



Please cite this article as: in Urban Malaysian Communities, Aminuddin A.H, Abu Hassan A.A, Azan Z., (2023), Evaluating The Trust in Government of E-Government Services Usage, Jilid 4, Bilangan 3, Paper ID 31-89

EVALUATING THE TRUST IN GOVERNMENT OF E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES USAGE IN URBAN MALAYSIAN COMMUNITIES

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DOI:

Received 14 November 2023, Accepted 20 December 2023, Available online 29 December 2023

ABSTRACT

The Theory Acceptance Model (TAM) is covered in the abstract. By providing an effective theoretical framework for IT adoption and illuminating the principles behind technology acceptance, TAM enables the prediction of user behaviour. When Davis established the TAM in 1989 and 1993, he outlined the mechanisms that govern the link between exterior factors, such as information systems (IS) characteristics, and the actual utilization of these systems. The model was inspired by the Theory of Reasoned Action, a psychological perspective on human behavior that was strikingly absent from the information systems literature at the time. The abstract also emphasizes the positive relationship that exists between usage of e-government services and trust in government. The present study employs a quantitative research technique, whereby data is gathered by the distribution of questionnaires with a Likert scale and contextual details. The survey questions are broken up into the questions categories, some of which include a usage of e-government services and trust in government.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Trust in Government, Theory Acceptance Model (TAM), usage of e-government services.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The perception of e-government service use in urban Malaysian communities is essential for understanding consumer satisfaction with digital government services. By integrating the Technology Acceptance Model, e-government service usage, and trust in government, a study model was developed to assess public perceptions of e-government services. The study revealed that factors such as accessibility, awareness, and system confidence significantly influence the adoption of e-government apps, ultimately leading to increased contentment among users. Despite efforts to enhance government service delivery through e-government applications in Malaysia, particularly in urban areas, usage remains limited, especially among economically disadvantaged populations (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

Understanding how urban inhabitants perceive and utilize e-government services is crucial for bridging the digital gap and tailoring government services to meet community needs effectively. Factors such as trust in government and technology play a significant role in citizens' adoption of e-government platforms. Enhancing the quality and efficiency of e-government services in Malaysian cities requires a comprehensive understanding of user perceptions and behaviors towards these services (Wa & Zhang, 2023). The deployment of e-government applications in Malaysia aims to improve service quality and efficiency. However, challenges such as a lack of experience and capacity, particularly at the local level, hinder the full realization of e-government's potential. Addressing these challenges and enhancing citizens' trust and willingness to use e-government services are critical for the successful implementation and improvement of e-government services in Malaysian urban areas (Johari et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the adoption and utilization of e-government services in urban Malaysian communities are influenced by various factors such as accessibility, awareness, system confidence, trust in government, and technology. Understanding these factors is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of e-government services, bridging the digital gap, and meeting the evolving needs and expectations of urban populations in Malaysia.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study's independent and dependent variables the use of e-government services, trust in the government, Theory Acceptance Model (TAM), and theoretical framework are covered in this part.

2.1 Usage of E-Government Services

The foundation of Malaysia's e-government is the My Government Portal, which serves as a centralised Government Single Gateway and provides access to a range of online services and integrated information from government agencies. My Government claims that its life event and citizen-centric approach makes government information and services more accessible to people for certain life events and their particular needs. In addition, the government's journey towards the digitization of service delivery systems also referred to as electronic government or e-government began with the introduction of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) plan in 1996. This initial attempt involves numerous levels of government, including the federal, state, and municipal governments, as well as the agencies that lie under them. Among the trial projects and services that were introduced during this time period were:

The Electronic Document Management System (GOE-EDMS) is utilised in the Government Office Environment to handle documents electronically:

- e-Khidmat for Frontline Agencies such as the Road Transport Department (JPJ) and the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM);
- Project Monitoring System II (SPPII) for project management;
- Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) for human resource management;
- ePerolehan system for government acquisitions;
- e-Kehakiman and e-Syariah for Civil Courts and Syariah Courts respectively; and
- e-PBT for services by the Local Authorities.

