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ASSESSMENT OF EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICES DELIVERY THROUGH E-PLATFORM IMPLEMENTATION? EVIDENCE FROM KENYA

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Abstract

Digital service innovations play an important role in service delivery in our day-to-day lives, particularly in public sector service delivery. socio-economic sectors such as finance, health, education, agriculture and Governments are quickly embracing technology for dissemination of information, enhancement of service delivery and reaching their customers more effectively and efficiently. The aim of e-government is to provide a digital platform for improving communication and information access from government to citizens and vice versa. The Government has identified the potential of ICT in driving the economy and has embarked on several transformative ICT initiatives. This study uses literature review to focuses on Kenya's public sector digital service innovations. It looks into challenges encountered on the digital platform, and the fact that this platform has not realized the objective of maximizing service delivery to the public. A number of factors and situations which has resulted into inefficiency arising from digital divide among other factors has been mentioned along other recommendations.

Keywords: Efficiency, Government service, e-Platform, JEL Code: B23, B26

1 INTRODUCTION

The application of information and communication technology remains the central focus of reference in modern service delivery and network connections. For any institution to remain relevant and competitive, it must go digital, irrespective whether it is a private or public enterprise. Therefore, the digital service platform must be developed nearly by all institutions to uplift their level and value of service or product delivery. In such circumstance, government sector service delivery network (E-Government) must be made to be active and running.

E-government involves the application of information technology like the area network, internet and even mobile computing to improve and diversify the quality of service delivery to citizens and to the business community (Compeau, Higgins 1995, Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011). This is a platform created by government to digitize the services and establish more effective communication between itself and the general citizens (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011).

Generally, there is a serious concern from the managers of public services to address the cost of service delivery without necessarily compromising on its quality and efficiency, . It has been observed that the approach to manage public affairs by governments of developing countries has shifted from traditional approach of bureaucracy to citizen driven through information revolution. (Nguluba, 2007) such digital wind is blowing all over global continents.

Views in many sub-Saharan Africa countries is that government digital service innovation in the public sector is a political affair and not a technical challenge, requiring a professional attention Nguluba, (2007)

Even though digital government services are aimed at being inclusive in terms of service dissemination, there exist a number of inequality in terms of enabler distributions and other hindrances which does not allow efficiency to prevail (Belanger 2012).

Digital divide is conceived as a key factor which degrades efficiency in the working of government, it exists in most of the countries and it reflect on the gap existing between those categories of citizens who can access the ICT and those who cannot due to certain socioeconomic or some other reasons (Cullen 2001).

The paper focuses on the literature review on e-government platform in Kenya. It looks into various innovations which the country has put in place to ultimately open up efficient government public interaction. It finally looks into the possible reasons impeding the digital service delivery and discusses some possible solutions as way forward to improving the digital service delivery.

1.1 Statement of a problem

Government of Kenya has constantly struggled to improve on the quality and efficiency of public service delivery to its citizens since the independence from the colonial government in 1963 This situation has called for a number of government initiative reforms in the civil service ranging from periodic training of government workers, setting of a number of government training institutions and intergovernmental exchange programmes. The desire to provide more efficient public service resulted into setting up of an e-government platform in 2004, to further efficiency in service delivery.

However, there are limited number of studies which have been conducted regarding the e-government performance in Kenya. The studies have revealed insufficient information relating to efficiency level in the service delivery through e-government in Kenya. This study, through literature review, will assess the efficiency measures and innovations which the government has put in place to achieve efficient quality service, and will further recommend the way forward to make the digital government more efficient and effective in it service delivery.

The findings from the study will help in the policy formation regarding ways on how to possibly improve the efficiency in service delivery.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the efficiency of the e-government platform in the delivery of public services in Kenya.

Specific objectives:

1. To examine the digital innovations used in the e-government platform.
2. To determine factors causing digital divide in Kenya.
3. To establish if the e-government services spreads out equally throughout the rural Kenya.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many findings have established that e-government is majorly influenced by the objective to enhance efficiency in accessibility to public information and services, at a manageable cost, and improve efficiency **(**Adeboye 1995, Njuru 2011). (Kashorda 2009) observed that the Kenyan government has increased access to ICT equipment in all ministries. Even though, Thompson (2009) argue that ICT equipment do not necessarily translate to positive outcome if

not put into proper and meaningful use. Equally, the two scholars (Adeboye 1995) is of the opinion that electronic government is not a cure to many of the challenges facing developing countries particularly in regard to democratic management, **(**Adeboye 1995, Njuru 2011).

