An Investigation of the Impact Factors to Increase Citizens' Engagement in E-participation on E-government in Saudi Arabia

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by

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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date: 29 June 2016

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List of Publications

The following research papers were published from the work undertaken by the author during the course of this PhD research study.

- Alharbi, A.M. & Kang, K. 2012, 'The Impact of Culture on Government Web-Services Development: A Case study E-participation Development in Saudi Arabia', *26th International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA) Conference*, IBIMA Publishing, Barcelona, Spain, pp. 298-305.
- Alharbi, A.M. & Kang, K. 2014, 'E-Participation Service in Saudi Arabian e-Government Websites: The Influencing Factors From Citizens Perspective', *14th European Conference on eGovernment ECEG 2014***,** Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited Reading, Brasov, Romania, pp. 265-272.
- Alharbi, A, Kang, K, and Alattas, M, 2015, "The Challenges of E-participation in Saudi Arabian E-government Websites: From Government Perspective", *25th International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA) Conference*, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 7-8 May 2015
- Alharbi, A, Kang, K and Hawryszkiewycz, I, 2015, "The Influence of Trust and Subjective Norms on Citizens' Intentions to Engage in E-participation in E-government Websites", *26th Australian conference on information systems (ACIS)*, Adelaide, Australia
- Alharbi, A and Kang, K, 2015, "Key Aspects of Citizen Engagement in E-Participation on E-Government Websites", *26th International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA) Conference*, Madrid, Spain, 11-12 November 2015
- Alharbi, A.M. & Kang, K. 2016, 'Factors Affecting Citizen Engagement in E-participation on E-government Website: S-O-R Approach'**,** *16th European Conference on eGovernment ECEG 2016***,** Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited Reading, Ljubljana, Slovenia (*Abstract accepted*)
- Alharbi, A, Kang. K & Sohaib, O 2016, "Citizens Engagement in E-participation on E-government Websites through SWAT Model: A Case of Saudi Arabia", *the 20th Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS 2016), Chiayi, Taiwan*

Abstract

The growing use of web technologies has significantly influenced how governments work and provide services to citizens. Electronic government (e-government) has been one of the major developments in recent years in both developing and developed countries. The main objective of e-government is not limited to access information but also to create new ways to improve processes, integrate government services and increase interaction with citizens. One of these ways is electronic participation (e-participation), which offers citizens a two-way communication between them and the government. E-participation, a subset of e-government, has become a common phenomenon in the governments, which are serious about using the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for strengthening the government-citizen relationship, such as the use of social networking services, online polls, discussion forum and blogs etc. Unlike traditional methods of communication between citizens and governments, e-participation activities on e-government websites enhance communication and enable citizens to become actively involved in the policy-making process. While there are many researches conducted in the field of e-government, most of these researches investigate the adoption/usage of e-government. However, previous studies failed to investigate citizens' intention to engage in e-participation activities. The purpose of this research is to investigate the key factors that influence on citizens' intention to engage in e-participation activities on e-government websites in Saudi Arabia. Based on literature review a conceptual model for e-participation on e-government websites proposed. Data was collected from Saudi citizens to find out their perceptions towards e-participation. Following this aim, this research answers the following main question: What are the key factors that influence on citizens' intention to engage in E-participation on E-government websites in Saudi Arabia?

In order to answer the research question, a mixed-method research approach is employed in this study, which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. First, a quantitative approach was applied to empirically test the relationship among the constructs of the proposed model. An online survey instrument is used as the method of data collection from Saudi Arabia citizens. A sample of 770 responses was used for data analysis. The data was analyzed using a structural equation modelling(SEM) statistical techniques using AMOS 22.0 to estimate the relationships

between the different factors in the research model. Secondly, a qualitative study (a focus group discussion) was used to validate the survey results and provide more insights into the relationships identified. The participants in the focus groups were also the Saudi citizens. One focus group discussion, which consisted of eight participants, was conducted in this study. The participants' responses throughout the discussion were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The quantitative results show that the proposed model is strongly supported by the data. The results of the focus group revealed the various factors influencing in citizens' intentions to engage in e-participation, thus supporting the hypotheses and consistent with the quantitative results. The analysis of both the survey and focus group discussion results confirmed that trust, attitude, web design and subjective norms strongly influence citizens' intention to engage in e-participation activities on e-government websites.

This study contributes to the knowledge by providing an important insight and a better understanding of citizens' intention to engage in e-participation activities on e-government websites in Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study will assist Saudi local government leaders and managers to better understand the major issues facing e-participation and enable analysis of the extent to which citizens' online inputs reflect community-wide interests.

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