Reengineering the open government concept: An empirical support for a proposed model

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ABSTRACT

Open government is a new phenomenon that attracted much research in recent years. The major dimensions of open government included some redundancy with respect to the indications of these concepts. Through an extensive literature review, this study tried to breakdown the three major pillars of open government into their known sub-dimensions. The second step was to summarize the basic concepts reported in the literature and map them to these dimensions. Finally, this work tried to synthesize the basic concepts into four major dimensions. The proposed dimensions are: transparency, information accountability, collaboration and empowerment.

The second objective of this work is to validate this proposed model by utilizing an empirical test using confirmatory factor analysis. The research model proposed tried to predict Jordanians' intentions to use e-government services using the four proposed dimensions of open government. Empirical results supported our premise and indicated a good fit of dimensions and acceptable loadings on each dimension. Also, the regression test predicted the intention to use e-government websites with an acceptable coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.409$). Empirical results indicated a significant prediction of intention to use e-government website by all dimensions proposed with more weight for information accountability. The reengineered model was supported by the data and calls for more validation by researchers.

1. Introduction

The latest reports issued by the United Nations adopted a four stages model based on the excellent achievements of member countries in regard to utilizing the web and providing comprehensive information to their stakeholders (UNDESA, 2010, 2012, 2014). The only downside of such shift is the negligence of the capacity, density, and adequacy of information within each stage that was indicated by the second stage. The notion of open government is closely related to information status, where more information is published and at some stage, the quality of information is an indicator of such openness. Big and open data is a new trend that is attracting countries towards a more open image.

The importance of e-government projects is not deniable, where more and more countries are utilizing the Internet to open doors for communication and collaboration with their citizens. The Internet is an open channel that encourages people to be active participants in the political arena, and especially disadvantaged segments of society (Al-Rababah & Abu-Shanab, 2010; Spaiser, 2012). Based on this, most countries of the world are embracing e-government projects.

The new direction of e-government towards a political role is attracting more research in e-government, where some researchers are embedding some political dimensions like participation and transparency in their propositions (Abu-Shanab, 2013a). Open government is the new phenomenon related to the concept of e-government. It emphasizes the status of information in each stage. Regardless of the country's achievement in its e-government project, its open government status can be assessed. Open government is built around a collaborative relationship between governments and citizens, where both become partners in solving problems (UNDESA, 2013; Unsworth & Townes, 2012). To make this collaboration process a success story, credibility, trust and accountability are the foundation. Many examples related to open government are reported in the literature (Cerrillo-i-Martínez, 2011; Coglianese, 2009; Mergel, 2012).

The concept of open government is an old one and goes back to the 1950s (Yu & Robinson, 2012), still it is not defined well and includes some redundancy in regards to its dimensions. As an example, the collaboration pillar proposed by Obama's administration is a dimension of the e-participation (a second pillar of open government). Such tautology makes empirical research difficult and the conceptual research utilizing these two concepts problematic. This paper will review the literature to understand and synthesize the concept of open government. Also, new definitions of some dimensions are proposed based on previous literature. The second step was to reengineer the concept to remove any redundancy or tautology in the concept. Finally, an empirical test was implemented

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