E-government services continue to be embedded in the environment of today's public administration and therefore remain limited by what these administrations are capable and willing to do. The term "e-government" as used by the OECD E-Government Project, applies to the use of ICT as a tool to achieve better government. Thus, e-government is not about business as usual but should instead focus on the using ICT to transform the structures, operations and most importantly the culture of government public interaction (Ochara 2010).

According to (Harriss 2002), due to poor Internet connectivity, it may take time for Kenyans to achieve universal access full ICT use, since less than 10% of 38.8 million Kenyans have access to computers. In addition, (Kashorda 2009) argued that while digital Hubs are still in their initial level of development, the country still, has limited pervasive cyber cafes and institutional access to the Internet facilities (Karshoda 2009), observes that more than 80% of Kenyans live in the rural areas and this intensifies the challenge of Internet connections, even though the use of other ICT gadgets such as smartphones has proliferated as more than 77% of the Kenyan population own mobile telephones (Bailard 2009, Kashorda 2009).

2.1 Demand and supply perspectives of e- government

Generally, reforms in an administration system of government can be analysed or explained from both demand and supply perspectives. The demand-side explanation falls around national challenges of governance. The recognition is that administrative reforms are closely intertwined with political reform, aimed at strengthening the ability and capacity of elected officials to produce results (Ochara 2010). The success of the democratic elected representatives, as being measured by the benefits they are creating for their constituents, who demand top performance and efficiency, proper accountability and public trust, and a renewed focus on delivering better services and results (Ochara 2010). Thus the demand-side explanation has to do with the politicization of the reform agenda which can be driven internally (bureaucracy), and politician-driven as well as society-driven (Ochara 2010).

Another orientation of the demand-side explanation is the 'political nexus triad' (PNT) in which actors (politicians, bureaucrats, and citizens) negotiate their political interests regarding the function and structure of government (Moon, Ingraham 1998). The dominant interests therefore emerge to shape the structure and function of government. For instance, in the Kenyan situation, after having a highly centralized government since gaining independence from Britain in 1963, the general elections of December, 2007, brought to the fore serious issues of governance, which has culminated into a shift of governance structure to a parliamentary (Ochara 2010) system. This change of governance was 'forced' on the PNT after a break out of civil unrest (citizens' demands as part of the PNT) for close to three months.

The supply-side focus argues that the reform practices including New Public Management (NPM) are being spread by reform-pioneering countries, institutions, or leaders to imitator countries, such as those in emerging economies (Ochara 2010). An increasingly post-NPM claim is the emphasis on the influence of the civil society as a source of demand for improved governance (Polidano, Hulme 2001, Ochara 2010). This may be a sign of two different versions of the supply-side explanation, one which is highly managerial oriented under the banner of NPM, while another is rooted under the 'good governance' notion (Ochara 2010). Given that the good governance paradigm also includes intra governmental reforms, it therefore appears to be a combination of an influence from pioneering countries to implement NPM-related

reforms as well as that from the civil society in order for government to meet citizen expectations.

2.2 Kenya E-Government Scenario

The pioneer of e-Government in Africa predicted that the development of e-Government in most African countries would be the world's major and fastest-growing business in the next period (Yayehyirad Kitaw 2006). The government of Kenya has remained committed in the promotion of this platform of e-Government initiative since 2006. The goals of this initiative include better and more efficient delivery of government information and services to all citizens, increased productivity among public employees, the encouragement of public' participation in government initiatives.

The Kenyan Government approved E-Government strategy in 2004, making the start of e-government journey. In 2006, National ICT policy was approved under the Ministry of Information and Communications (Wamoto 2015**).** This was to create order and harmony in Government ICT initiatives which were at the time regularly characterized by lack of coordination with each department following their own ICT program which resulted to wastage through replication of resources. Directorate of e-Government was set to oversee, coordination of implementation programme, formulation and communication of ICT guidelines and enforcement of national and international standards in the working of ICT service platform (Odongo 2012). The government has since initiated several e-government systems with the aim of enhancing efficiency, transparency and democracy within public administration. The Government has identified the potential of ICT in driving the economy and has embarked on several transformative ICT initiatives.

