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An Evaluation of E-Government System Success in Service Provision in Kericho County, Kenya

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Abstract: *E-government is a form of e-business in governance and refers to the processes and structures needed to deliver electronic services to the public (citizens and businesses), collaborate with business partners and to conduct electronic transactions within an organizational entity. County governments being in a state of development has given rise to new business processes, different information flows, and changed policies, new kinds of records, advanced security measures, and new data management methods. The general objective of the study was to evaluate the e-government system in service provision in Kericho County. A descriptive study design was used to evaluate the e-government system in service provision in Kericho County. The population of the study comprised all the Kericho county government employees. A simple random sampling method was employed where 50 respondents from four major departments of IT, Accounting/Finance, Administration and Customer care across the county were interviewed. A self-administered five point Likert scale questionnaire was utilized for data collection. A reliability estimate of 0.75 was realized for the instrument using Cronbach reliability coefficient. Data collected was analysed using factor analysis and results presented in tables. This study established that the e-government system in Kericho county has the capacity to handle various operations in and contributes to the overall development in the since it will enhance service delivery while reducing wastages that used to be experienced in various departments. It also documented that the county government is relying so much on the system since most of its operations have been digitized and can now be accessed real time. This paper further documented that good identification of user needs and adequate training help in speeding up the success of the system. The study recommends more research to be conducted to clearly present measures that should be undertaken to address the challenges associated with implementation, management and use of the system especially because the counties are still struggling to attract the best calibre of skilled professionals to run and manage their systems.*

Keywords: e-government, County government, Services, Information Technology, Administration

Research Area: Social Science

Paper Type: Research Paper

1. INTRODUCTION

The public administration world-wide has undergone major changes in the last few years with radical Information Technology (IT) based initiatives that fundamentally affect the way that government bodies perform their activities. The concept of e-government usually refers to the use of IT within government to achieve more efficient and effective operations, better quality of service and easy public access to government information and services (Kraemer and King, 2003). The need to invest in these initiatives is to move beyond the passive information giving to active citizen involvement in the decision making process. E-government brings new concepts of citizen participation, both in terms of their needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizens on a daily basis (UNESCO-Egov).

Transformation of the government mechanism with information and communication technologies (ICTs) is seen, not only as a means of reshaping the business processes and working practices in public services, but also as a basis for strengthening the relationship between the public and private sectors. For example Fountain (2001) in writing about the role of IT in government, argues that 'technology is a catalyst for social, economic and political change at the levels of the individual, group, organization and institution'. In the county governments however, there is undeniably a considerable variation in Fountain's claims. At the basis of these studies are certain assumptions, such as that government services delivered electronically are somehow more responsive, that part of being modern and efficient is to conduct transactions on-line, that governments can facilitate broader uptake of electronic commerce in the community by using it themselves, and that the more electronically enabled a nation or region is, the more economically competitive and therefore able to enjoy the economic growth (Tonkin, 2003). The purpose of this paper is to determine the validity of the claims concerning Kericho county government reforms through new technologies.

Kericho County is a county of Kenya. It has an estimated population of 1 million and an area of 2,111 km². Its capital and largest town is Kericho. It is home to the best of Kenyan tea which is renowned worldwide for its taste. Kericho County has six constituencies namely Kipkelion East, Kipkelion West, Ainamoi, Bureti, Belgut and Sigowet –Soin which are also referred to as sub-Counties in the County administration. The county has 30 wards all represented by various Members of County Assemblies in the County Assembly. It borders the following counties; Nandi to the North, Uasin Gishu and Baringo to the North East, Nakuru to the East and South East, Bomet to the South, Nyamira and Homa-Bay to the South West, and Kisumu County to the West and North West (Kenya Census, 2009).

The services offered by the Kericho county government include; development control services; refuse/ waste management; cleansing/ park services; revenue mobilization; drainage maintenance; maintenance of county institutions and projects identification and monitoring. The provision of all these services depends on the availability of funds collected through the numerous county fees, levies, charges and rates. Therefore there is need to invest and utilize ICTs to help monitor the provision and collection of revenues in an efficient manner, as they are known to make operations more efficient.

