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Analysing the critical factors influencing trust in e-government adoption from citizens' perspective: A systematic review and a conceptual framework

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ABSTRACT

Although the success adoption of e-government contingent upon citizens' trust and their willingness to use it, little consideration has been paid to explore the adoption of e-government from citizens' trust perspective. This paper provides a critical and systematic review of the current literature on citizens' trust in e-government, with a particular focus on the most critical factors influencing citizens' trust in respect of the adoption of e-government. The extant literature was identified through six electronic databases, from 2000 to 2014. Academic articles were reviewed if they contained a relevant discussion of the antecedents or factors influencing citizens' trust in e-government adoption. The findings of this review reveal that several studies have been conducted in the area of trust in e-government (particularly trust in government and trust in the internet) with limited consideration paid to citizen's aspects of trust (such as personality, culture, gender, experience, education level, beliefs and value of systems). Based on the findings of the critical review, a conceptual framework is proposed by developing further the updated DeLone and McLean IS Success Model, which presents the antecedents of trust in e-government adoption.

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1. Introduction

The electronic government or e-government encompasses the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) to provide effective delivery of government's services and information to citizens, businesses and other government agencies (Bélanger & Carter, 2008; Carter & Weerakkody, 2008; Layne & Lee, 2001; Moon, 2002; Rose, Persson, Heeager, & Irani, 2015). Many scholars (e.g. Weerakkody & Dhillon, 2008; Bannister & Connolly, 2011; Janssen & Shu, 2008; Lips, Gil-Garcia, & Sorrentino, 2012; Weerakkody, Janssen, & Dwivedi, 2009) argue that the successful adoption and acceptance of e-government provides potential advantages for citizens, business and other government agencies. However, in many countries, some citizens still do not trust using online services and e-government applications, which impact the adoption of e-government (Al-Busaidy & Weerakkody, 2009; Cullen & Reilly, 2007; McLeod & Pippin, 2009; Ndou, 2004;

Palanisamy, 2004; Seifert & Petersen, 2002). In addition, Khasawneh and Abu-Shanab (2013) and Al-Hujran, Al-Debei, Chatfield, and Migdadi (2015) highlight that despite the advantages of e-government, there is still some rejection or even fear of e-government applications by the public. Therefore, trust is one of the most significant aspects in the implementation of e-government strategies, which will lead to recommendations from the users/citizens who experienced it to other citizens. According to Carter and Belanger (2005) and Colesca (2009), governments require to understand the factors influencing trust of citizens and other governments' agencies in e-government in order to achieve successful adoption of e-government services.

Trust in e-government services is a complex relationship because it includes many complicated issues that affect citizens' trust in government services (Alshehri, Drew, & Alfarraj, 2012; Chopra & Wallace, 2003; Bélanger & Carter, 2008; Colesca, 2009; Mahmood, Osmani, & Sivarajah, 2014). Trust in the context of online transactions has been discussed in e-commerce (Chang & Cheung, 2005; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2000); however, few studies have analysed the role that trust plays in e-government services (Gefen, Rose, Warkentin, & Pavlou, 2005; Horst, Kuttchreuter, & Gutteling, 2006; Joison, 2009; Schaupp, Carter, & Hibbs, 2009). Carter and Weerakkody (2008) agreed that despite cultural

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differences in the adoption of e-government across countries, “trust” is a universal factor influencing the adoption of e-government. Before using e-government services, it is important that citizens believe that their government will provide the effective managerial and technical resources that are required to implement and secure these online systems (Alshehri & Drew, 2010; Colesca, 2009; Dwivedi, Weerakkody, & Janssen, 2011). Moreover, citizens must be confident to use e-government and they must have the intention to engage in e-government services.

In the existing literature, several studies (Carter & Belanger, 2005; Khasawneh & Abu-Shanab, 2013; Navarrete, 2010; Teo, Srivastava, & Jiang, 2008; Wang & Lo, 2013; Wang & Lu, 2010; Welch, Hinnant, & Moon, 2005) have been conducted in the area of trust in e-government (particularly trust in government and trust in the internet) with limited consideration to citizen's aspects of trust (such as personality, culture, gender, experience, education level, beliefs and value systems etc). Al-Hujran et al. (2015) agreed that the existing literature focuses only on how the technical aspects of technology and government reputation influence citizens' trust at the adoption stage which is believed to be the major barrier to e-government adoption. Thus, studying the concepts of trust in e-government from citizens perspective is considered to have a major consideration as citizens' adoption is the major objective of e-government (Welch et al., 2005; Teo et al., 2008; Rehman, Kamal, & Esichaikul, 2012; Khasawneh & Abu-Shanab, 2013). Consequently, a lack of clear understanding of the factors and issues that influence trust in e-government from citizens' perspective is one of the main motivations of this research.

