A PROPOSED MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF E-GOVERNMENT IN MALAYSIA

Bazilah A Talip
University of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Dr. Bhuva Narayan
Queensland University of Technology, Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a theoretical model for e-Government in Malaysia and addresses issues involved in its implementation. It presents three possible models including the Framework for Electronic Government (Grant & Chau, 2005), the Three Pillars Framework (Georgescu, 2007) and The Grid-Group Theory from cultural studies (Douglas, 1996) and integrates and adapts them to the specific needs of the Malaysian environment.

1   INTRODUCTION

E-Government is an application that can reinvent how the government works as well as promote its interaction with citizens and businesses through improved connectivity and better access to information and services online (Siddiquee, 2008). It is informational, transactional, and collaborative. E-Government provides the connection between control, collaboration, culture, and technology - the engine of the e-Government in countries around the world. However, barriers still exist to the successful implementation of some of the Malaysian e-Government initiatives.

2. MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

Barriers involved in the implementation of effective e-Government initiatives in Malaysia include cultural, social, psychological, technological, and administrative barriers that are expressed in different degrees based on the dynamic within the government and its people.

2.1   Organisational factors

Many government online services in Malaysia are ineffective due to a flood of broken links that are either non-functional, under maintenance or outdated (Siddiquee, 2008). To correct this, senior Government officials in Malaysia have been actively involved in the development of e-Government with proper policies and code of practice. This is to reduce the gap between government and citizens, government and business, and government to government.

2.2   Society and Culture

The Malaysian government's public officials are drawn from various ethnic groups, cultures and beliefs although the majority are Islamic. Hierarchism, fatalism, individualism and egalitarianism has a huge impact on developing e-Government initiatives in Malaysia this fatalistic mentality, especially toward technology should be changed and improved in order to be more competitive globally. Hence the government has provided computer savvy facilities and training to its citizens with proper code of ethics.

2.3   Technology and Interoperability

E-government provides websites for online services accessible through computers or mobile technology. Citizens are now able to access the Internet through the increasingly ubiquitous mobile phones. Some of the bigger technological issues involve interoperability across government agencies; a one-stop e-Government portal can only be achieved if back offices are interoperable (Choudrie & Weerrakody, 2007) and this can only be achieved through an integration of data, processes, communications, and security (Tripathi, Gupta & Bhattacharya, 2011).

2.4   e-Participation

E-participation can be defined as the exploitation of ICT for engaging citizens to participate as much as possible to democratic procedures, interacting among them, as well as, with politicians

and decision makers and providing them with the necessary information and appropriate rights in a way that reinforces their role in the decision making process (Masters, Macintosh, & Smith, 2004). Some of the tools that can encourage e-Participation include chat rooms, blogs, online forums, ePetitions, eTax, eVoting, ePanels, ePolls, eCommunities, and eConsultation tools (Ergazakis, Metaxiotis, & Tsitsanis, 2011). The Malaysian e-Government initiative needs to take these into its long-term planning.

2.6 The mobile Government (m-Government)

Malaysian e-Government initiatives use mobile applications extensively to enhance productivity termed M-Government. The use of mobile phones (or smart phones) helps the government to get closer to citizens in faster ways. Mobility services reduce data redundancies, human mistakes and speed effective (Roggenkamp, 2007). Services in different communication channels such as the *m-teacher, m-clinic, m-neighbourhood and m-library* should be introduced. Nonetheless, safety and security should be noted.

2.7 MyKad, MyID, MyGovXchange and other services

Malaysia is the first country in the world to use the Government Multipurpose Card which is known as *MyKad* that stores biometric information and facilitate transactions with government agencies and private organizations (Siddiquee, 2008). The government should ensure that personal information is protected and the card is accessible. Lack of access to appropriate systems, knowledge, and motivational support could explain the unsuccessful use of *MyKad* (Eynon, 2006).

The *MyGovXchange* client provides online payment systems and online forms submission (Hassan, 2010). This reduces corruption issues which further address the necessity of e-Government initiatives especially for the Malaysian Government, which has compiled the National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) that includes strategies to combat corruption (PMO,

2010c).

