Cameroon's Web-Centric: Assessing Websites' Information Flow between Government Ministries and Citizens

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Abstract: *- Research and experience have shown that information on the websites of government ministries' in Cameroon is rarely updated. Some websites do not have user's option page to post comments. There is inefficiency and inconsistency in the dissemination of information on the websites. For this reason, long stretches of lines are still common in front of government ministries where citizens come to obtain information, and submit administrative files for processing. To understand this phenomenon, the researchers used an in-house survey for two reasons: firstly to know if some electronic information tools other than websites are used by government ministries in governance and secondly, to ascertain the extent to which new media tools are a catalyst for the effective implementation of e-Gov. in Cameroon. A non-random sampling technique was used to get the opinions of officials of 10 Regional Delegations of government ministries located in Buea, capital of the South West Region. The study used four theories: Agenda Setting theory (1972), Uses and Gratification theory (1974), the technology acceptance model (1989), and the Web Trust theory (2005). Data collection was done through questionnaire administration and analysed with the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 21). Descriptive, inferential and modelling analyses were used. All ten ministries agreed to using radio, television, newspapers and magazines in communicating and receiving feedback from the public. Most (70%) government ministries in Cameroon agree that e-government practice in Cameroon is not effective. The Public as well as the government both depend and use more of mainstream media than new media in information access and dissemination. As recommendation, the government needs to provide a more stable and favourable platform for new media since it is certain that new media will be the future for any aspiring e-Gov. economy. Looking ahead to Cameroon's emergence by 2035, the training of citizens on how to access, manage, receive, and communicate with the government via ICT facilities is primordial, with the caution that it remains only a means to an end and not an end in itself.*

Keywords: *- E-government, Government, Governance, Digitalization.*

Introduction

E-government is defined as the use of information technology in government, with government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), Government to Employee (G2E) and Government to Citizens (G2C), as its main components (Panzardi, 1996). Dodd (2000), posits an evolutional trend of e-government (electronic government) emergence from the private sector. E-government did not emerge following the E-commerce resolution as held by Dodd, but it found its roots in India around the 1970s as a result of high need for development in in-house government application in the areas of defence, economic monitoring, planning and adoption of Information Technology (IT) to manage data from other

Government agencies related to election, census, taxation, administration and public opinion (Madon, 2009).

By 2008, one hundred and seventy-nine (179) out of one hundred and ninety-two (192) UN member states reported that, they had implemented and developed strategies to successfully adopt the e-government system (UN and ITU, 2008). Brannen (2001), confirms that by the end of the 20th century, most African countries had adopted the e-government service approach, transforming from a government-client based office transaction and interaction system to an e-service network data based system of the government. The Economic

Commission for Africa (ECA) report (1996), had earlier reported the digital transformation strive in Africa, which it says, was harnessed by some public and private organisations such as the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI).

Years later, Asongwa (2013), confirmed in his study, "The state of e-government readiness in Africa'' that, some African countries had a functional web-centric system as far back as 2005. He further stated 12 African countries which were the best in e-Gov. in 2005, 2008 and 2010. That is, in 2005, Mauritius, South Africa and Morocco were the best followed by Egypt, Bothswana and others like Seychelles, Swaziland, Senegal, Algeria, Lesotho and Benin. In 2008, the top five countries maintained their positions, though there was a little slum and in 2010, Egypt, Lesotho and Mauritius took the lead as best African countries out of the 52, in e-government use and execution.

Cameroon has not been left behind in this peculiar innovation of Africa's engagement to the digital government turnover. In 2003, the Cameroon government launched the creation of websites (web portals) with the primary motive of having records of its citizens at home and abroad. It was also meant for inter-governmental interaction and national policy propositions, (Oliver, 2003). To realise this, collaborations between the UNU-International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST) and the National Agency for Information and Communication Technology (ANTIC), as well as the government of Cameroon culminated the development of a National Electronic Governance Strategy for Cameroon towards monitoring and managing the resulting programme.

