

The mediating effect of customer happiness on the relationship between customer experience and E-Government success in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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Abstract:

Customers are the key stakeholders of any business upon which the entire value chain of an organization rests. Conspicuously, the customer-orientation approach triggers an organization to consistently redefine its vision, mission, and objectives and re-engineer its value chain so that the organization becomes ultimately productive. The fundamental metric for measuring the performance of a value chain is customer experience which is the outcome of all the activities and so it determines the applicability of going concern assumption on the entity as well as future marketability of the products and services. Since the capitalistic economy advocates a 'laissez-faire' policy, it tends to stay uninterrupted while privatization occurs. Hence, government portals are not the only options to offer utility services because privatization will take over them if they fail to satisfy customers. The outcome of customer experience can be thought of as a line with two poles, having on one end 'Satisfaction' and the other 'Dissatisfaction'. This report accentuated on the underlying relationship between the factors of customer satisfaction and the success of e-governance which will thereby assess the bearing of each factor on e-governance to determine the weight of such variables so that the Government of Abu Dhabi, UAE may prioritize elements according to their significance to keep customers delighted.

Index Terms- E-governance, Customer, Relationship, Experience, Happiness, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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I. Introduction:

The fundamental question to measure the success of intangible services is - 'What do residents feel about the E-governance services extended by the Abu Dhabi Government?'. Customer experience has long been regarded as the most domineering factor to measure success. Multi-dimensional surveys, interviews, and questionnaires are presented to the targeted groups to obtain the public perception which is thereafter analyzed to measure Customer Experience (Botha, Kruger, and De Vries, 2020). A positive response from customers or service recipients can help to expand service lines and a negative response may result in the privation of the E-governance services. This report accentuated on the underlying relationship between the factors of customer satisfaction and the success of e-governance which will thereby assess the bearing of each factor on e-governance to determine the weight of such variables so that the Government of Abu Dhabi, UAE may prioritize elements according to their significance to keep customers delighted.

II. Research Aims:

This research aims at bridging a sustainable relationship between the service recipients of e-government facilities by identifying fundamental factors that can trigger customer experiences towards satisfaction.

III. Research Objectives:

- Identifying factors affecting the customer experiences in an e-government service platform
- Determining the weight of each factor can have a significant bearing on customer experience.
- Recommending a roadmap for the e-government agencies to take due care of parameters that are affecting the inter-relationship between Government and its subordinate individuals, businesses, employees, and other Governments.

IV. Research Question:

What are the factors impacting the relationship between customer experience and E-Government Success and how customer satisfaction can intensify this relationship?

V. Research methodology:

To uphold the reliability and validity of the research outcome, this paper will demystify the methodology applied in conducting the research work. Hence the following sections are outlined as below –

5.1 Types of research:

This research is an **exploratory** one because it has attempted to investigate the factors that are responsible for the positive customer experience in the e-government platform.