Many studies in the area of ICT have been done in an effort to justify the potentials associated with it, these include; Nyambene (1996), on publicly quoted companies in Kenya, Muganda (2001), on business value of e-commerce, Nyagowa (2000), on micro finance institutions and Odiko (2004), on e-business. It's evident from these studies that though they are all related to the current study; none has evaluated the success of e-government system in service provision in the county of Kericho. There was therefore a compelling need to for this research to bridge the existing knowledge gap.

Given the recent interest by Kericho county government in the transformative potential of e-government technology, there was a growing need to critically evaluate its since there is increasingly more investments being channeled towards this e-government initiative, yet various researches worldwide indicates widespread failure of information systems especially in developing countries due to various reasons. Kericho County is among the first counties to put in place an e-government platform which has given rise to new business processes, different information flows, changed policies, new kinds of records, advanced security measures, and new data management methods. The principal aim of this study was to investigate the impact of e-government technology in Kericho County as shaped by organizational, economic and social mechanisms.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING E-GOVERNMENT

E-government is understood as the use of IT based tools in government agencies to achieve efficient operations, better quality provision of services and to more importantly achieve sufficient accountability in serving citizens (Bett, 2009). Central to this definition is the concept of integration of diverse stakeholders of e-Government systems using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), such as the Internet, Mobile Computing, Computer Networks, Mobile Telephony, etc.

The emergence of the Internet and developments in processing capacity and data storage over the 1990s has significantly altered the environment for ICT use across society and in government. While the longer-term effects of this digital revolution are likely to be profound, these developments have already increased pressure on county governments to improve performance and provided them the tools to do so. This does not mean, however, that e-government challenges are primarily technical. E-government services continue to be embedded in the environment of today's public administrations and therefore remain limited by what these administrations are capable and willing, to do. The term "e-government", as used by the OECD E-Government Project, applies to the use of ICT as a tool to achieve better government. Thus, e-government is not about business as usual, but should instead focus on using ICT to transform the structures, operations and, most importantly, the culture of government (Wimmer, 2002).

It has been emphasized that an important goal of e-Government is the delivery of faster and cheaper services and information to citizens, business partners, employees, other agencies, and government agencies (Layne and Lee, 2001). Easy and equitable access to public information and services has always been a goal of open and democratic governments. However, e-Government is a much more substantial transformation than e-Service delivery. E-Government defines an area, the public sector, as well as the institutions, people, and processes which operate within this area. It is obviously not only about services or technology; it is about reinventing the way in which governments interact with citizens, governmental agencies, businesses, employees, and other stakeholders. It is about enhancing democratic processes and also about using new ideas to make lives easier for the citizen by, for example, transforming government processes, enabling economic development, and renewing the role of government, itself, in society.

E-Government is usually presented as using IT to:

- Provide easy access to government information and services to citizens and business;
- Increase the quality of services, by increased speed, completeness and process efficiency; and
- Provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in different kinds of democratic processes.

The implementation of e-Government involves not only a profound transformation in the way government interacts with the governed but also the reinvention of its internal processes and organisation. E-Government concerns both internal and external use of IT, for internal administration as well as for external services (Gronlund, 2002).

3. TECHNOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF E-GOVERNMENT

The impact of new technologies on government has been subjected to different interpretations as far as its social and human implications are concerned. These interpretations are closely associated with people's assumptions about the nature of

organizational power and control. ICTs have been presented as the means of achieving desirable citizenship and workplace values (Kraemer and King, 2003). In that sense, ICTs are associated with “open government” and with greater organizational and political “transparency” (Bellamy and Taylor, 1998). On the other hand contending with these views of the government transformation is a range of counter-arguments, which stress the electronic notion of the accountability in public institutions. Within this context, ICTs will vastly increase opportunities for supervision and regulation of staff, as well as of customers and citizens.

