

FACTORS ENHANCING E-GOVERNMENT SERVICE GAPS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXT

Gilbert Mahlangu, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Midlands State University, mahlago97@gmail.com

Ephias Ruhode, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, RuhodeE@cput.ac.za

Abstract: Globally, the discourse of e-government has gathered momentum in public service delivery. No country has been left untouched in the implementation of e-government. Several government departments and agencies are now using information and communication technology (ICTs) to deliver government services and information to citizens, other government departments, and businesses. However, most of the government departments have not provided all of their services electronically or at least the most important ones. Thus, this creates a phenomenon of e-government service gaps. The objective of this study was to investigate the contextual factors enhancing e-government service gaps in a developing country. To achieve this aim, the TOE framework was employed together with a qualitative case study to guide data collection and analysis. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews from government employees who are involved in the implementation of e-government services in Zimbabwe as well as from citizens and businesses. Eleven (11) factors were identified and grouped under the TOE framework. This research contributes significantly to the implementation and utilisation of e-government services in Zimbabwe. The study also contributes to providing a strong theoretical understanding of the factors that enhance e-government service gaps explored in the research model.

Keywords: E-government, e-government service, e-government factors, service gaps, implementation, Zimbabwe, developing country

1. INTRODUCTION

E-government is the praxis of transforming government services from traditional to electronic means using modern information communication technologies (ICTs) to provide easy access to government services for all users such as citizens, businesses, and government agencies (Hanum et al., 2020). Globally, the discourse of e-government has gathered momentum in the public service delivery (Alabdallat, 2020; Almutairi et al., 2020; Jacob et al., 2019; Lee & Porumbescu, 2019; Lindgren et al., 2019; Mukamurenzi, 2019; Sánchez-Torres & Miles, 2017; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Accordingly, Alabdallat (2020) revealed that no country has been left untouched in the implementation of e-government. Several government departments and agencies are now using ICTs to deliver government services and information to citizens, other government departments, and businesses. However, Alabdallat (2020, p. 5) noted that “most of the government departments have not provided all of their services electronically or at least the most important ones. This issue seems to be confined to the developing countries, especially among countries with very low incomes”. Thus, this creates a phenomenon of e-government service gaps.

There is a range of definitions of this term, but in this study, e-government service gaps refer to the extent to which e-government services are not fulfilled to the intended users (government employees, businesses and citizens) of the e-government system (Herdiyanti et al., 2018) either because the system is constrained to deliver the required services or some of the expected services are not being provided. Thus, e-government service gaps represent two major fine points: the constraints on the system to deliver e-services and the service deficiencies from the government.