Further data available in the ministry of information and technology annual report (2006) reveals that some of the projects that were implemented during the five-year plan. Key among them is the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) and Integrated Personnel and Payroll Database (IPPD) which are fully operational in the ministries. Other applications that have been rolled out include the Local Authorities Integrated Financial Operations Management Systems (LAIFOMS), Education Management Information System (EMIS), Integrated Taxation Management Systems (ITMS) currently known as ITAX after making great improvement in design, online Recruitment and Selection System in the public service commission and the Border Control System in the Ministry of state for Immigration and Registration of persons **(**Midida, et al. 2013).

To effectively create the e-government interactive platform, a project was launched by MoIT in Kenya, the Huduma Centres as one-stop shops that aims at providing a wide range of services demonstrated how ICT can be leveraged to substantially improve public service delivery (Abdallah, et al. 2015) The private sector in partnership with the Government has also played a critical role in driving some of the projects including the use of mobile payment platforms to collect government revenue such as e-citizen and e-JijiPay. noticeable evidence from is the County (e-JijiPay) is an application designed for citizens of the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi to facilitate easy payment of City County bills and expenses which includes; Parking, Land Rates, Rent Payment, Construction Permits, Single Business Permits, Advertisements and more (Okiro, et al. 2015).

The digital economy holds huge potential for growth, so ICT will be expected to play an increasing role in affording opportunities to the youth of the country to play an active role in the economic sector.

2.3 Objectives of E-Government in Kenya

The current Kenyan e-government strategy, E-Government 2006 Strategy and Programme, includes the same main goals as many OECD countries' e-government strategies:

● Electronic government should make public administration more efficient, transparent and – in the long run – less expensive.

● A more efficient central public administration providing better services should allow for the broadening of participatory democracy, an increase in citizens' and business actors' confidence and trust in the state, and greater participation by citizens in political life. Efforts should be made to develop a more transparent and substantial relationship between representatives of public authorities and citizens.

● By providing new public forums and easier access to public services oriented towards the needs of citizens, an environment can be created in which public administrative bodies and communities can share their experiences and influence the realisation of local and national e-government programmes. The relationship between the state, citizens, and their communities should be reconstructed on new foundations that meet the requirements of citizens and businesses.

● As a service provider, the state will only be able to accomplish its tasks by ensuring the free flow of information. Public administration must initiate and foster the process of consultation and create opportunities for information sharing. In more general terms, Hungary has to catch up with the countries that are currently at the forefront of developing and providing e-government services.

● The state's increased role in leading the application, use and dissemination of ICT will drive the process of constructing and developing a knowledge-based society and increasing the competitiveness of the economy. The strategy identifies six areas for action:

● Basic infrastructure elements: Establish a network infrastructure such as: a government backbone network connecting all government bodies, an e-authentication system.

2.4 Theoritical model

The study applies the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), to explain the relationship between the introduction of information technology and its adaptation as an approach to explain differences in human behaviours in the IT adoption and use: (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011, Taylor, Todd 1995).

TAM theory explains that there exist linkages flow in a sequence of beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. In order to understand individual system applications, most studies focus on factors affecting the individual's intentions of system acceptance (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011, Karahanna, Straub et al. 1999). The model of TAM can be demonstrated in the given diagram below.

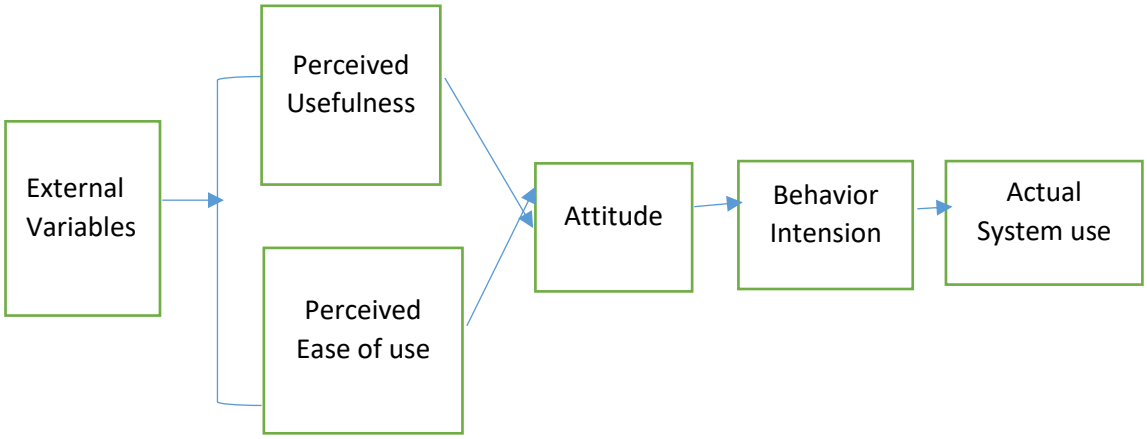

Fig 1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Sources: (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011); TAM model in e-government

