

AN INVESTIGATION OF E-GOVERNMENT PROGRESS IN OMAN: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

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Abstract

E-government has become increasingly pervasive in modern society and it has emerged as an effective means of delivering government services to citizens. While most early e-government efforts were concentrated on developed countries, in the recent past, it has also become popular in many developing countries. Most notably are the Middle Eastern countries that have continued to invest significantly into e-government initiatives in the last five years; the Sultanate of Oman is one such example. However, although large investments have been made since 2003 to facilitate the implementation of electronic services in the public sector in Oman, only limited progress has been made in terms of realising fully functional e-government. The aim of this paper is to identify the factors that are currently influencing the development and implementation of e-government in Oman using a quantitative survey-based empirical study in three key public service agencies in Muscat, the capital of Oman. The research identified ten different factors that were influencing the progress of the national e-government project, e-Oman, from the viewpoint of government employees. The most salient of these factors was the Omani IT workforce capability and the citizens' trust and confidence in using e-services.

Keywords: E-government, Developing Countries, Oman, Trust, Confidence, IT workforce Capability

1 INTRODUCTION

The explosion of digital connectivity and significant improvements in information and communication technologies (ICT's) is changing the way most governments in the GCC region interact with citizens, deliver their services and how they compete with other governments in the region. The emphasis has now changed from internal government focused processes to more open and transparent citizen focused processes that aim to offer more accessible and user-friendly services to citizens. This shift has been facilitated largely as a result of the availability of innovative and cost effective ICT solutions and the evolution of the Internet. While developed countries have exploited the power of the Internet to successfully e-enable public services and entice citizens, developing countries have been comparatively slow in developing successful e-government strategies (Stoltzfus, 2004; Abanumy, et al., 2005; Karunanada and Weerakkody, 2006; Weerakkody et al., 2007).

The benefits of e-government are not only introducing e-services for citizens; private sectors (small, medium and large firms) can also benefit from the different stages of developing e-government (Beynon-Davies and Williams, 2003). Given that the public sector is often classified as bureaucratic, inefficient and less technology savvy, e-government can be considered as a revolution that was waiting to happen, particularly in a developing country context. Given this context, e-government has the potential to radically change public sector agencies and offer many benefits that were previously not envisaged (ibid).

Electronic government (e-government) has been defined in several ways depending on the context and research objective of the researchers; it is referred to as digital government, online government and even transformational government (Riley, 2003). For this study we discuss e-government as the manner in which governments make use of the exchange of information and services that are pertinent to citizens, individual businesses, and other governmental agencies to name a few (Welch, 2005). When e-government is implemented successfully, it will ensure that there is improvement in processes within government agencies, efficiency is achieved, and public services are better managed and delivered (Riley, 2003).

However, for e-government implementation to be widespread and successful, exemplary strategies and practices need to be identified in addition to establishing and prioritizing processes to be e-enabled. Furthermore, every e-government programme needs to have a clear idea of the proposed benefits to citizens, what challenges need to be overcome and the level of institutional change that needs to take place for it to be successful in a given context (Hazlett and Hill., 2003). While many developed countries have identified successful strategies and overcome obstacles to pioneer the e-government concept (Jones et al., 2007), developing countries such as Oman have much to learn in this context. However, there has been little research done to examine, for instance, the reasons for the lack of progress since the initiation of the national e-government project in Oman in 2003. Moreover, there is very little published literature (apart from UN reports) that identifies the issues impeding e-government efforts in Oman. This paper aims to examine key issues that are currently influencing the implementation of e-government in Oman. The study aims to address the question of what are the underlying dimensions that constitute the construct of government employees' knowledge in relation to e-government implementation and diffusion. As such, the paper aims to determine the most significant factors that are influencing e-government progress from the perspective of the employees.

In order to achieve the aforementioned aim, the paper is structured as follows. The next section briefly examines the benefits and challenges of e-government as published in the literature. This is followed by a brief overview of Oman and e-government implementation efforts in that country in section three. Next, an overview of the research approach used for this study is offered. The research finding is placed in section five. In section six, a comparison of factors affecting the progress of e-government implementation in Oman is offered. The paper then concludes by discussing the most salient issues

currently influencing e-government implementation in the context of eOman, the national e-government project in Oman.