Therefore, far from being a source of equality, new ICTs are inherently unrestricted (Bellamy and Taylor, 1998). This technological understanding portrays technology as an essentially neutral entity, with inevitable determining impacts or effects on the socio-economic life and society as a whole (MacKenzie, 1999; MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985; Williams and Edge, 1996). In consequence e-Government is seen as a technology driven transformation for the improvement and integration of the system of government. The often cited benefits of e-government in a developing country like Kenya include improved efficiency, increase in transparency and accountability of government functions, convenient and faster access to government services, and improved democracy, and lower costs for administrative services (Netchaeva 2002, Silcock 2001).

The Working Group on e-government of the Pacific Council on International Policy or PCIP (2002) further advance the idea that the enthusiasm for e-government adoption may stem from the belief that technology, and specifically, ICTs can aid in transforming the government’s often negative image in the eyes of its citizenry. Mistrust of government is widespread, with citizens regarding civil servants as bureaucrats bent on profiteering. Therefore, any government that appreciates and respects the wishes of its citizenry would use ICTs to reverse this perception (Muganda, 2009).

The spread of ICT has brought ‘hope’ to many counties attempting to transform their governments, with the objective of redeeming their image in an effort to improve the public’s perception of the role of those governments. A number of studies in the area of ICT have been done to validate the prospects associated with it for instance; Nyambene (1996), in his evaluation of extent of factors limiting information technology (IT) usage in publicly quoted companies in Kenya established that the technology in the country has not been appreciated hence many factors contribute to its limitation in use. Similarly Muganda (2001), in his investigation of the business value of e-commerce in the case of selected firms in Kenya concluded that e-commerce provides an opportunity to local firms to trade online and hence enhance their market growth. Nyagowa (2000), also conducted a survey of the causes of information systems failure among micro finance institutions in Kenya and documented that attitude plays a key role in determining their success and failures.

Lastly Odiko (2004), in his study of e-business as a mode of international business engagement in the case of Kenya national handloom weavers association concluded that ICT development is crucial to improving e-business development. It is this ‘hope’ that ICT can aid in government transformation (World Bank, 2005; Bonham *et al*, 2003; Panzardi, 2002, Caldow, 2003; Schware, 2003; Akman *et al*, 2004; Wimmer, 2002) that is largely fuelling the focus on e-government Technology adoption as a process for creating public value using ICT, recognizing that it is only the citizens who can determine what is truly of value to the society.

4. E-GOVERNMENT MODALITIES

E-governance can bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizen (UNESCO-Egov). Individuals and organizations interacting directly or indirectly with the government are known as the players of e-government. The three main target groups that can be distinguished in e-government concepts are government, citizens and businesses/interest groups. These interactions can be named as Government-to-Citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), and Government-to-Government (G2G). Government-to-Citizen deals with the relationship between government and citizens.

G2C allows citizens to access government information and services instantly, conveniently, from everywhere, by use of multiple channels. Government-to-Business (G2B) consists of e-interactions between government and the private sector. The opportunity to conduct online transactions with government reduces red tape and simplifies regulatory processes, therefore helping businesses to become more competitive (Heeks, 2001). Government-to-government (G2G) is the last modality where governments depend on other levels of government within the state to effectively deliver services and allocate responsibilities. In promoting citizen-centric service, a single access point to government is the ultimate goal, for which cooperation among different governmental departments and agencies is necessary. G2G facilitates the sharing of databases, resources and capabilities, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of processes.

5. BENEFITS OF E-GOVERNMENT

Several benefits are presumed to be associated with e-government services which basically translate to provision of direct services to users instead of/or in addition to traditional flow of paper work between the government and its citizens (Ho 2002, Netchaeva 2002, Silcock 2001, Whitson and Davis 2002, UN 2003). The benefits include savings in terms of money and time. A fully-fledged e-government service is expected to provide users with 'one-stop shopping' (Ho 2002, Fagan and Fagan 2001) to access and transact the information they need via a government website that is tailored to provide information irrespective of the various functional units of that particular government agency. This saves time for both parties involved, (i.e. the government and the users).