To reinforce and sustain the present digital service delivery system, a set of comprehensive and holistic strategies and action plans have been established. These consist of:

1. **Public Sector Digitization Strategic Plan:** This plan offers a high-level roadmap for the use of digital technology and describes the overall strategy for digitization within the public sector.
2. **Agency strategy Plan:** To ensure alignment with the more general digitization goals, each government agency creates a strategy plan that is relevant to its requirements and aims.
3. **Enterprise Architecture-Based Digital Service Design:** This method combines the concepts of enterprise architecture with digital service design to facilitate the creation of digital services in an efficient and effective manner.
4. **Agency ICT Strategic Plan:** Government agencies develop ICT (Information and Communication Technology) strategic plans to guide their technology-related efforts and investments.
5. **myGovernment Portal:** This portal acts as a centralized center for digital government services, allowing residents to access a variety of services and information in one location.
6. **Malaysian Government Mobile Apps Gallery (GAMMA):** GAMMA consolidates mobile apps produced by several government organisations, allowing individuals with easy access to government services via their mobile devices.

All of these detailed plans of action and strategies are meant to improve the digitization of government services so that they are easier to use, more effective, and more focused on the needs of citizens.

2.2 Trust in Government

Trust in government and e-government services is a critical factor that significantly impacts citizens' perceptions and interactions with governmental systems. Alsaghier and Ford (2009) emphasize that trust in government and e-government services includes citizens' expectations of the government's ability to perform essential tasks, even without direct supervision, with characteristics such as competence, helpfulness, honesty, and truthfulness being key components. Lean et al. (2009) highlight the relationship between users' confidence in the reliability and effectiveness of e-government websites and their trust in these services. and Bélanger (2005) and Alsaghier and Ford (2009) have adapted trust measurement items from previous research, underscoring the importance of trust in promoting the use and sharing of government services, particularly when users perceive their online interactions as secure. Furthermore, Bélanger and Carter (2008) emphasize that public trust in e-government initiatives is crucial for their adoption, with factors such as the government's ability to provide high-quality services through e-government channels and the integrity of associated agencies playing significant roles. Studies by Bélanger and (Carter, 2008), Karavasilis et al. (2016), and Mensah et al. (2017) consistently show that individuals' trust in the government strongly influences their willingness to use e-government services. Additionally, Bélanger and Carter (2008) suggest that citizens' readiness to endorse new technologies, especially e-government services, is connected to their level of trust in the government. In conclusion, trust is a fundamental element in the successful implementation and adoption of e-government services. It is intricately tied to citizens' perceptions of the government's capabilities, integrity, and the security of online interactions. Establishing and preserving trust is vital for nurturing public confidence in e-government initiatives and promoting their widespread use.

Fostering cooperative principles between citizens and public institutions can enhance government efficacy (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Trust in government institutions is hindered when perceived objectivity is lacking, leading to decreased institutional trust (Horsburgh et al., 2011). South Korea's low ranking in the OECD's "Society at a Glance 2014" report and its position on the Corruption Perceptions Index highlight challenges in public trust (Putra et al., 2022). E-government can boost public trust by enhancing citizen engagement and confidence (Welch et al., 2004). Research indicates that e-government services can improve public opinion of the government and increase public faith in it (Wong & Jensen, 2020). Factors such as transparency, accountability, and responsiveness play crucial roles in building public trust in e-government (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

In Scandinavia, high levels of citizen engagement and confidence in the government have led to effective public service delivery, showcasing the benefits of e-government (Zhao & Hu, 2015). Moon emphasizes that information technology can enhance government performance, transparency, and policy engagement, contributing to rebuilding trust among citizens (Andiani et al., 2023). Studies have shown a positive association between website satisfaction, e-government satisfaction, and public trust in government (Mohammed et al., 2020). The use of e-government services can lead to increased public trust, especially in nations with lower corruption levels (Pandey, 2023). Despite the potential benefits of e-government, various factors such as policy alienation, inefficiency, and corruption have contributed to declining public trust in government (Abdulkareem & Ramli, 2021). However, IT innovations like the OPEN system in Seoul have shown promise in restoring public faith in government (Porumbescu, 2015). Citizen participation through official government websites can transform individuals into demanding citizens, emphasizing the evolving nature of public engagement (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011). Enhancing public trust in government through e-government initiatives is crucial for effective governance. Transparency, accountability, and responsiveness are key elements in building and maintaining public trust. By leveraging technology and promoting citizen engagement, governments can work towards restoring and strengthening public trust in governance.