2 E-GOVERNMENT BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES: A LITERATURE PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of e-government according to Kostopoulos (2003) is to build a digital state where public services and information can be offered to citizens electronically. Choudrie et al., (2004) suggests that e-government has the potential to improve external and internal relationships among the various stakeholders involved in the government services delivery process (including citizens, government employees, external businesses etc) and facilitate sharing of knowledge among these stakeholders. For many governments, particularly in developing countries, reducing expenditure and cutting down the cost of running government institutions is also a major concern (Bwoma and Huang, 2003). For instance, e-government will eliminate the expenditure needed for building more physical premises and agencies around the country to provide government services to citizens. Also, mismanagement and poor organization particularly in developing countries is common and affects public expenditure. In this context, e-government can cut costs by making operations constrained online. Moreover, e-government will encourage the improved interaction and communication between governments and its citizens (Kostopoulos, 2003). Furthermore, e-government will also establish an environment where public agencies can remain open for 24/365 to serve their citizens and help establish a new line of services for the citizen (Bwoma and Huang, 2003). This environment will therefore reduce the need to directly contact government agencies thereby reducing the cost for government and improving services for the citizens (Awan, 2003; Stoltzfus, 2004; Martin, 2000).

The result of the aforementioned developments will affect communication as well as bring about reforms on the term and conditions for using government services. The use of ICTs will improve the whole process of government; not only how citizen will interact with such services, but also even help create greater trust between the government and their customers (Choudrie and et al., 2004). Moreover, e-government will reduce the time public sector employees have to spend in their offices, help create better polices, and improve the organizational competitiveness within all government sectors. Choudrie and et al., (2004) classifies two broad benefits of e-government, namely, improving government-citizen relationship, which talks about rapport between government and citizens, and gaining e-commerce benefits such as better cost management. As Belanger and Carter (2004) have highlighted, the main similarity between e-commerce and e-government is that, in e-commerce people exchange their goods and similarly in e-government citizens exchange information and services with the government. Like in the e-commerce context, one of the most important issues in the e-government models is the integration between different government agencies. According to Belanger and Carter (2004), the e-government context allows to establish a standard system or network between government agencies for faster and more efficient information exchange between them. Even more, this can be done by using a common or standard computer language under a secure system to save the information within any type of online connection.

Most researchers have mentioned similar type of relationships in e-government which revolve around Government to Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Citizen (G2C) (Bwoma and Huang, 2003; Stoltzfus, 2004; Ndou, 2004; Chesi et al., 2005). However, Bwoma and Huang (2003) noted one more type of relationship G2E, which explain the relation between the government and their employees. The G2E relationship is particularly relevant for this research as it investigates the factors influencing e-government as seen by the employees from a service provider's perspective.

Researchers and practitioners also assert that e-government offers many benefits to citizens. Among the greatest benefits of e-government is improving IT infrastructure and reducing logistical costs, based on data integration of various government agencies (Al-Khoury and Bal 2007; United nation,

2003; Ndou, 2004; Chesi, 2005). For example, collecting all data required for citizens in one portal can ensure that citizens have the ability to explore and use all services from home or work. Moreover, there are many other benefits offered by e-government such as, improved business processes, globalization and increased use of the internet (Al-Khoury and Bal 2007).

Although there are vast advantages in implementing e-government, efforts have been obstructed by a number of challenges in developing and implementing e-government systems. Many challenges have been mentioned in different articles published in the last five years. Most common challenges are privacy and security (Al-Khoury and Bal, 2007; Al-Jobri, 2006; Bwoma and Huang, 2003), accessibility (Al-Jobri, 2006; Abanumy et al, 2005; Choudrie and et al, 2004; Chesi et al., 2005), infrastructure (Al-Khoury and Bal, 2007; Bwoma and Huang, 2003; Chesi et al., 2005), and IT workforce capability (Bwoma and Huang, 2003; Chesi et al., 2005). In addition, Bwoma and Huang (2003) identified integration of technologies between government agencies, as a major obstacle for e-government implementation. In this context, using interoperability standards for building e-government systems will increase the flexibility of integration with other systems (Borras, 2004). However, although there is a real need for a common language to complete this process of integration, still many government agencies have their own regulatory environment and strategic priorities (Borras, 2004).