2.8   Web 2.0 technologies

Social media applications (blog tools, wiki tools, social networks, video sharing, mashups, and folksonomies) are used to provide additional channels to communicate closely with citizens. This allows people to share, discuss and vote for better ideas as well as respond to questions/topics of interest. This service is useful for business entrepreneurs to get information as well as for politicians to reach out to the public. Proper policy should be provided for privacy protection.
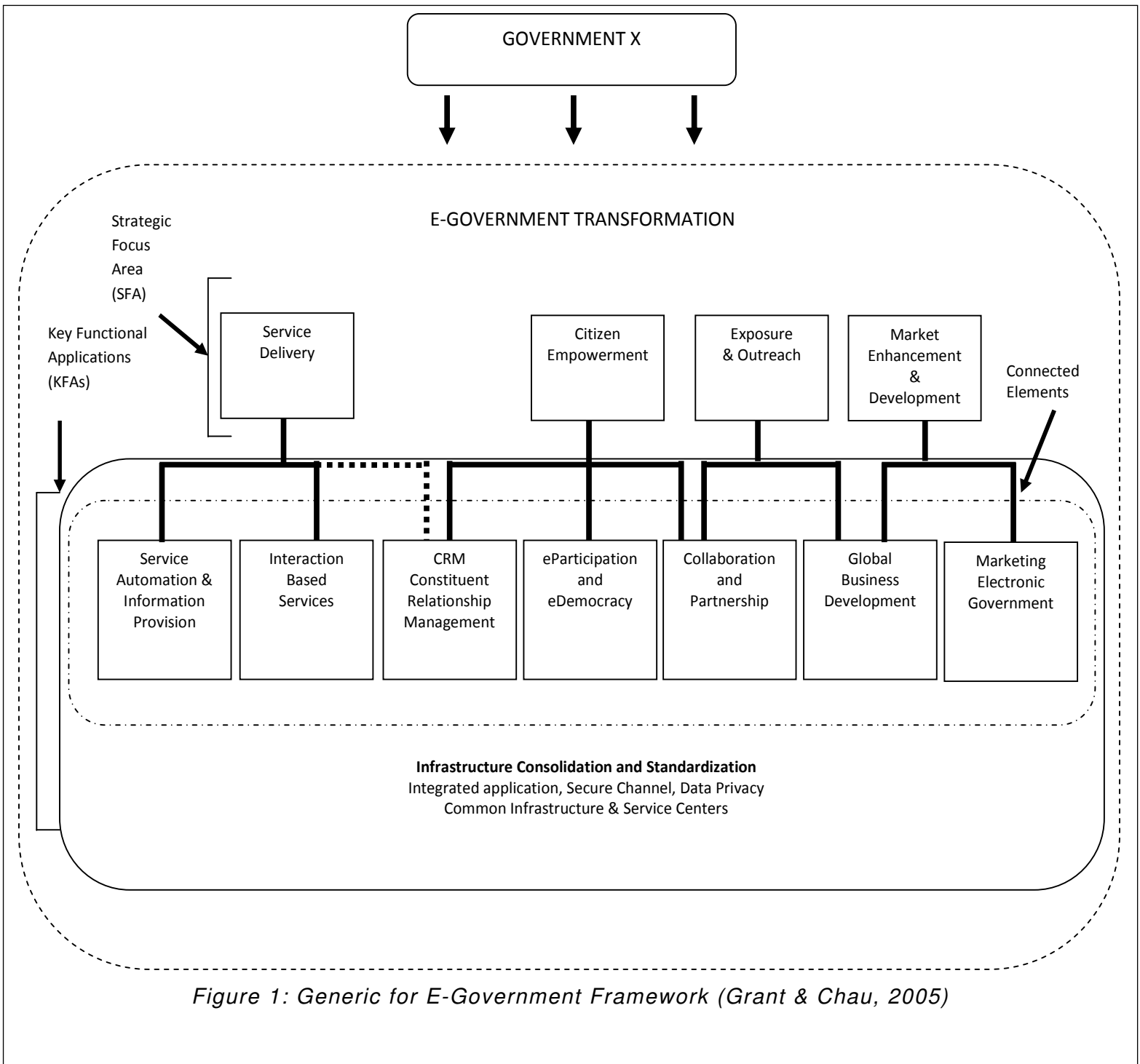
3   THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Various frameworks have been developed to measure e-Government initiatives. Nevertheless, some existing theoretical frameworks in the area of e-Government are informative tools that can be used to develop and improve services of any nature. Three frameworks have been chosen in proposing a new model for the Malaysian e-Government:

- The generic framework for electronic government (Grant & Chau, 2005),
- The three pillars structure (Georgescu, 2007), and
- The grid and group theory (Douglas, 1996)

3.1 Generic Framework of e-Government

The *Generic framework for e-Government* proposed by Grant and Chau (2005) is organised into two main sections as illustrated in Figure 1. The first section outlines Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs). The second division illustrates Key Functional Applications (KFAs).