E-government has the potential to enhance citizen-government interactions, improve the quality of governmental services, and increase public trust in the government (Welch et al., 2004). While e-government can facilitate citizen-initiated engagement in certain demographic groups, it may exacerbate existing inequities in others. Online citizen-initiated contact can enhance the quality of interactions, but there is limited evidence supporting the idea that e-government boosts user confidence. Governments are increasingly utilizing blogs, social networking sites, and websites for public relations objectives, with social media interactions correlating with greater trust in local and state governments.

Research on the relationship between e-government and public confidence is lacking. Studies have shown a small association between public trust and the adoption of e-government, with e-government potentially benefiting local governments more than the federal government in terms of trust. Social media can help restore public trust in the government by improving message clarity and enhancing public-government connectedness. E-government has been found to increase public trust, particularly among individuals with high levels of trust, while having no effect on those with neutral or low levels of trust. Trust is a crucial component in e-government success, with recommendations for government organizations to prioritize trust-building strategies to retain users of online public services. The e-Government trust model highlights the role of laws, social norms, IT security, process automation, and policies in developing trust, providing a framework for governments to enhance public trust through modern technologies.

Overall, while e-government has the potential to improve citizen-government interactions and public trust, the relationship between e-government and public confidence is complex and requires further research to fully understand its impact across different levels of government and demographic groups.

2.3 Theory Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by in 1989 and 1993 with the primary goal of providing a theoretical framework for successful technology adoption and shedding light on the mechanisms behind technology acceptance (Davis, 1989). This model aimed to predict user behavior by focusing on critical activities and mediating the interaction between external factors, such as information system characteristics, and the practical use of these systems (Davis, 1989). Inspired by the Theory of Reasoned Action, TAM incorporated a psychological perspective on human behavior that was lacking in the information systems literature at the time (Davis, 1989). Work laid the foundation for the creation of the Technology Acceptance Model, which has been widely applied in acceptance research (Mohr & Kühl, 2021). The TAM model emphasizes the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use in determining users' attitudes towards new technology (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2016). It has been extended and refined over the years to include factors such as social influence and cognitive instrumental processes (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

The TAM has been recognized for its ability to explain and predict user acceptance of various technologies, including mobile commerce, mobile banking apps, wearable devices, and online transactions (Jeong & Roh, 2017; Rastini & Respati, 2021; Shroff et al., 2011). It has also been extended to incorporate additional variables like innovativeness, risk, and trust to enhance its predictive capacity (Slade et al., 2015).

Moreover, the TAM has been applied in diverse fields such as e-learning, sports websites, online banking, and mobile government services, showcasing its versatility and effectiveness in understanding user behavior and acceptance of technology (Rachman & Napitupulu, 2017; Hur et al., 2011; Mugo et al., 2017; Pikkarainen et al., 2004). Studies have consistently shown that the TAM can explain a significant portion of the variance in users' intentions and behaviors towards technology adoption (Pikkarainen et al., 2004). In conclusion, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been instrumental in providing a robust framework for understanding and predicting user acceptance of technology across various domains. Its emphasis on perceived usefulness and ease of use, coupled with extensions to incorporate social factors, has made it a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners alike in comprehending the link between technology use and user trust.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework, adapted from Shuib, L., Yadegaridehkordi, E., & Ainin, S. (2019), to determine evaluating the perception of e-government services usage in urban Malaysian communities, is depicted in Figure 1.