Furthermore, Abanumy, et al., (2005) also note that website accessibility is a good measurement for e-government success, but at the same time serves as a barrier, because web accessibility will mean allowing universal use for the information. Thus, the success of e-government will depends on 'how user-friendly government websites will be' and 'what the website ability is' as well as 'how familiar the users are with various web based technologies' (Kostopoulos, 2003).

Another important issue with e-government development is the technical and software infrastructure requirements. This is one of the most costly aspects of e-government as transferring traditional government processes to an e-enables state where services are reliant on efficient enterprise applications and network infrastructure (i.e. high speed Internet connections) requires huge capital investments (UN, 2008). Moreover, accountability of limited financial resources, particularly in developing countries is an important challenge that governments need to manage well. Therefore, the stance adopted by governments should be one that is geared more towards the effective utilization of relevant resources as well as any foreign aid that is offered to finance e-government related projects (Al-Nahas, 2006).

Additionally, the national culture should be considered as an important element when preparing legislation regarding government transactions, particularly in an online context (Ndou, 2004; Lam 2005). For instance, Brooks et al., (2008) suggests that enabling acceptable legislation and cultural terms and conditions will often ensure that government and its citizens will trust each other. This is particularly pertinent in countries like Oman in the Middle Eastern region where national culture and social values influence the way citizens adopt new technology and innovations (Albusaidy and Weerakkody, 2008).

3 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF E-GOVERNMENT IN OMAN: CURRENT PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Oman is located in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula next to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and is bounded in the northeast by the gulf of Oman and southeast by the Arabian Sea. Oman covers an area of about 119,500 square miles. According to the Ministry of National Economy, in 2003 Oman had a population of 2.34 million people and a growth of around 46800 every year; at the end of 2006 Oman had a population of 2.577 million people (www.moneoman.gov.om, 2008).

Official e-Government efforts in Oman (referred to as 'e-Oman') started in 2003 with the establishment of a government organization called 'Oman digital'. This organisation is responsible for all e-government and e-commerce services in Oman. Initially, this organization was responsible for identifying the information and technological needs for different government agencies in Oman to participate in e-government. Currently this organization is developing the infrastructure and a national web portal for e-government in Oman, sadly, a process that has taken nearly half a decade to establish.

Research by Abanumy, et al., (2005) suggests that Oman e-government is still in the initial stage of building e-services, which concentrate on supplying information to the users (see Layne and Lee's, 2001 e-government development stages). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia described Oman's ICT e-participation policies and missions as average when compared with Saudi Arabia, and below average when compared with the United Arab Emirates. In 2008, the UN world e-government readiness survey showed that the Omani e-government efforts improved significantly since the 2005 survey by moving up from 112 to 84 in the rankings. Sadly, though, according to the same survey Oman's e-government project was ranked last among Gulf countries (UN, 2008).

In addition to the discussion presented above, the lack of a legal framework to identify guidelines and regulations regarding the use of electronic data is one of the main limitations of Oman's e-government concept (UN, 2005). Furthermore, according to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Oman needs to provide new laws to regulate the Internet, which will control the relations between service providers and users (Tigran, 2006). In addition, though Oman connected to the internet in 1997 the country still has only one internet provider, which means that not all towns and cities are covered by internet services (ibid). However, since of late with the establishment of 'Oman Digital' the government has ensured the formulation of national ICT strategy to enhance e-services such as e-procurement, e-payment and privacy (UN, 2005; Tigran, 2006). Nevertheless, sceptics have suggested that Oman lacks clear detailed plans for implementing e-government, which will affect their progress (Al-Jboori et al., 2006). Moreover, there are no software industries, which can grow with Oman's e-government needs. Other researchers have also identified common issues, such as, usability and information quality as factors affecting the efficiency of e-government implementation in Oman (Abanumy et al., 2005).