GOVERNMENT X

E-GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMATION

Strategic
Focus
Area
(SFA)

Key Functional
Applications
(KFAs)

Service
Delivery

Citizen
Empowerment

Exposure
& Outreach

Market
Enhancement
&
Development

Connected
Elements

Service
Automation &
Information
Provision

Interaction
Based
Services

CRM
Constituent
Relationship
Management

eParticipation
and
eDemocracy

Collaboration
and
Partnership

Global
Business
Development

Marketing
Electronic
Government

Infrastructure Consolidation and Standardization
Integrated application, Secure Channel, Data Privacy
Common Infrastructure & Service Centers

Figure 1: Generic for E-Government Framework (Grant & Chau, 2005)

3.2 Three Pillars of e-Government

Georgescu's (2007) The *Three pillars of e-Government* (Figure 2) illustrate how public management and leadership can impact the e-Government initiatives' effectiveness.

1. Leadership
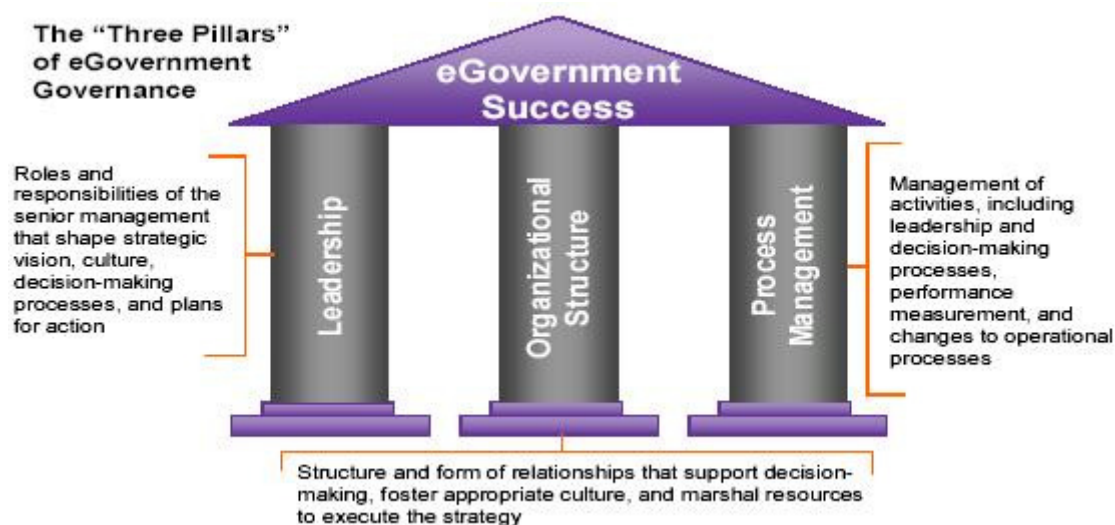
2. Organizational Structure

3. Process Management

Figure 2: The Three Pillars of e-Government (Georgescu, 2007)

Studies have also revealed that lack of communication between public servants and citizens destroy e-Government initiatives (Siddiquee, 2005). Hence, incentives, appreciation, and recognition that reduce the effect of the bureaucratic and hierarchical system should be implemented to bridge this gap.