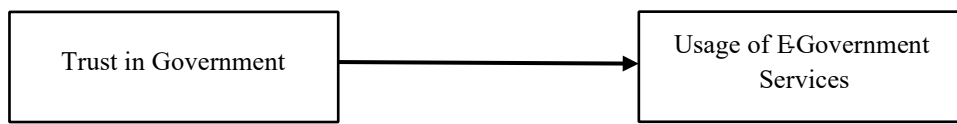


Figure 1: This conceptual framework has been adapted from Shuib, L., Yadegaridehkordi, E., & Ainin, S. (2019).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study is quantitative, which involves collecting data through the administration of questionnaires that include a Likert scale and background information. Information about demographics, usage of e-government services and trust in government are among the sections which make up the questionnaire. People's opinions, attitudes, and perceptions on how e-government services are perceived in urban Malaysian areas are measured using the Likert scale. The survey was completed online, and the link was posted on a number of social media sites. The primary aim of the study is to examine the relationship between participants' experiences and perceptions of e-government services in urban Malaysian communities. The results are trustworthy in terms of appropriately summarizing the circumstances in these particular metropolitan Malaysian neighborhoods. In the research paper, one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance), independent t-tests, and reliability tests were among the SPSS techniques used to assess the dependability of the data. In reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the consistency of a questionnaire, particularly as indicated by Likert scale questions. The one-way ANOVA was utilised to ascertain if there are any statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent (unrelated) groups, whereas the independent t-test analyses the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous and dependent variable. One hundred people responded to the research.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part includes the findings on the demographic information of the descriptive, reliability and correlation.

Descriptive

Demographic data (See Table 1)

Table 1: *The percentage of demographic.*

ITEM	LIST OF ITEMS	PERCENTAGE
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Gender	Male	49%
	Female	51%
Level of education	PhD Degree	1%
	Master Degree	6%
	Bachelor Degree	62%
	Diploma	20%
	SPM	9%
	Others	2%
	Age	Less than 20 years old
	20 -30- years old	74%
	30 - 40 years old	9%
	40 - 50 years old	8%
	Above 50 years old	3%
Occupation	Government	10%
	Non-Profit Sector	1%
	Student	52%
	Private	29%
	Others	8%
Race	Malay	97%
	Chinese	1%
	Indian	2%
Years of Use Internet	1 - 2 years	2%
	3 - 5 years	7%
	More than 5 years	91%

The demographic inquiry examined how Malaysian urban people viewed the usage of e-Government services based on the pie chart above, as shown in table 1, part A. Table 1 shows that women make up 51% of Malaysian urban users, while males account for 49% of the audience. The most frequent educational backgrounds among Malaysian urban e-Government service

users were diplomas (20%) and bachelor's degrees (62%) followed by Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) (9%). More over half of the participants made every decision. The demographic inquiry examined the age distribution of Malaysian urban people in connection to their perceptions of using e-Government services, as the table above illustrates. In summary, 74% of Malaysian urban users are between the ages of 20 and 30; 9% of respondents are in this age range; 8% are in this age range between 40 and 50; 6% are younger than 20, and the remaining respondents are older than 50. Malaysian urbanites are primarily students (52%), with the remainder working in the nonprofit (20%), private (20%), government (10%), and other sectors (8%). More over half of the participants made every decision. The aforementioned table illustrates how Malaysian urbanites of various racial backgrounds viewed the use of e-Government services in response to the demographic question. It may be inferred that 97% of Malaysians that live in urban regions are Malay, with Chinese and Indians making up the remaining 2%. Ninety-one percent of urban Malaysians have been using the internet for more than five years, followed by three to five years (seven percent), and one to two years left.

Reliability

In the section that follows, many SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) methodologies have been used to assess the reliability of a scale or a set of questions. Cronbach's alpha, an often-used measure of internal consistency dependability, is one such method. Reliability is the extent to which a set of items or survey questions consistently assess a certain idea or concept in a scale or survey. The data result for four Likert scale questions was shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Reliability Statistic.*

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items		
.918	4		

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I feel that the e-government services providers are trustworthy	3.8100	.96080	100
I feel confident about my privacy protection when using an e-government service	3.5600	1.09471	100
I feel my transaction is secure when using an e-government service	3.5800	.97628	100
I believe that there could be negative consequences from using e-government services	3.8100	.96290	100

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for four Likert scale questions are.918, which suggests that the items' internal consistency is generally "excellent." To put it another way, the four questions looked at how effective confidence in the government is. The reliability and internal consistency of the samples were found to be rather excellent.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.937	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I have a positive attitude towards using e-government services	3.8200	.98862	100
I use/intent to use e-government services	3.7700	.95193	100
I often use/intent e-government services	3.6600	.99717	100

A Cronbach's Alpha value of .937 for three Likert scale items indicated a relatively "excellent" degree of internal consistency. Put another way, the three questions looked at how effective it is to use e-Government services. The findings demonstrated that the samples. Reliability and internal consistency were excellent.