4 RESEARCH APPROACH

This paper aims to identify government employees' perception of the factors that are currently influencing the development and implementation of e-government in Oman. The research methodology employed is a quantitative, survey based study (Saunders et al., 2002).. The quantitative sample for the research reported here was drawn from 105 IT knowledge workers in the Omani government. This sample was composed of 35 employees from the Information Technology Authority, 50 employees from the Ministry of Manpower and 20 employees from the Tender Board. Our sampling strategy in these three Omani government agencies gives a sense of 'how effective and efficient the use of electronic services in government' were in meeting the Omani citizens' requirements.

All three selected ministries were actively involved in e-government and had some transaction level e-government services. The questionnaire used allowed to capture a broad and realistic perspective of the issues influencing e-Oman. The three participating organisations were very supportive of the research and assisted the researchers to identify relevant employees to disseminate the questionnaire.

4.1 Data Collection

The data collection strategy used for this paper relied primarily on data that was collected through a survey-based questionnaire administered to IT field workers in middle management and operational level employees at three different ministries in the Sultanate of Oman. The secondary data was gathered through a review of the published academic literature and other relevant Omani government and United Nations publications.

There is very little published (normative) literature on e-government implementation that has focused on Oman (Albusaidy and Weerakkody, 2008). Therefore, to examine e-government adoption in Oman, the researchers considered a survey method as the most suitable approach, as it allows for gathering data from a large sample of participants (Saunders et al., 2002; Choudrie and Dwivedi, 2005; Kifle 2008). The aim of the survey was to define different criteria pertinent to e-government service delivery and disseminate these criteria to government employees working in the IT field who are directly responsible for creating various electronic services in the context of “e-Oman.” Ten questions were included in the questionnaire, consisting of closed-ended and Likert scale type (5-point scale) questions (Sonnenwald et al., 2001; Al-Shafi and Weerakkody, 2008).

The survey questionnaire was distributed to 105 government employees in three different Omani ministries between August and September 2008. The basis for selecting the three ministries was their level of involvement and influence in the e-Oman initiative; all three selected ministries were actively involved in e-government and had some transaction level e-government services (see for instance Layne and Lee (2001) for the levels of e-government development). The questionnaire offered perspective on the broader issues influencing e-Oman and represents a realistic picture of the current state of e-government in the Sultanate of Oman. The three participating organisations were very supportive of the research and assisted the researchers to identify relevant employees to disseminate the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered and followed up by the researchers to ensure that an adequate number of responses were obtained. Of the 105 questionnaires administered, 35 questionnaires per organization, 98 respondents returned the completed questionnaire for a response rate of 93.3%.

4.2 Data analysis

The questionnaire survey consists of ten independent variables that were identified and structured around key themes recognized from the literature and an initial semi-structured interview conducted with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Information Technology Authority (ITA) in Oman (Albusaidy and Weerakkody, 2009). These variables are accessibility of services, “use of email to communicate with citizens,” security, operational efficiency, cultural obstacles, privacy, legislation, user confidence, IT workforce capability, private sector partnerships, trust, e-services availability, and information exchange between government agencies. To ensure clarity and ease of completion, the questionnaire was written in English as well as Arabic for those who cannot understand English.

In order to measure the influence of usefulness, capability and service quality towards e-government activities, the data had to be transformed in the following manner. Each factor with Likert scale questions was computed and then subsequently used. For example, security had five key statements (i.e. Satisfactory, “To a Large Extent”=5, “To a Reasonable Extent”=4, “Somewhat”=3, “Weak”=2, and “Not at All”=1), which were averaged to compute a mean score.

The beginning of the data analysis stage involved checking the responses and assigning a unique identification number to each response. The second stage consisted of using statistical applications to obtain actual values and better understanding of each factor considered in this survey. In this way, the authors used the SPSS application (version 15.0) to analyse the data. The results of the survey were structured around the ten key themes identified above as outlined in the next section.

5 RESEARCH FINDING: EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVE OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADOPTION IN OMAN

Respondent's profile

This section describes the research findings; out of the 98 completed questionnaires that were returned from the 105 that were distributed, four questionnaires were discarded because of incomplete answers. The remaining 94 questionnaires made up the final sample that was used for subsequent analysis. All 94 respondents were from IT backgrounds and had knowledge of the electronic services offered by their respective government organisations. The key themes from the findings are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Accessibility for all citizens

This notion is a way of offering better and more accessible services to citizens in order to develop successful e-government strategies (Choudrie and et al, 2004; Chesli, et al., 2005). In terms of accessibility, the results revealed that 38.3% of respondents felt that e-Oman was somewhat accessible and 38.3% felt the levels of accessibility offered were reasonable. However, the result also illustrated that 2.1% of the government employees were 'not at all' satisfied with the accessibility aspects of the e-Oman services. Nevertheless, since the majority of respondents perceived accessibility as good or satisfactory, it can be argued that accessibility will not negatively affect the use of e-government services in Oman.