At the early phase of introducing the e-government system worldwide, many governments lacked the understanding of its significance and functions (Fatile, 2012). Ifinedo (2005), identified some of the problems surrounding the adoption and management of the e-government service in Africa to range from poor organisational skills, inadequate infrastructural support, poor or limited human capital resources to the lack of computer expertise in e-Government management amongst inter-governmental agencies. These shortcomings observed have caused a series of embezzlement, poor interchange of web information between the government and the citizens, (citizen-centric), as well as limited inter-governmental interaction at the local and/or international levels. Other limitations include: rare update of information on ministries' websites; lack of user's opinion option; and long stretches of lines still found in front of government ministries either for information access or for the processing of financial and administrative files. Because of these backdrops visible in Cameroon and other parts of Africa, many doubts arose on the likelihood of the existence of an effective e-government system in Cameroon. The key question now is, to what extents do Cameroon government ministries use e-government through websites to communicate with the public? To answer this question, two hypothetical extremes have been framed, which are: Government ministries in Cameroon do not mainly depend on websites as an e-government service medium and that the digital government approach is more effective in governance for information flow between the government and the public. Based on this, the study surveyed government ministries with the aim to knowing if there are other e-government factors than websites that are used by them in communicating with the public and the level of e-government effectiveness in Cameroon's governing system. Also, the researchers were interested to know if the media channels which the government strongly rely on in setting public agenda are the same channels which the citizens equally depend on for service delivery and information awareness. Lastly, the researchers sort to know each government ministry's opinion on whether Cameroon is actually ready and willing to fully adopt the e-government system of governance in place of the strictly government-client office based system of governance which it currently operates.

Cognitive gains (intellectual and effective gains) from the study

This research is of scholarly importance at the hierarchical level (government, national agencies for e-Gov. practices and education) and down to the

common man. It will add to their intellectual understanding of the indissoluble relationship between e-government and democratic practices. This incorporates a governing system within a society, skewed towards facilitating socio-economic, cultural and political development. On practical baselines, the end result of this study will help the government as well as both national or international e-government agencies on how to better redefine or strategize e-government policies for local and foreign implementations. The justifications most often cited for an ICT usage policy are increased cost effectiveness, improved service delivery and improved performance. The use of ICTs will help accelerate e-participation by allowing information and services to be provided more rapidly and cost effectively, and reaching a wider audience. The different initiatives examined in the Cameroon ministries covered by this study identified a varied range of experiences of e-participation and may serve as models, which could be reinforced to a seamless local e-Gov. growth, and also enable a better understanding of the factors which could prevent its successful implementation.

Theory framework

Four theories underpin this research: Agenda Setting theory (1972), Uses and Gratification theory (1974), the Technology Acceptance Model (1989), and the Web Trust theory (2005). With Agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), the research seeks to understand how government ministries set the agenda on what they want the public to know and to think about. For instance, on the government websites, they make known what they perceive important for the public to access and to think about, but in as much as the government can set an agenda for the public, the public can also set agenda for the government, telling them what government should think about through public comments and debates. This is most revealing by the way government replies or responses to users' comments posted on government websites relating to government information and services delivered and vice-versa. Meanwhile, the Uses and Gratification theory (Blumler and Katz, 1974) shows explains E-government as a system used by the government to

interact with other divisions that make up the society:- government to citizen, government to business operators, government to employees and government to government, all in an attempt to enhance transparency, government mobility, efficiency and effectiveness in information and service delivery between and amongst the parties concerned. Government's use of this system is perceived as springboard for national and international integration/development in socio-economic, cultural and political advancement. And as the theory holds, people use a medium because of the satisfaction they derive from it. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), on its parts, suggests that when users are presented with a new software mechanism like digital governance a number of factors influence their (Government/Public) decision about how and when they will use it. This is notably considered in terms of perceived usefulness, which is the degree to which an individual, government agency or business operator believes that using a particular system (e-government service) would enhance better job performance, accountability and transparency, (Davis,1989). In Web Trust, Carter and Belanger (2004) as cited in Schaupp and Carter (2005) posit that, successful diffusion and acceptance of an innovation (e-government service in this case), is contingent upon the trust relationship between parties. The e-government system is salient upon a trust relationship between both the government and its publics (government to citizens, government to governments, government to employees and government to business). The researchers used the well tested perceived ease of use (PEOU) construct from the TAM to represent this concept. Gabner Group, an international consultancy firm, formulated a four-stage e-government model, and presented the stages as:- presence, interaction, transaction and transformation, (Deloitte et al, 2001). Presence involves the creation of an inclusive government website through which its (government's) intentions and objectives are made known; interaction is the hosting of search engines for easy navigation in order to enhance government-public interaction; transaction covers public services like the payment of bills and fines, renewal of licenses, amongst

others; and transformation strives to achieve the complete vision of e-governance with presence of "virtual agencies" where government information is readily available to all who need it.

