Posting of privacy and security statements are not very common, and there isn't much convenience for citizens that cannot speak English and the disabled.

The third step is the portal stage with fully executable and integrated online services. This step provides significant advantages to people. The whole country has one place where all other department can be retrieved, which improves individual ability to find information. All government sites are combined with one another and a range of fully executable services are available to both the public and private organizations. Bureaucrats show they pay attention to the public's privacy and security concerns by posting government programs online. Also, translation options are available for those who do not speak English or those who have visual or hearing problem.

The fourth step is interactive democracy with public outreach and a range of accountability measures. In this step, government websites moves outside a service delivery ideal to a system of a wide political revolution. In addition, to having integrated and fully executable online services, government web sites provides opportunities for websites personalization (such as customizing for someone's own particular idea) and push technology (such as providing emails that offers automatic updates on issues or areas people care about). These kinds of features help citizens' customize information delivery and take advantage of the interactive and two way communication strengths of the internets. Through these and other kinds of advanced features, visitors can personalize websites, provide feedback, make comments and reward themselves of host of sophisticated features intended to increase democratic responsiveness and leadership accountability.

E Governance Services: A Theoretical Background

E-Governance services refers to the use of information and communication technology to enable and increase the efficiency of government services and information provided to people, private organizations, employees and government department(Carter & Belanger, 2004).

The sole aim of E-governance service delivery program is to have a closer link with both public and private organizations and to assist the users so that they can operate their transactions at any place and anytime (Hussein, et al. 2010). Furthermore, the reform processes of the information age have been influencing government organization over the last few decades and encouraged the policy makers to make the public sector more efficient. This has resulted in many studies on E-governance service delivery in recent years, with the sole aim of enhancing service quality provision to citizenry (Annear & Othman, 2010, Hussein, et al 2010). This study therefore, concludes that effective government management has direct impact on service delivery provision. In addition, effective service delivery reduces the risks and increased information dissemination drives as a tool for development (Wetch & Feeney, 2014). IT not only supports users in reducing cost, but also increases the abilities of people and groups to execute their daily out work efficiently and effectively (Huang & Brooks, 2011). Besides, E-Governance services being one example, should preferably emphasized on what makes users satisfied in their daily work and reduce bottleneck in government units and departments (Satia, et al. 2013).

In the words of Avgerou & Walsham (2001) *“successful examples of computerization can be found but frustrating stories of system which failed to fulfill their initial promises are more frequent”*. Government’s IT services are characteristically developed by internal service providers, often neglecting the service end users (Bridge, 2012). Consequently, delivering such services can be endangered and hindered not taking into consideration the service users, needs and aspiration in the policy design process (Carroll, et al. 2013). Thus, limited user involvement throughout the design process of E-Government services is often mentioned in most cases (Olphert & Damodaran, 2007). Nonetheless, the major challenge government faces today is the digital divide of the citizens in refusing to accept the use of E-governance, in view of the fact that the personal information of the users will not be disclosed. Therefore, government has the responsibility to play in ensuring that the E-governance will provide more value to the users and that the services are easy to use (Belandier, & Carter, 2008).

Furthermore, the last quarter of 1990s saw the emergence of the term E-Governance, but the history of computing in public sector organizations goes back to the early stages of the computing era. However, literature on Information Technology in public sector organizations goes back to late 1970s (Bertot & Jaeger, 2006). Although some of the early E-Governance computer services still exist, such as office automation, they are today not applicable to E-Governance services. Whereas decision making, service processing, and values are thought to be more useful in improving citizen’s satisfaction, improving the quality of life of people, thereby ensuring the attainment of organizational objectives (Usman, et al. 2015). More recently, concrete E-governance programme provided by government have not been citizen-centric and did not meet end-user needs. The citizen-centric approach for E-Governance is significant as E-Governance websites have become the easiest and normal way of communication between government and the people (Wang, et al, 2005, Chen, 2010). Furthermore, E-Governance programmes should be available and consistent supporting different types of E-Governance interactions such as government to citizen, government to business, government to employee, and government to government (Gupta, et al. 2008).

Besides, E-Governance programmes and policies should continue to face difficulties and challenges, specifically in the implementation stage, because of the gap between shareholders unmet needs and service designs. Those gaps are considered to be the major key factors that lead

to failure of E-Governance projects and programs most especially in the less developed countries (Choudrie, et al. 2009). Furthermore, understanding E-Governance transformation and discovering factors that impact on E-Government development has increased interest in the E-Governance research literature (Scholl, 2014). A citizen-centric approach offers a chance to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and the needs of the people and the framework in which they find themselves with respect to E-Governance project (Derks, et al 2009). Figure 1 below provides a current state of the user-centered design.