The aim of this paper is to investigate, examine and identify the critical factors influencing citizens' trust in e-government adoption from citizens' perspective. It also aims to develop a conceptual framework for trust in e-government based on DeLone and McLean IS Model which studies the influence of information quality, system quality and service quality in intention to use and users' satisfaction. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a background of the concept of trust. In Section 3, a methodology of the review is explained. Section 4 presents a reported analysis of the data conducted in Section 3. Section 5 presents the finding of the systematic review. In Section 6, based on the finding of the review, the D&M IS Success model is developed as a framework to the antecedents of citizens' trust in e-government. Section 7 presents the theoretical and practical implications of this study. The final section concludes, with a presentation of the limitations and contributions of the research.

2. Background

2.1. Definition of trust

The concept of trust has appeared over the past 50 years with the development of human and social interaction (Paliszkiewicz, 2013). Trust is considered as an important part of a relationship because it shows how people interact and build relationships positively (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000). Trust refers to a willingness to depend on an unfamiliar trustee where the trustor does not have “credible, meaningful information about, or affective bonds” for the trustee (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p.712) also define trust as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party”. However, many researchers have difficulty defining this concept because of the multi-dimension nature of trust. For example, McAlister (1995, p. 25) reported that “although trust's importance has been

acknowledged, the matter of how it develops and functions has received little systematic theoretical attention”. In addition, Karvonen (1999) agreed that a lack of careful analysis of the concept of trust in sociological, philosophical and technical factors is one of the fundamental causes of the confusing picture of trust.

Researchers (e.g. Chopra & Wallace, 2003; Colesca, 2009) have studied this concept in a many disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, computer science, organizational science and business and marketing. Each discipline focuses on different aspects of trust that cause complexity in defining trust.

- **Psychological approach;** According to psychology, trust is the psychological state of the individual in which the trustor risks being exposed to the trustee based on positive expectations and the intention of the trustee (Rotter, 1980; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). In addition, Hamshar et al. (1968) Hamshar, Geller, & Rotter (1968) agreed that trust is based on perceived control of the individual over their environment. Trust has three aspects: cognitive, emotional and behavioural. Cognitive trust is when the trustor makes a coherent decision to place his trust in the trustee. Emotional trust is when trust is built in the trustee in an emotional way; and behavioural trust is when trust is built on the basis of commitment (Schlenker et al., 1973).
- **Sociology approach;** According to sociologists, trust is the property pivotal to both individuals and social groups (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Consequently, culture, ethnicity and religious affiliation are important factors influencing trust (Rotter, 1971). According to Sherchan et al. (2013), trust in sociology is based on two viewpoints: individual and societal. The individual level is similar to its perception from psychology. On the other hand, the societal level focuses on a collective psychological state of the group.
- **Economical approach;** In this approach, trust focuses on the reputation of the trustee and the benefits or risks that will come from the trusting relationship. In order to earn a good profit and build the company reputation, it is important that everyone trusts each other (Ouchi, 1980; Dyer, 1997)
- **Computer Science;** There are two components of trust in computer science: user trust and system trust. The concept of user trust is extracted from psychology and sociology, according to which it is a subjective expectation an entity has about another's future behaviour (Mui, 2003). However, in e-commerce businesses, such as Amazon and eBay or on social media, trust is based on user feedback and past interactions between customers. This indicates that trust is based on rationality. Moreover, in such circumstances, trust in user feedback increases in response to positive experience and decreases otherwise. Trust in online systems was found to be of two types: direct and recommendation. Direct trust is developed by personal experience while recommendation trust is developed on the basis of someone else's experience. (Sherchan, Nepal, & Paris, 2013)

The concept of system trust is based on its reliability, effectiveness and security (Sherchan et al., 2013), according to which the expectation is that a device or system will faithfully behave in a particular manner to fulfil its intended purpose (Yao et al., 2010). For instance, the trustworthiness of a computer device would depend upon the reliability and effectiveness of its hardware and software to perform the expected functions (Moreland et al., 2010). Moreover, according to Srivastava and Teo (2009), there are two risks associated with trust in technology: privacy and security risks.

- **Organizational Science approach;** Organizational science is a field of study which deals with the functionality of an

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