Literature Review

E-governance is a complex mechanism, which involves processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their rights, obligations, and mediate their differences. This system covers every institution and organisation from family to the state, exercising political, economic and administrative authority to manage the affaires and the manner in which power is exercised for socio-economic development, (Fatile, 2012). Moon (2002) holds that these technologies have helped to deliver government services to citizens, improve interactions with businesses and industries, and provide access to information. A lot of controversy however has continued amongst communication scholars on the right definition(s) of e-government. Fatile (2012) quoting Moon (2002) says:

E- Governance refers to the use of information technologies (such as the Internet, the World Wide Web, and mobile computing) by government agencies that can transform their relationship with citizens, businesses, different areas of government,

and other governments. These technologies help deliver government services to citizens, improve interactions with businesses and industries, and provide access to information (pp.125).

Understanding Government and Governance

Grönlund and Horan (2004) define government as the process of decision making and a process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented by a group of individuals. It covers every institution and organisation from family to state. Governance, on the other hand, refers to the whole system involved in managing a society. The system includes: activities not only by government organisations but also companies and voluntary organisations and citizens. Nadu (2009), says Governance has two dimensions--information set secret (back office) and information made accessible (front office).

Riley (2004) described the parallel margin of Governance and Government. He said while government's foremost job is to focus society on achieving the public interest, that of governance is a way of describing the links between government and its broader environment:-political, social, cultural and administrative. The difference is further demonstrated in the table below:

Table 1: Government compared to Governance.

GOVERNMENT	GOVERNANCE
Superstructure	Functionality
Decisions	Processes
Rules/regulations	Goals/performance
Rules/regulations	Performance
Implementation	Coordination
Outputs	Outcomes
e-Government	**e-Governance**
electronic service delivery	electronic consultation
electronic workflow	electronic controllership
electronic voting	electronic engagement
electronic productivity	networked societal guidance

Source: Grönlund and. Horan (2004).

Grönlund and Horan (2004), hold that, the distinction that lies between governance and government are wide but it all depends on what information systems count as Government or Governance. This consists of three distinct but

interrelated spheres which they classified under political spheres, the administrative sphere and civil society.

E-government

Basu (2004) defines e-governance as a system used by government agencies via information technologies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, business and other arms of government. It equally allows possibilities for the public to initiate a request for particular government services without necessarily going to government vicinity or having direct contact with the government employee. Rather, services are rendered online.

Types of e-government

Sun and Barnett (1994), argue that a society with efficient and effective interaction and participation (two-way-communication) between the government and the public, hastens the connection and unifying strength in the communication flow. This, in effect, has been the unbending fact that global communication has been linking independent countries into an independent network following the changing age of technology. Thomas et al. (2004) say, these services and information flow differ according to users' needs, and this diversity has given rise to the development of different types of e-governments... E-government is classified into four main categories, which are Government-to-citizen (G2C), Government–to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G), Government-to-employee (G2E).

The importance of e-government

Fatile (2012) posits that many governments have a slow pace of adopting the e-government device service especially in Africa and this is because African leaders lack the understanding of the important role e-government plays in the socio-economic, cultural and political development of a nation. Deloitte (2003), in a research study, stated that the strategic application of IT mainly e-government, has had the potential to drastically reduce the amount of time, money and effort that businesses and citizens spend complying with rules and regulations in administrative units before finally getting their work done. E-government therefore, makes it possible for citizens, businesses, other levels of government and government employees to easily find information and get services from government agencies; making transactions (paying fees, obtaining permits and so on) easier. It also enables government agencies to align their efforts as needed to improve service and reduce operating costs (Ndou, 2004 and Watson & Mundy, 2001). E-governing improves services through better understanding of users' requirements, thus aiming for seamless online services.

Research on the future of e-government

The future of the world's adoption of e-government remains a global concern. Communication scholars like Dawes, Blonars, Fletcher and Bertot (1999), have successfully achieved a unified communication phase within the frame work of the e-government research system where there should be the need for implementing future and ICT driven views for reliable and sustainable e-government policies. For better policy pursue and formation, Fletcher and Bertot (1999) and Dawes (2008), noted that a lot of global consciousness sprung up about the e-governance system, envisaged by sponsorship organizations like the UN National Science Foundation (NSF) towards harmonising policy management and technological interactions to address problems facing the public. Interestingly, the UN Global E-Gov. Report (2008) holds that 179 out of the 192 UN member states have developed and implemented strategies earmarked towards a successful attainment of the e-government service system. The report further revealed that E-Gov. has been identified as one of the UN top priorities for governments across the globe.