Prior research suggests that perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are two major influential emotional beliefs that determine a user's IT acceptance. (Chin, et al. 1989) defined perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" and perceived ease of use as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011, Venkatesh, Davis 2000).

This study mainly focuses on the evaluation of the efficiency through the applicability of TAM in the e-Government setting in Kenya and focuses on how Kenyans behave differently, and exhibit different levels of acceptance, then other e-Government users. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are playing an increasingly vital role in the daily lives of people in Africa, revolutionizing work and leisure and changing the rules of doing business (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011, Taylor, Todd 1995). With the emergence of an information technology economy, the country of Kenya could reach higher levels of social, economic, and political development. The e-Government services include information for research, government forms and services, public policy information, employment and business opportunities, voting information, tax filing, license registration, or renewal, payment of fines, and submission of comments to government officials (Larsen, et al. 2002) . However, the successful operation of e-Government does not depend on the technology, but rather on the people (Lin, Fofanah et al. 2011, Akman, Yazici et al. 2005). Thus, this study focuses on the efficiency of e-Government success from the perspective of Kenyan citizens.

2.5 Drivers facilitating the E-Government in Kenya

Government initiatives

The government has enshrined development strategies of the ICT sector in the country's Vision 2030 goals. Campaigns to promote more investments in this sector are underway led by the government and the ICT Board, such as the development of the US$ 14.5 billion Konza Technology City Government initiatives. The city aims at building a stronger ICT Hub, with an aim of improving internet connectivity to bust the use of ICT in the country.

Local innovation

A number of ICT Hubs in Kenya have been established to promote the development and use of ICT technologies through co-working, collaboration and incubation services. The I-Hub, one of the best known hubs brings together technologists, investors, tech companies and hackers in the area creating an ecosystem of creators and users of ICT and mobile technologies Local innovation.

Local private companies

Mobile operator Safaricom M-pesa has revolutionised m-commerce in the country. The operator in collaboration with Microsoft has also made it possible for software developers on the Microsoft platform to sell their products via the Safaricom payment platform Local private companies.

Foreign multinationals

Google, IBM, Nokia Siemens, Huawei, Samsung and many other multinational companies operational in Kenya have boosted development and confidence of the sector and doing business in Kenya.

Digital Literacy Programme(DLP)

The government initiated the program out of the conviction that technology has the power to bring about systemic change in basic and higher education by transforming teaching and learning through integrating technology in the learning environment. The learners are entitled to a luminous green tablet while the teachers receive a blue laptop. In the on-going implementation targeting all public Primary schools in Kenya.

Over 75000 teachers in public Primary Schools have been trained in readiness for the project implementation. With full implementation of the DLP project, the government expects increased national digital literacy levels and revolution of the countries digital economy. (Peixoto, et al. 2016).

Presidential Digital Talent Program (PDTP)

The project was conceived through the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Master plan. The program is aimed at growing ICT through leadership and increase the relevance of ICT in business principles in management and public service delivery. It is also aimed at building ICT technical capacity in government for effective service delivery. The program provides internship to ICT and engineering graduates. The trainees undergo mentorship in private and public institutions for a period of one year. The first 100 trainees graduated in March 2016 and another group of 400 are already on board undergoing training. The program aims at achieving workforce development for effective and efficient services delivery leveraging on ICT (Peixoto, et al. 2016).

Development of Technological Hub (Konza Smart City – Kenya)

The objectives of the projects are to support entrepreneurs and access to free Wi-Fi in all the 290 constituencies countrywide. It will also enhance awareness and uptake of on-line platforms for employment and business opportunities (Peixoto, et al. 2016).

In line with the technological development in Kenya, Konza City is set to be a world-class Smart City and a prime economic driver for the nation, with a robust mix of businesses, workers, residents, and urban amenities. It purpose is to be the country's heart of innovative solutions for ICTs, business, and health and education.