5.2 Quantitative Analysis and findings:

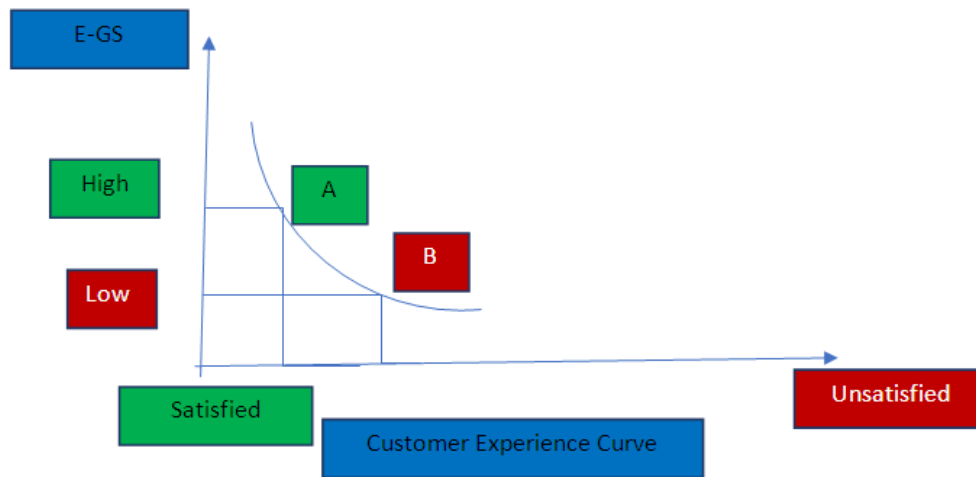


Figure: Relationship between Customer Experience and E-governance Success

5.2.1 Positive Co-relation exists:

In the above diagram, it is visible that when Customers are satisfied, the e-governance success is high and when it is low e-governance success (E-GS) is low. It means that there is a positive correlation between these 2 parameters (Osborne and Hutchinson, 2020). **For example**, if customers rate positively to the online Electricity bill payment system, then the E-governance success rate will be higher in the scale of transparency, security, and convenience. However, if customers rate negatively on various reviews and social media platforms then the E-governance success rate will be marginal in the scale of transparency, security, and convenience.

5.2.2 Regression Analysis:

E-governance success is a dependent variable that is significantly affected by various factors such as customer experience, foreign collaboration, lenient tax policy, and database integration (Botha, Kruger, and De Vries, 2020). Customer experience has 2 poles of measurement such as satisfied and unsatisfied customers. Therefore, to find out the impact of customer experience on E-governance success, the following equation can be applied –

$$Y = a + b * X$$

Here Y is a dependent variable that represents E-governance success and X is an independent variable that refers to customer experience. The term ‘a’ indicates a constant variable which is Y-intercept and ‘b’ implies slope. The formula for slope, b is

$$b = \text{rise/run} = \text{E-GS} / \text{CX} = Y / X$$

Since Customer Experience is a function of various factors, it is required to project the weight of each factor to calculate the impact of these factors on E-government success.

$$F(\text{CX}) = (\text{Comfort, Security, Usability, Perceived Value, Perceived Usefulness})$$

Factors of CX (X)	Estimated Weight of X	Slope (b)	Constant (a)	=	E-GS (Y)
Comfort	18%	75%	0	=	13.50%
Security	33%	75%	0	=	24.75%
Usability	21%	75%	0	=	15.75%
Perceived Usefulness	13%	75%	0	=	9.75%

Perceived Ease of Use	15%	75%	0	=	11.25%
Total	100%				

Figure: Calculation of E-governance Success

Source: (Kohtamäki, Vesalainen, Varamäki and Vuorinen, 2020)

Slope, 'b' is 3/4th or 75% where for every 4 notches of CX, E-GS rises by 3. This ratio will remain constant across all the factors of customer experience because the CX curve will not shift right or left until any external factor like competition, natural calamity, changes in rules or foreign collaboration affects the relationship between the 2 parameters. The constant or Y-intercept 'a' is zero because Axis-Y meets Axis-X at zero.

The fundamental outcome of this analysis is –

- a) There exists a positive relationship between customer happiness and E-government success (Schedler and Summermatter, 2021).
- b) The slope on the CX curve suggests that the relationship between both the parameters is 75% which means that there exists a high level of correlation.

5.3 Qualitative analysis and findings:

Certain attributes significantly impact the relationship between Customer Experience (CX) and E-government success (E-GS) which are discussed as herein –

5.3.1 The comfort of customers:

Customers are the service recipient and ultimate absorber of benefits so they must be taken care of while navigating strategies. E-governance success depends on customer convenience and flexibility to a larger extent because of the following reasons –

- If convenient facilities are not extended to the consumers of e-governance then they will tend to use private services which, at times, are a bit costlier than government facilities. **For example**, if the process of subscription for cooking fuel gets difficult due to administrative red tape, then people will eventually prefer private arrangements to fulfill their requirements.
- Getting prompt customer service 24/7, so that whenever customers are faced with any difficulties or are subject to privacy hacks then they can easily notify the Information Technology (IT) teams of E-governance.