E-government in Africa: practices progress and promises

Few countries globally have made the leap from e-Government to connected governance (The United Nations Perspective for African Network report, 2008). This report, illustrated the situation of Africa's five regions in comparison to the world average rankings. The regions with the highest e-readiness were in Southern Africa, with West Africa appearing as the least ready. The highest country readiness in Africa was recorded in South Africa and Mauritius and the only African countries to exceed

the world average were Seychelles, Egypt, and Cape Verde. (African achievements, 2007-2008).

According to the United Nations (UN) Report (2008), several quantitative and qualitative measures have shown progress made in individual African countries in e-Government over the last decades. The report high-lights a number of benchmark achievements: Mozambique, entered the top 30 countries, as number 26, in e-participation (citizen participation in policy making) as well as number 19 in the top 20 in e-information (citizens are given basic information as the foundation for citizen-participation). Botswana was in the top 25 countries worldwide on e-consultation (governments soliciting citizen opinion). Most eminent is the fact that some five African countries now have open web forums to discuss on topical issues   (United Nations, 2008). The UN report also identified several best practices in e-Government in Africa, notably the development of e-voting in Cape Verde which also was introduced in Cameroon (the biometric voter registration). Another measure of e-Government progress in the Africa region is the unique Technology in Government Award (TIGA), established in 2006 and first awarded in 2007 by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the Canada Fund for Africa (Hafkin, 2009).

African countries like Senegal, Kenya and Egypt have walked in the same light with the US constitution vision for sustainable e-government. Many African countries in the past decades have been on their toes within the framework of adopting technologies that sustains e-government service management. According to Heeks (1998), developing countries aiming to use ICTs or better still, adopting e-government to reinforce their governing system, both qualitatively and quantitatively, should opt for "intelligent intermediaries", which are E-government models that will serve as catalyst for government-citizen e-service integral participation. Though Africa's future emergence is bright, Osterlie (2004) accused some African countries to have put a deaf ear to this innovation (e-governance). He explained that, African leaders' delay to adopt this technology is because some consider e-government as some sort of automatic transformation to switch from the government-client face-face mode to an online base at the appointed time. A situation which Agbude et al (2015) see as challenging, giving the urgency in integrating e-governance as an imperative of authentic leadership in the 21st Century .

E-governance in Cameroon

Olivier (2003) says Cameroon has not been an exception in this global ambitious achievement of a future e-government service. He says the Cameroon government launched the creation of government websites (government portals) in 2001 with the purpose of creating a wider national and international citizen and inter-governmental interaction to contribute in policy formation. From an optimistic view point of fostering a better future for e-governance in Cameroon, the former Prime Minister and Head of Government, Peter Mafany Musonge stationed an e-government committee to agenda-set and defines policies to better the use of ICTs in Public Administrations. Olivier further explained that, the Cameroon portal committee workshop that was set up in 2001, saw as its early fruits the creation of a National Agency for Information and Communication Technology (ANTIC). However, it was only until March 2013 that the realization of e-governance in Cameroon came to maturity and functional, following the concerted effort of the then Prime Minister, Head of Government, Philemon Yang and then Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam. It was the outcome of a cabinet meeting in Yaoundé with key discussions on electronic government implementation, efficiency and practice. As part of this struggle, UNU-IIST promised to work with ANTIC and major universities in Cameroon on the development of a Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) system for Cameroon and establishment of GCIO training and education programmes for a sustainable e-government service in Cameroon, (Adegboyega, 2011). Information Service and Technology (IST) Africa initiative consortium report (2002-2013) revealed a series of both operational e-services and on-going initiatives as fruits of the many relentless