3 EVIDENCE FROM SUCCESSFUL DIGITIZATION OF E-GOVERNMENT IN KENYA

In many ways, Kenya is ideally suited to digitize its government functions. Consider the following:

***Mature Mobile Money Ecosystem*:** According to the World Bank's Global Findex report, 58 percent of the adult population in Kenya had active mobile money accounts in 2014, the highest rate in the world. The Central Bank of Kenya reported 31 million mobile money subscribers backed by close to 144,000 agents in 2015. Usage extends beyond person-to-person transfers to include airtime purchase, credit, insurance, payments among others, however, many types of handsets used by many people does not accommodate many transactions which take place in the e-government platform (Baller, et al. 2016)

In contrast, payment card usage is generally low in Kenya, especially for online transactions: 95 percent of debit cards are used solely at Automated Teller Machines, while credit card usage is at 4 percent. That's one reason previous efforts to digitize the public transport system by introducing "My1963" and "BebaPay" cards were unsuccessful. Given the low values of public transport costs and poor uptake of card-based products, these services could not adequately compete with cash. But owing to its pervasiveness, mobile money – though largely dominated by the M-PESA service – can avoid similar pitfalls, becoming a critical enabler in the digitization of government service payments in Kenya.

Supporting Infrastructure (Huduma Centres): "Huduma" means "service" in Swahili, and Huduma centres are one-stop shops set up countrywide by the government to complement the e-Citizen portal by providing additional services and those requiring physical presence or special assistance. The 47 Huduma centres are comprised mainly of upgraded post office outlets in each county, with mobile units serving extremely remote areas. However, the centres are not effective because of the frequent power supply disruptions, fluctuating internet connections and operational skills which many people within the country side face from time to time.

On average, 12,000 people are served daily at Huduma Centres, and as of June 2015, payments for services rendered totalling $50 million.

Internet Access and Usage: According to the Internet live stats, Kenya's internet penetration rate is 45 percent of the population (21.2 million), after Nigeria, South Africa and Seychelles. Mobile technology and the increase in smartphone ownership have played key roles in improving access. Affordable and accessible Internet enables quicker government service delivery especially for services such as driving license renewal or land rent payments, which can be initiated and completed online (Kimenyi, et al. 2015).

Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment: The Central Bank of Kenya passed regulation governing the digitization of government services and payment platforms in December 2014. This is in addition to existing local and international laws and policy frameworks aimed at promoting a safe, efficient and transparent digital payment ecosystem (Kimenyi, et al. 2015)

4 FINDINGS

It is generally established that a number of initiatives which the government of Kenya has put in place are still at the initial initiative level. A number of institutions are in the process of enforcing the government policies to enable the e-government project to work.

Mass education and awareness regarding ICT knowledge is still missing. However, government has initiated a number of activities to make the public aware regarding the use and application of ICT networks in the economy.

It is also observed that inequality exist when it comes to the way instruments of e-government has to be distributed for the public use.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The e-Government initiative will be a shared vision between the National and County Governments and the private sector and the implementation process will involve all stakeholders. The broad objectives of e-Government in all aspects of National and County governments will be to:- (a) Improve collaboration between Government agencies and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization; (b) Improve Kenya's competitiveness by providing timely information and delivery of Government services; (c) Reduce transaction costs for the Government, citizens and the private sector through the provision of services electronically; (d) Provide for access to information held by public institutions, provide for information security and protection of personal information; and (e) Ensure automation of Government services and the extension of establishment of "Huduma" centres: one-stop centres for accessing all Government information and services by the citizens; to sub-counties. E-Government Applications: In order to improve productivity & ensure all citizens participate effectively in the information society, the government shall consider the following: (a) Automation of Government functions. – by undertaking Business Process re-engineering of government departments in order to identify opportunities for automation (e-Health, transport, e-Agriculture, e-Lands, etc.); (b) ICT Integration into the economy - by promoting the use of ICTs across all public and private sectors (within SMEs) in order to increase productivity and competitiveness of the overall economy; (c) ICT integration in Education – by reviewing and ensuring that the basic & tertiary education curriculum and teaching methods are geared for the knowledge economy (Digital Literacy Program); (d) Digital Villages- by promoting the creation of information centres/digital villages (e.g. Huduma centres) across all counties.

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