5.3.2 Security of profile and transaction:

- When customer processes online transactions for paying utility bills or taxes then they must be protected with a secured payment system so that their particulars are not hacked by unauthorized 3rd parties. **For example**, using Secured Electronic Transaction (SET) protocols to keep transactional information end-to-end encrypted which can prevent infiltrations (Kohtamäki, Vesalainen, Varamäki and Vuorinen, 2020).
- Customers may allow cookies or may provide personal information for registration on websites to build virtual profiles of their identities and credentials which should be protected through a centralized database with restricted access for the higher management.
- It has been reported by World Trade Organization (WTO) that due to lack of security in the Central Bank of Bangladesh, the country lost \$800 million to hackers.

5.3.3 Usability of E-governance services:

- According to British digitalization society, at least 73% of people feel averse to optimize the e-governance facilities because of the criticality and scarcely legible meaning of terminologies used in defining rules and procedures.
- Graphical User Interface (GUI) makes the E-governance system more interactive because users find visual contents to be more effective and communicative than written materials. **For example**, to help users navigate the 'Accessibility' features of the digital platform, many Financial Institutions (FI) have introduced GUI to accelerate usability and flexibility.

5.3.4 Perceived Usefulness:

- Customers should be made well aware of the usability of the resources incorporated in the digital platform of e-governance so that they are confident of the usability (Schedler and Summermatter, 2021). **For example**, due to the COVID-19 phenomenon, users should be able to submit their Tax returns through Smart Phone applications or websites so that they are no longer required to go out.
- Preferential incentives should be allowed to the users who are using E-government services for the first time (Towards Customer-Centricity, 2020). For example, 10% discount on bill liabilities, if the user settles his due for the first time using mobile wallets.

5.4 The impact of Qualitative factors on the success of E-governance:

CX Dimensions	Criteria	Customer Experience	E-governance Success/ Failure
Comfort	Convenient facilities	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
	Frequent customer service	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
Security	Secured transaction processing	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
	Information protection	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
Usability	Legible terminologies	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
	Optimizing Graphical User Interface (GUI)	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
Perceived Usefulness	Customer awareness	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure
	Preferential incentive	Satisfactory	Success
		Dissatisfactory	Failure

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations:

The fundamental objective of this research paper is to design a roadmap for the E-governance platforms to deliver consistent quality and premium services to the citizens so that they may remain satisfied and thus the E-governance become successful. There are enormous benefits of e-Government which include high accountability of the Government, improving the living standard for the citizens, achieving cost efficiency, and ensuring overall development of the Government mechanism and customers satisfaction. The following recommendations can be laid down to highlight the measures to be undertaken for the success of E-governance through customer happiness –

- a) Since there is a strong correlation (i.e., 75%) between e-government success and customer happiness, the ministry of Abu Dhabi should focus on customer convenience, security, and usability of E-Government protocol so that there is a persistent value generation and delightful customer experience using those digital services
- b) The Government should take adequate measures to improve tools and means of customer interactions and impart training to 60,000 employees working in the IT sector keeping pace with the technology amelioration.
- c) For the effectiveness and efficiency of e-governance, mass people should have internet access and for this reason, the Abu Dhabi Government should invest USD 3.5 million to extend the facilities of the internet in remote areas.
- d) The government should focus on ensuring organizational, legal, and technical modernization to enable the people to adapt to the ever-changing and fast technological advancement.
- e) The government should keep track of the latest development in the technological arena to accelerate customer convenience, security, awareness, and usability so that the private organization cannot overtake E-governance.
- f) Educating people about the enormous benefits of e-governance platforms so that mass people will come under the coverage of e-governance protocol. Moreover, effective cash incentives should be allowed to the users of e-governance platforms so that they stay loyal to the e-governance services.
- g) The Abu Dhabi Government should allocate sufficient funds for the implementation of E-government initiatives otherwise, it will eventually buffer in providing services to the customers.

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Ethical compliance:

While conducting this research, the researcher has ensured pragmatic compliance with the ethical standards for professional researchers so that the research outcome may not get biased by any means. Integrity, objectivity, and independence were always held higher to resolve conflicts of interest. The following ethical protocols were pursued during the research:

- a) Maintaining confidentiality of information and responses provided by individuals
- b) Referring conflict of interest to supervisors and adopting safeguards against threats to ethical values.
- c) Keeping back-up of important documents in separate custody which is not accessible to unauthorized individuals.

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