official government meetings, conferences, seminars and agreements signed for a future e-government realisation in Cameroon. These include, E-services in operations like:- SIGIPES (online management of government employees); SYSTAC (Driving Licenses Management) managed by the Ministry of Transport; SYDONIA (Import & Export Management) managed by the Custom Department, Ministry of Finance; Electoral System (biometric identification) run by Elections Cameroon (Elecam); E-health (CHU Teaching Hospital, Yaoundé); e-Learning (University of Yaoundé I) and diplomacy (Ministry of External Relations) sponsored by the Indian government (IST-Africa report, 2002-2013). Some on-going initiatives comprise of:- Primo (e-Procurement) system, which is used for the management of government contracts, tax management, state budget management and public contracts payment, Judiciary Management System, Biometric passports and National Civil Status Registry System. Also, the e-post project was launched in Yaoundé on Thursday 27th December 2013 spearheaded by the Minister of Post and telecommunication, Jean Pierre Biyiti bi Essam (IST-Africa report and www.CRTV.cm, 2002-2013).

General challenges of e-governance

Introducing e-governance can pose huge challenges to many governments. Difficulties can arise in the development, implementation and updating of e-government sites (Kroukamp, 2005 & Tlagadi, 2007). When and where there is no privacy, the problem of insecurity is likely to occur. According to Kroukamp (2005), there has always been the need for governments to protect their information and systems from breaches of computer security. Tlagadi (2007), says in many Bureaucratic government organization, information flows between government departments, as they are developed to meet the needs of these departments and not citizens. This however, contradicts the manifest purpose of e-government service, which is to build, interact and engage the government and its citizens, business operators, and employees in key aspects like decision making, treatment and submission of files amongst other aspects (Amoretti, 2007).

E-government and democracy

For one to discuss on such a conceptual platform, "e-government and democracy", the aspect of e-participation which principally encompasses e-voting as a major activity, is conceptually interconnected with the notion of e-governance by which the government sets the agenda, telling the people what they should know about voting, whether by ballot or electronic (Nugent, 2003). He further said the government makes use of its communication tools such as the website, to publish the following: the constitution, information on public's rights and duties, information on how the state or government is run, function and segments, etc. According to Macintosh (2006), the use of e-government service technology, broadens and deepens political participation by enabling citizens to better interact with each other and their elected officials. One thing to note here as Watson and Mundy (2001) held, e-government and e-politics are identified as elements of e-democracy, meaning any democratic country that envisions the implementation of e-government and/or e-politics is e-democratic.

Methodology

This study made use of the quantitative approach, with a survey method employed. The population of the study was government ministries in Cameroon and due to proximity to the source of information, easy data management and administration, a non-randomly selected population of fifteen (15) government ministries were chosen. The sample population were Chiefs of Services within each government ministry. For easy access to source of information, the expected response in relation to this study was limited to the Regional Delegations in Buea- Capital city of the Southwest Region. The researchers also compiled public opinion on the issue and because of propinquity to easy information, and easy data management, it was delimited to a segmented public of forty-five persons (journalists, civil servants, and recruitment seekers). This was because these are persons in direct and frequent use as well as better understanding of the e-government system; especially with its function, purpose and procedures.

The technique used for the study was the simple random sampling; where the ministries were systematically chosen and purposive too because the Chiefs of Service that responded on behalf of their respective ministries were purposively chosen. A simple random technique was also used in selecting public respondents (journalist, civil servants and recruitment seekers). The questionnaire was divided into four sections with a total of ten (10) questions. It made use of two basic levels of measurement: nominal and interval scales. Five (5) questionnaires were used, with ten (10) questions to run the pilot test of the study. During the pilot test, it unveiled that it took averagely 7 minutes to read, understand and answer the self-administered questionnaires. Data for the study from the ministries were collected within the month of May 2nd to the 7th. While that for the public was collected in the month of June 10th to the 14th. Coding was done after a codebook was developed using the questionnaire of data from the field. After coding, data entry and cleaning followed suit. The data which was transformed in the form of codes was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 21.0. The data was analysed using the same software by aid of specific questions in the questionnaire. Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were employed in this study. This study is reliable because the questionnaire was pre-tested before actual data collection was done and the results obtained did not differ. Balance in opinions was conducted from a relative proportion of both the government staff and a selected public (Journalist, Civil servants, and Recruitment seekers). As validity to this, the main concept under measurement was the E-government system; its implementation, degree of integration. This was measured posting testable questions like, Rate your level of use amongst the following communication channels (Twitter, Facebook, Website, radio, Television, Newspaper etc.) in communicating with the public. Rate the level of e-government effectiveness in Cameroon's governing system.1= not at all effective (0%), 2= slightly effective (25%), 3= somewhat effective (50%), 4=effective (75%), 5= very effective (100%). Moreover, on the case of sampled government ministries, the rate of missing values was 3.09%.