3.3 *Douglas' Group-Grid Theory*

The Douglas framework (Figure 3) outlines cultural influences that impact human behaviours and discusses cultural barriers and their impact on an individual's position within their social group (Douglas, 1996).
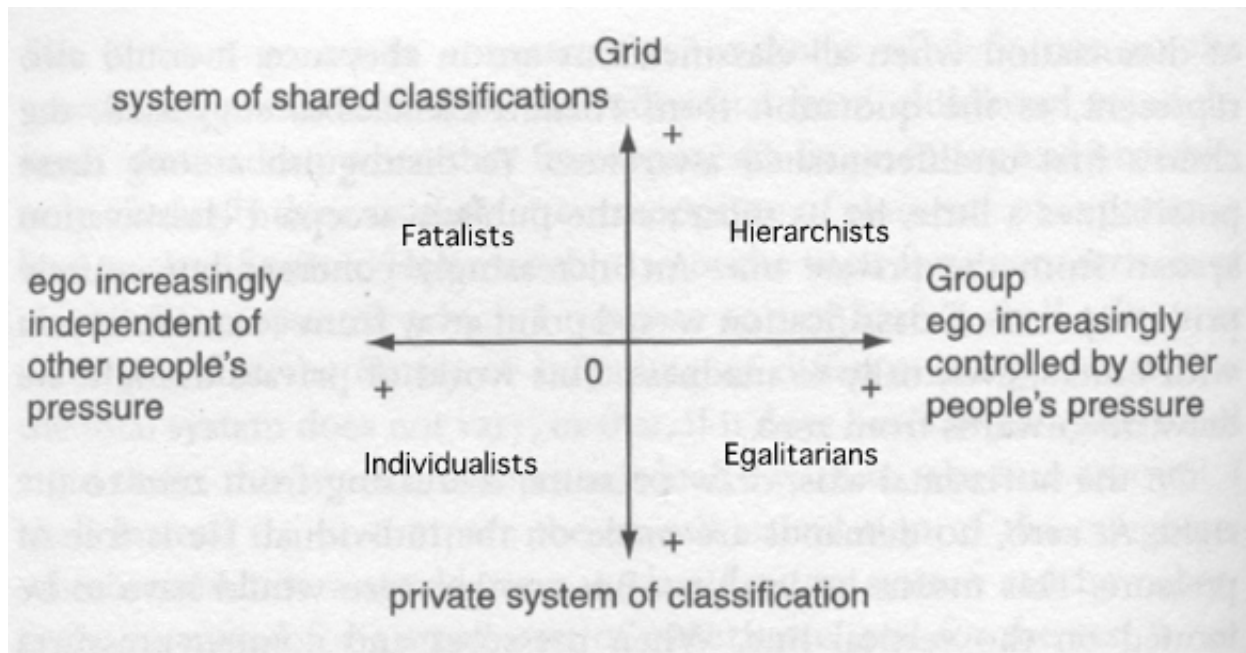
Figure 3: Grid-Group Theory (Douglas, 1996)

Hierarchy in Malaysia is ingrained both in society and in the Government which is hard to change especially in the line of succession for leadership positions (Siddiquee, 2006). Drake et al. (2004) and Titah and Barki (2008) found that subcultures also impact the effectiveness of e-Government initiatives, and that scientific, political and bureaucratic subcultures can influence public administration to pursue e-Government services. Technology is important in improving the e-Government initiatives in Malaysia. It can help overcome fatalism and individualism, thus reducing the digital divide (Carter & Weerakkody, 2008; Seng, et al., 2010).

4   A PROPOSED E-GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIA

This section proposes a new framework to develop e-government initiatives in Malaysia. It demonstrates the four key elements for improving e-Government initiatives. They are cultural diversity, collaboration, control, and technology. Research revealed that transformational and situational leadership could improve