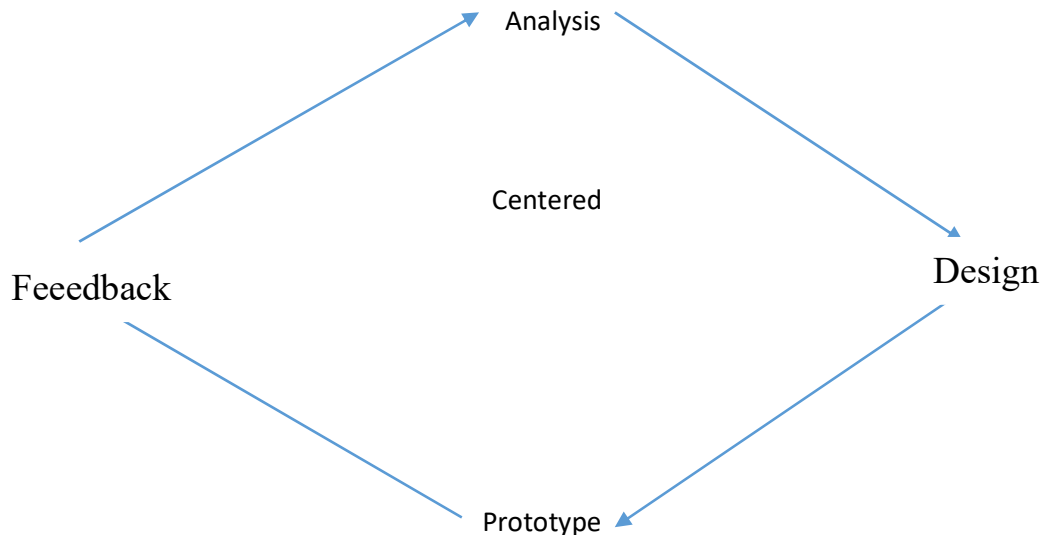


Figure 1: Current State of User-Centered Design for E-Governance Service

Source: Adapted from Sanders, E. B. & Stappers, P.J. (2008), Co-Creation and the New Land Scopes of Design.

Thus, E-Governance project should not only meet the needs and aspiration of the people, but should also meet with the needs and work practices of the service providers as they supply and deliver the services. When a discrepancy happens, a reduction in the quality of the service delivered will set in. As argued IT projects are most likely to fail due to lack of attention on the interests, expectations and insubordination of the service providers (Derks, et al 2009).

By and large, the end result of E-Governance Service delivery is to safeguard efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of quality service to the public. Scott (2016) argues that, this can only be sustain if technology combined with humanistic approach to service delivery is given much priority by all the stakeholders involved in the provision of services to citizenry.

Kinds of Services

Services are categorized in numerous ways. Utilities services are those services that can be financed by user charges whereas, non utilities services are those that can only be financed by taxes. A division is made between social and economic services, and between basic or local or community services, which are expected to be provided by local government and non –local or national services, which are expected to be provided by the central government (Ademolekum, 2010). In addition, Ostrom, (2005), emphasizes that those goods and services that requires

exclusion of use or consumption and not easily separable are regarded as public goods and services. Table 1 below summarizes the major differences between public and private goods.

Table 1: Difference between Public and Private Goods.

Public Goods	Private Goods
❖ Relatively problematic to measure quantity and quality.	❖ Relatively easy to measure quantity and quality.
❖ Consumed together and concurrently by many people.	❖ Can be consumed by only a person.
❖ Difficult to eliminate someone who does not pay.	❖ Easy to eliminate someone who does not pay.
❖ Generally little or no single choice of kind and quantity of goods.	❖ Generally single choice of kinds and quantity of goods.
❖ Payment for goods and services not relative to the demand or consumption.	❖ Payment for goods closely related to demand and consumption.
❖ Allocation decisions made primarily through political process.	❖ Allocation decisions made primarily through market instrument.

Source: Ostrom, V. & Ostrom, E. (2005) "Public Goods and Public Choice." The meaning American federalism: constituting a self-governing society, ed. V. Ostrom. San Francisco: Institute of Contemporary Studies.

Governance and Service Delivery System

Delivering services of high quality is vital quests for governments that seek to create and provide value to their citizens (Gronruos & Ravald, 2011). Through the provision of effective services, government and private organizations can achieve increased citizen's satisfaction, loyalty and as such long term profitability (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Thus, in order to provide effective service and create value, organizations need to plan the delivery of their services and to ensure the successful implementation of the actual plan as more pressure continue to influence the public sector organization (Zafra-Gomez, et al. 2013). Consequently, proper planning and effective implementation of delivery plans are the main factors for the service delivery system. Moreover, constant development of service procedures contributes to the optimization of service delivery system and may increases the organizational standard of service.