Generally, below 5%, the rate of missing values is assumed not critical whereas high rate of missing values would have placed doubt on the validity of the data. The Cronbach's Alpha of 0.536>0.5 indicates that there is reliability and a variance (0.208) also shows that the respondents were diverse in their respond choices and consistent in answering the questions.

Findings

Hypothesis one: A significant proportion of government ministries think that e-government application in Cameroon is effective.

A Standard deviation value of 1.00 and P value (0.000<0.05) indicates that there is a very strong and significant disparity amongst government ministries' opinion of whether e-government in Cameroon is effective. The Pvalue (0.000<0.05) outcome stands to refute the hypothesis that e-Gov. in Cameroon is effective giving the overwhelming proportion of the ministries 70% (7) who said e-Gov. is not effective whereas 20% (2) argue it is effective.

Hypothesis two:

There is no significant difference between public and government perception of Cameroon's readiness for the implementation of e-governance.

A chi Square of 0.170 not very far from zero, DF (degree of freedom) =1 and P value (0.68>0.05) indicates that though there exists a level of difference between the government and the public's opinion, it is not a significant disparity between their stance on if Cameroon is ready or not for the implementation of e-government. Hence, confirming the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between public and government perception on Cameroon's readiness for the implementation of e-governance. In the space of the difference, the public 53.3% thinks Cameroon is ready, while on the side of the government (70%) they think Cameroon is not ready.

Hypothesis three:

There is a significant relationship between public respondents' nature of profession and decision that e-Gov. is not effective in Cameroon.

A Cramer's V (0.449) and P-value (0.022) indicates that there is a significant association between public respondents' profession and the decision on whether e-Gov. practice in Cameroon is effective or not. It was observed that all the journalists, and recruitment seekers sampled said e-Gov. execution in Cameroon is not effective. Based on the Integrated Value Mapping (IVM) weight score of 89.5%, there is more evidence that the e-gov practice is not effective in Cameroon. This is further confirmed by a 10.5% (below average) Civil Servants -   who think it is effective.

Hypothesis four:

There is no significant difference between Government use of old and new media in the e-Gov. system.

Though the Standard deviation (11.39104) indicates a degree of difference, it is not significant. The P-value (0.997) further confirms that, there is no significant difference between Government use of old and new media in the e-Gov. process. This also implies that the rate at which the government makes and perceives use between the new media and old media are almost of the same weight. Nevertheless, findings indicate that government puts a little more interest on Old media given the aggregated case score of 390.0% than new media (244.4%).

Hypothesis five:

There is no significant difference between public respondents' dependence on old and new media in the e-Gov. system.

Though the Standard deviation (27.89090) indicates a degree of difference, it is not significant. The P-value (0.999) further confirms there is no significant difference between public's dependence on old and new media in the e-Government process. This also implies that the rate of public dependence on new media and old media are almost of the same weight. Nevertheless, the public relies a little more on Old media given the weight score of 215.4% than new media (157.1%).

RQ 1: To what extent are various new media platforms determinants to e-Gov. effectiveness in Cameroon?

An Omnibus p-value of 0.04<0.05 shows that the variability explained by the model is significant. This was also justified by 65.3% Cox & Snell R Square (0.653) and 100% Nagelkerke R Square (1.00). Cox & Snell R Square outcome indicating that 65.3% of variability is explained by the model meanwhile Nagelkerke R Square of 100% explains that all cases were considered and variability of the model was perfectly explained. The overall statistics, P-value (0.50>0.05) generally shows that new media platforms do not significantly affect effectiveness of e-Gov. practice in Cameroon. Nevertheless, amongst the various new media platforms, emails contribute highest with score (2.217) as predictive indicator to the effectiveness of e-Gov. practice in Cameroon followed by Twitter (1.248), use of Website (0.571) and then Facebook.

RQ 2: How often do Cameroon government ministries practice e-government service using websites in setting public agenda (information).

Almost half of the ten ministries said they use websites every working day for communication with the public, (40%). Meanwhile 3 other ministries said they use website once or twice a week (occasionally) constituting 30%. 1 ministry affirmed using website between three to four times in a week while the remaining 20% (2) ministries use websites less than twice a week.