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the initiatives by reducing the gaps between governments and citizens worldwide (Thompson&Vecchio, 2009; Lee-Kelly, 2002; Bass, 1990). Public officials' engagement and communication channels for citizens significantly improve the e-Government initiatives.
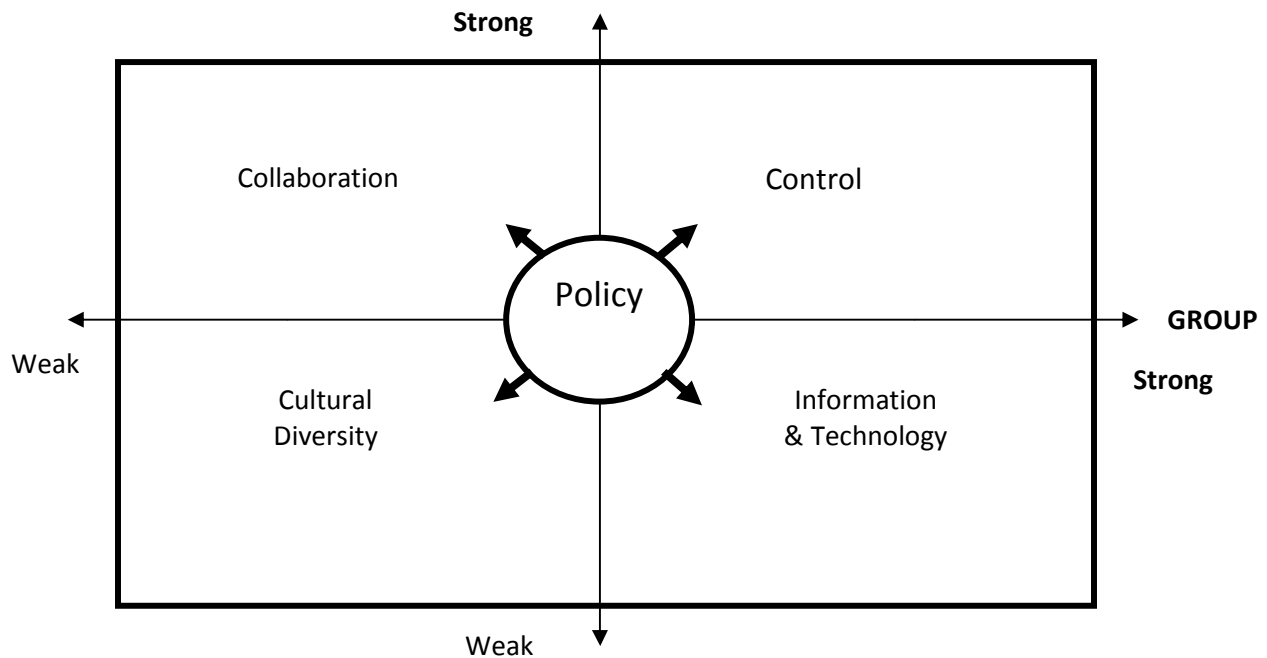

Figure 4: A Proposed Framework for e-Government initiative Development

The grid highlights the four weak and strong elements influencing the development of e-Government initiatives. Cultural diversity and information technology can negatively impact the effectiveness of e-Government. Engagement between the collaboration (public officials, interested stakeholders and citizens) and the control (the Malaysian Government and public administration) is highly influential in the development of e-Government services. The framework also demonstrates how control has a stronger influence than information technology. The third section discusses the policy lifecycle that is a key connector to the four elements in developing e-Government initiatives in

Malaysia. It continues by defining how e-Government policy development directly influences e-Government development. Policy development is vital to protect issues such as intellectual property, security, privacy, and copyright in developing e-Government initiatives worldwide.

Transparency and bureaucracy are also vital in policy development or e-Rulemaking in transforming e-Government to e-Participation successfully (Finger, 2010; Bertot et al., 2010; Vathanophas et al., 2008). Policy is crucial for governments worldwide to ensure trustworthiness of services to avoid damage. Lack of policy implementation impacts e-Government initiatives worldwide.

5 CONCLUSION

E-government initiatives provide better services to citizens, foreign investors, researchers, and industry collaborators for effective global competition. The three cultural and e-Government frameworks can be integrated and adapted to cater to the needs of the Malaysian e-Government.

All four elements - collaboration, control, cultural diversity and information technology - are vital in the successful development and implementation of e-Government initiatives in Malaysia. Policy lifecycle and e-Rulemaking will ensure the four elements are connected to encourage e-Participation. It is vital for the government to continually develop and revise the policy and code of practice to ensure e-Government initiatives' productivity and public officials' performances as well as to gain stakeholders' satisfaction and communities' trustworthiness in e-Government. Situational and transformational leadership styles can change conventional management and reduce the gap between the government, citizens and

businesses. Balancing the collaboration and control are vital in improving engagement between the Malaysian Government and citizens.

Additionally, research in e-Government will ensure that government services meet citizen needs. Benchmarking the Australian and US e-Government is an approach to evaluate, improve and reengineer the Malaysian e-Government initiatives' productivity and encourage the public officials to play a key role (Jansen, et al., 2010; Taylor, et al., 2008; Siddiquee, 2005).

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