Generally, system effectiveness is perceived as the ability of producing an exact desired effect, or in other words, "getting the right things done" (Drucker, 2014). From the context of service management, service delivery system is described as the structure, infrastructure, and processes for delivering a high quality service (Goldstein at al. 2002).

Based on these explanations, it could be perceived that service delivery system effectiveness is related to the degree to which a system's goals have been achieved and as such, an effective service delivery system is the system that is able to deliver the expected outcomes for which it was plan to achieved (Kingman & Brinage, 2011). The system should be able to produce good outcomes ranging from minimizing costs to improved accessibility of efficient operations, better

service quality and optimum customer experience and design and development of new changes (Walker, et al. 2013).

In order to assess the efficiency of the service delivery system most scholars either measure precise outputs of the system, such as the time required for task execution, costs etc. or use alternative variables and assess the effectiveness of its most vital determinants (Ponsignon, Smart, & Maull, 2011).

More so, employees' role performance adaptability and effectiveness of employee are seen as the main variable of service delivery system effectiveness, because they reflect the most significant outcome of the service delivery system, which is its ability to satisfy customer needs and create value to them. As service delivery system creates various interdependent service processes which are organized hierarchically and are integrated with explicit process planning (Sausa & Ross, 2006), the coordination of these processes should also be taken into consideration in the plan of service delivery system effectiveness. This is because these two factors will determine the way this integrated set of processes will be incorporated into the service delivery and as such the system ability to perform. Furthermore, , service employees, both the ones working in the front line and those who support them in the back of office, are an attached part of the service and their performance is consider vital for the success of the system(Smart, 2011). Therefore, by performing their designated duty, service employees can contribute to the attainment of the organizational goals.

From the above postulations, there is a need to emphasize that there is a strong relationship between employee's role performance and original outcomes such as improved service quality. As such therefore, employee adaptability is a vital ingredient in the organization's drive toward meeting the pre-determine goal, so is seen as significant indicator of service delivery system effectiveness. Zeithaml & DanGremier (2009) contends that workers' capacity to adjust to citizen's behavior is directly related to service quality. More adaptable workers will not find it difficult to give more attention to citizens and thus satisfy their individual needs. On the other hand, workers who do not have the capability to adopt their behavior to the circumstances and just follow their controller's instructions cannot deliver high quality of service (Sony & Mekoth, 2012).

Notwithstanding, employee coordination seen as the ability to which workers perform their duty effectively in order to attain organizational objective (Flinger et al, 2011). Employees' cooperation has been described as a vital tool that led to the attainment organizational objectives (Gittel & Weiss 2004). Public organizations should always aim at meeting the communication gap between them and their workers as that will enhance work effectiveness and as such will led to team work and at the end the organizational goal of improve service delivery will be attained.

To achieve this, there is the need to have full cooperation of both staff that work in the same department and across the various units When this is put in place organizations will reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and communication gap during the service delivery operation and by averting these organizational problems the efficiency of the service delivery system is guaranteed and effectiveness is improved, hence, leading to a good citizens evaluations. When this is put in place, there will be proper coordination between the line and the back office staffs as this will constitute an important factor for the success of the service delivery (Zomerdijs & Vries, 2007). On the other hand, effectiveness of process control is ssen as an important tool of the service delivery system that can positively affect the quality of the service been delivered (Zeithaml,

2010). Based on the above arguments, the paper perceived process control as the totality of the procedures for controlling the work flow and the effective utilization of available resources in order to attain a predetermine organizational goal (Armistead, 2011). Those procedures, includes the use of assigned standards, performance measurement outfits and control tools, that will be used to increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of the service delivery process.

When these are put in place, the service providers will effectively evaluates, implement and redefines the service delivery process in order to make it more effective, more efficient and more consumer-driven. Thus, the control process system will make the service delivery system more effective and the services provided to consumers more efficient (Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005). As the service delivery system and process control are interdependent, there attachment will result into more efficient and less cost effective (George & Gibson 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Different government reforms agenda have highlighted user needs in the choice of service delivery vehicle to ensure service responsiveness and user value, managers may not essentially reflect this rhetoric in action, but instead favor resourceful cost-cutting in response to increasingly demanding budgetary goals. Following the theoretical argument that E-Governance will carry differences for service effectiveness and on the expectation that external representatives are more pressured in to meeting citizens' demands relative to the traditional way of doing government activities. The paper recommends that appropriate measures put in place in ensuring that government has a combined IT platform for an effective system of service delivery.

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