System Security

Many researchers have suggested that issues like security remain a major barrier for e-government, and the low level of online security will affect e-government adoption (Wilford, 2004; Ndou, 2004). In terms of security, the results revealed that 25.5% of respondents were somewhat happy, 57.4% were reasonably happy and 10.0% were satisfied to a large extent. However, the results illustrate that the majority of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward security, which indicates that security issues may not affect the citizens' usage of e-government services in Oman.

Operational Efficiency

When e-government is implemented successfully, it will ensure improvement in processes and efficiency (Riley, 2003; Carter and Belanger, 2005). While examining the efficiency of government websites, the majority of respondents (85.2%) felt somewhat or reasonably satisfied. Additionally, 6.4% of the respondents mentioned that efficiency in usage of government websites was highly satisfactory. These results indicate a good level of operational efficiency in the e-Oman initiative.

Citizen Privacy

As shown by the survey, the average scores for respondents' attitude towards citizens' privacy in e-government services ranged from 3.68 to 3.78. This means about 70%, which is the majority of the respondents, agreed on the methods that were used to protect citizens' privacy in government websites. These scores are quite high and respondents had a positive attitude toward privacy issues. Therefore, we can argue that norms, beliefs and values in Oman might not affect peoples' attitudes towards using e-government services.

Citizen confidence with government

Authors such as Carter and Weerakkody (2008) identified public confidence as a major cultural problem that might affect e-government usage. While examining citizens' confidence in the usage of

government websites, the results revealed that 59.6% of respondents felt confident in using online services and 21.3% felt highly confident. However, the results also illustrate that 4.3% of the government employees felt citizens were less confidence in using of e-government services. Nevertheless, since the majority of respondents perceived citizens' confidence as good or highly satisfactory, it can be argued that confidence issues would not negatively affect the use of e-government services in Oman.

Internal IT Workforce Capability

All respondents acknowledged that there was limited resource capability and experience within the government IT field workforces. Fifty-two respondents confirmed that the IT workforce needed to improve their knowledge and experience, while 28 respondents stated that the IT workforce had reasonable experience and knowledge related to e-government technologies. Therefore, these results indicate the need for training and leveraging experienced workforces to implement various stages and services required to improve the e-Oman strategy.

Private sector Partnerships

This is a unique factor in this research because it examines the current relationship between the public and private sectors in Oman. The descriptive statistics show a high level of participation and arrangement between the public and private sectors; 83.0% of respondents reported that the private-public sector relationship was very satisfactory in the context of e-Oman.

Citizen trust of Government

Trust is classified as one of the major factors that contribute to e-government adoption (Gefen et al., 2002; Carter and Weerakkody, 2008). With regards to citizens' trust in using e-government services, the results revealed that 20.0% of respondents felt that citizens trusted e-government web sites, while 47.9% felt that citizens were reasonably satisfied in terms of trust issues. However, the results also illustrated that 26.6% of the government employees felt that citizens were somewhat less trusting of online government transactions. Nevertheless, since the majority of respondents perceived citizens' trust as good or highly satisfactory, we argue that trust issues would not negatively affect the use of e-government services in Oman.

E-services Availability

The availability of e-services in Oman was seen as weak by only 10.6% of the respondents, which indicates that only a few government agencies have not started e-government initiatives. However, the view of the majority of respondents showed that most government agencies were starting to implement e-government on a regular basis to communicate with their citizens electronically; 48.9% of respondents thought that e-services were somewhat available and 30.9% reported a good level of e-services availability within Omani government agencies. These results indicate that the availability of various electronic services is increasing significantly in the context of e-Oman.