Conclusion

This study had three main objectives: to investigate if Cameroon is ready in adopting the e-government system of governance rather than the strictly government-client office based system of governance; to find out if some electronic information tools other than website alone are used by government ministries in governance; and to understand the relationship between background indicators (profession, gender, and marital status) and degree of dependence on media tools. From the findings, government ministries in Cameroon do not only make use of websites in informing and receiving feedback from the public but equally make use of radio, television, newspaper, magazines, Twitter, Facebook and emails (a mix of old and new media). Television, newspaper and magazines are

the most used old media channels while email and Twitter are the top used new media channels. The study also observed that an aggregate of 60% of the ministries justified why they rely most on conventional media. These include the fact that the population is not aware of the operating processes involved in the new media; the end users are very vested with and regularly use the traditional media; and that information from the conventional media is perceived more credibly. Meanwhile 40% of the proportion that make more use of new media justified that the new media is faster and not geographically restrained. It was generally observed that the proportions of those who depend on the various media platforms are mostly male-civil servants who are not married. The following is a summary conclusion of this research:

- Most government ministries use website every working day for information dissemination and also receiving feedback from the public.
- Almost all (70%) of government ministries in Cameroon agree that e-government practice in Cameroon is not effective.
- The degree of new media utilization by government is not very good indicator or parameter to justify that e-government practice is effective in Cameroon.
- The profession of a citizen can influence their perceptions as to whether or not e-Gov. practice in Cameroon is effective. For example, while journalists and recruitment seekers say e-Gov. in Cameroon is not effective, a proportion of civil servants hold that e-Gov. is effective. Meaning people in different professions can have varied opinions.
- The Government and the public have contrary views on Cameroon's readiness for the full implementation of e-governance. The public (53.3%) thinks Cameroon is ready and government officials (70%) think the country is not ready.
- Government ministries are using more of old media to set agenda and the public equally has decided to cling on the same trend so as to maximise the chance of getting access to latest government information. More so, the public is rapidly embracing new media at a faster rate than the government.

- Government ministries in Cameroon do not only make use of websites in informing and receiving feedback from the public but equally make use of radio, Television, Newspaper, magazines, Twitter, Facebook and emails. Television, Newspaper and Magazines are the most used old media tools meanwhile email and Twitter are the top used new media channels.

Theoretical Implications

This study lies on the premises of Uses and Gratification theory, Agenda Setting theory, the Technology Acceptance Model and the Web Trust model. 100% of the ministries admitted that, their ministries do not only make use of websites for information access, government-citizen transactions, and feedback-response sharing, but they also make use of other communication channels like twitter, Facebook, emails, telephone, radio, newspapers, magazines and community talks. This adequately fits in with the uses and gratification theory that combines integral parts of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It was observed that, the public also depend on other communication channels ministry website information and service transaction, to which Facebook, television, newspapers and email feature prominently, for information and feedback.

The Web Trust Model also strongly comes to play as the public seem to have perceived the E-government system to be the most effective and sufficient governing system to be adopted in Cameroon. This is because it has been proven more effective to the citizens and has gained public trust as a mechanism to effectively, efficiently, and transparently justify for web-centric transactions. Nevertheless, it is an excellent avenue for government to set its agenda on end users in particular and the public in general.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, need exists for collaboration among e-Governance virtual communities. The Cameroon government should remedy the challenges as raised by some state

officials and the public as restraining the proper implementation of e-government in Cameroon's governing system. For the government to handle these backdrops they would need political will; experts for counselling; and engage strong relationships with advanced countries like United States of America and Canada that have a very open and high digital governing practice. In addition, the Government should provide more training to the ordinary citizens on how to use these ICT facilities to foster the realization of proper and efficient e-government practice. More so, for improvement in service delivery and competency, staff should also be empowered to develop and maintain e-Gov. service through training programmes to have a better mastery of what e-government is all about, its function, purpose and operationalization. It is equally recommended for the government to establish an Industry meant to improve telecoms infrastructure and introduce policies for its citizens to access affordable Internet services so that, the public can be able to use more of e-governance services. When the people are Internet friendly, they can easily reach-out and be reached. On a final note, government should allocate more funding on e-governance projects. These projects will require a lot of funds; for instance, providing a regular power supply to all rural areas, cheap and fast Internet facility coupled with free online training on how the public can connect directly with the government online without any face to face contacts.

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