Correlation

Using SPSS's "Correlation" approach, have generated many types of correlations between the variables in the dataset in the following section (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The statistical method of correlation is employed to determine the direction and degree of a relationship between two or more variables. It facilitates your comprehension of how variations in one variable connect to variations in another.

Correlation data (See Table 3)

Table 3: *The correlation data between variable independent and dependent variable.*

Correlations

		Trust	Usage
Trust	Pearson Correlation	1	.713**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	100	100
Usage	Pearson Correlation	.713**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows a significant .713 associations between the use of e-government services and trust in the government. Table 3 shows that there is a high correlation between trust in the government and the utilisation of e-government services. Furthermore, it indicates that the significance of the association is at the 0.01 level. The result will show the correlations and p-values that go along with the variables we selected in a correlation matrix. Here is an expression for the correlation coefficients: There is no correlation when the value is 0, and the range from perfect positive correlation (-1) to perfect negative correlation (-1).

Correlation data (See Table 4)

Table 4: *The percentage of agree for all the question.*

ITEM	QUESTION	PERCENTAGE OF AGREE
Trust in Government	I feel that the e-government services providers are trustworthy	39%
	I feel confident about my privacy protection when using an e-government service	36%
	I feel my transaction is secure when using an e-government service	38%
	I believe that there could be negative consequences from using e-government services	44%

Table 4 presents the survey results, which show that up to 39% of Malaysian urbanites agree that e-government service providers are trustworthy. Following this, as many as 36% of Malaysian city people said that they are confident in the privacy protection provided by e-government resources. Moreover, 38% of urban Malaysians believe that using an e-government service is a safe way to deal. Last but not least, a full 44% of Malaysian city dwellers agree that utilising e-government services might have negative consequences. As a result, the following theories are anticipated by this study:

H1 = Trust in Government is significant relationship towards usage of e-government services.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the search results make it abundantly evident that a wide range of factors impact the complicated problem of trust in government. Research indicates that e-government enhances public trust in the government, but its impact is limited to individuals with high levels of trust; it does not affect those with neutral or low levels of trust. Therefore, in order to keep users of their online public services engaged, government agencies must prioritize trust-building tactics. Furthermore, by reducing message distortion and improving public-government connectivity, social media can help rebuild public confidence in the government. The laws, social norms, IT security, process automation, and policies all play a part in the building of trust, as demonstrated by the e-Government trust model. This strategy may be used by governments as a framework to use modern technology to increase public trust. Lastly, it's critical to remember that people's readiness to encourage the use of new technologies—especially e-government services—may be derived from how much trust they have in the government. Therefore, in order to increase public trust and encourage the adoption of e-government services, governments must give trust-building initiatives top priority.

The recommendations below to raise trust in government are based on the research results:

- **Make use of social media:** By reducing message distortion and strengthening public-government connectivity, social media can help rebuild public confidence in the government. Social media may be used by governments to interact with the public and provide factual information.
- **Put trust-building tactics first:** In order to keep users of their online public services engaged, government agencies should prioritize trust-building tactics. Enhancing responsiveness, accountability, and openness are a few ways to do this.
- **Make use of the e-Government trust model:** It illustrates how policies, regulations, IT security, social norms, and process automation all play a role in the growth of trust. This strategy may be used by governments as a framework to use modern technology to increase public trust.
- **Enhance the quality of e-government services:** Although studies have indicated that e-government boosts community trust in the government, they also demonstrate that this impact is limited to those who have high levels of trust, leaving neutral or low levels unaffected. For this reason, it's critical to raise the quality of e-government services in order to boost the public's trust.

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