Information Exchange between Government Agencies

When examining the information exchange between government agencies, the survey results indicate that the integration between different government agencies is still in the initial stage. These results indicate the need to integrate processes and systems between different government organisations and agencies within the Omani government environment. Since all of the respondents were from the IT domain in Omani government ministries, this observation is particularly relevant for e-government implementation.

6 DISCUSSION

The research conceptualized the value of e-government factors that influence success in the context of e-Oman initiatives. Ninety-four responses from government employees were used to determine the ten different factors that influence success of e-government initiatives. The paper sought to address a number of aims: The study gives a richness of data that provides the basis to demonstrate the current e-government initiatives in the context of e-Oman. The study also provides better understanding of the research question: what are the fundamental usages by Omani citizens of various e-services in Oman, as described by Omani government employees.

The research highlighted a number of factors facing the Omani e-government implementation. It indicated that the actual implementation of e-government has a good set of procedures and the complete task of e-government implementation may proceed well beyond the government's vision of 2020. From the government employee's perspective, issues such as accessibility, efficiency, availability, security and information privacy were impeding citizens from using e-government services, while issues such as confidence and trust can easily be earned from citizens when earlier factors are satisfied. Those issues were compounded by two different needs: the need to integrate between various government agencies and the enhancement of IT workforce skills to facilitate the effective and efficient delivery of e-services.

What is apparent in this research is the strong relationship between four different factors: accessibility, efficiency, availability and confidence. The survey results indicate that realising the first three factors (accessibility, efficiency and availability) will lead to a high level of confidence among citizens. The survey results illustrate that the majority of respondents had a positive attitude toward these three factors. As outlined in Figure 1, the results revealed that 76.6% of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward accessibility, 85.2% of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward efficiency and 79.8% of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward e-services availability. Finally, the survey outcomes showed a percentage of 76.6 as positive attitude towards citizens' confidence. Therefore, from this observation, we can suggest that when there are improvements on accessibility, efficiency and availability of e-government services, the citizens' confidence in e-government will improve.

With regard to issues of information security and privacy, the survey shows that 68.0% of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward security and 74.5% of respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward privacy. The survey outcomes show that 67.9% of respondents have a positive attitude towards citizens' trust. Therefore, from this observation, we can suggest that when there are improvements on e-government security and privacy issues, the citizens' trust will improve.

Another relationship emerges when comparing both the IT workforce capabilities and the information exchange between government agencies. From this relationship, it can be suggested that an experienced IT workforce will facilitate better process and systems integration between different government agencies.

7 CONCLUSION

The originality of this research is represented in a quantitative survey to describe the current state of Omani e-government, and the mutual interaction between the government and its citizens, that examined the government's workforce experience base and daily interaction with the citizens. Government can be radically improved by exploiting e-government only if acceptable legislation and cultural terms and conditions are adopted in e-government initiatives. The consequence of this is that norms of citizens' trust and confidence will significantly improve whilst e-government continues to facilitate a high level of interaction and communication with citizens.

As outlined in the survey, a number of factors (such as accessibility, efficiency, availability, security and privacy) were identified from the literature and considered important for understanding citizens' attitude towards adopting e-government services. From the empirical findings, it can be concluded that when the accessibility, efficiency and availability of e-government services are high, the citizens' confidence in e-government is likely to be high. Moreover, the findings confirm prior research, in that security and privacy issues strongly influence citizens' trust in the adoption of e-government services. From a practical perspective, most of the Omani e-government initiatives are currently focused on providing information, cataloguing and basic services. In this context, the findings confirm that the success of e-government in Oman will largely depend on providing better accessibility, efficiency and availability of official government websites.

Since this research has focused on the views of government employees, there was no real picture of their claims about the effectiveness of e-government. Government employees are generally more willing to participate in this type of survey, because they are more interested to draw a picture of their officials. Therefore, further research could possibly examine the effectiveness of e-government within the Omani citizenry. Furthermore, continued studies are needed to examine the progress of Omani e-government in order to ensure that the future development and implementation of different stages of e-government are achieved in the progress of the Omani Vision2020. The survey was conducted in Muscat, the capital city of Oman; therefore, this research could be extended to ascertain the opinions of a wider section of employees of local government agencies from different cities in Oman.

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