Whitson and Davis (2002) also argue that successful implementation of e-government services affects the way the government agencies measure their transaction with users. They do so by focusing users as key to the transaction process. The main issue here is that e-Government services are affecting how the public sector provides services to the public by shifting from system-oriented to user-oriented focus. Improvement of government accountability is another benefit that many observers have associated with e-government services (Netchaeva 2002, Silcock 2001, Whitson and Davis 2002). This is basically related to the above-mentioned benefits of cost-saving since the government uses less taxpayer money to provide more services that give results within a shorter period of time than did traditional processes. Many observers have also noted a trend toward more partnership among governments, users and the private sector agencies because of implementing e-Government services (Ho 2002, Holliday 2002, La Porte *et al.* 2002, UN 2003). This partnership has led to the emergence of internal and external networks that are beneficial to all parties involved.

Muganda (2009) asserts that the private sector in most developing countries is exerting pressure on the government agencies to improve efficiency while the governments are

creating a spillover effect (acting as role models) to small businesses to improve efficiency by adopting e-commerce strategies. Benefits are also realized in the following ways i.e. the citizens get connected to the government more easily using electronic means of communication. In turn, efficiency in public service delivery is achieved through faster dissemination government information to a larger audience (Gregory, 2004). The cases of corruption are reduced as accountability and transparency is increased, these results from the fact that the physical contacts of the citizens and government service providers are limited and their activities are easily monitored.

Equal opportunity to access to information is provided regardless of one's physical location and physical disability (Sein, 2004). The barrier of distance is overcome with diversified service points. The bureaucracy experienced in the government offices is broken because the hindrances caused by those in 'power' are removed and the services are offered regardless of one's background. There is also the benefit of interdepartmental exchange of information and merges of related services is enhanced between government agencies. This leads to significant reduction of transaction costs, time, space, and manpower (McLaughlin *et al*, 2004). ICT makes it possible for government to reach marginalized groups/communities and improve their quality of life. This means empowering them through their participation in the political process, as well as delivering much-needed public goods and services. Ultimately, the goal of e-government is to enhance the interaction between three main actors in society-government, citizens and business—in order to stimulate political, social and economic progress in the country (Netchaeva 2002, Silcock 2001).

6. E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION ARCHITECTURE

Relevant researches in the field of e-government adoption architectures within the e-Government environment have largely relied on models from e-Commerce and Supply Chain researches (Shee *et al*, 2000). This is because, as Ebrahim and Irani (2005) state, e-Government is a "relatively new research area" and that "its architecture and adoption strategy have not been widely discussed in the literature". Therefore, many authors in e-Government research have relied on concepts from other relevant fields such as e-business, e-services and e-commerce (Ebrahim & Irani, 2005). However, of relevance is to mention that studies have also been carried out that have studied the architecture and components of e-government (UK Cabinet Office, 2000; Heeks, 2001; Sharma & Gupta, 2002; Daniels, 2002). The framework is broadly structured into four layers.

The top layer is the access layer that provides an indicator as to who might use the government services and what their channels of access are. The possible users of government services can be citizens, business, government employees, other citizens of countries and other governments. These users access government services through various communications channels that therefore form a critical component of e-government. As per the above figure, these may be a host to online or offline channels such as PCs, websites, kiosks, mobile phone (WAP), digital TV, and call and contact centres. Ebrahim & Irani (2005) consider this level to be under the control and management of government users.

The e-government layer as per figure 1 attempts an integration of the various data sources into a web-portal of government services in some form of a one-stop digital government portal. The expectation is improvement in access to government resources, reduction of processing costs as well as enhance higher quality services (Ho, 2002; Gant and Gant, 2001; Sharma and Gupta, 2002). Thus the key architecture component at this level is an integrated government web-portal which is necessary for the interaction between government and citizens, government and business, government and its employees and government and other

governments. The e-government layer, with the development of an integrated web-portal is therefore a priority in order to understand the types of applications. According to Chan and Chung (2002), this layer should enable the user to use a web browser to get all government information using a web-based front-end that allows disparate information to be linked together.

7. ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK

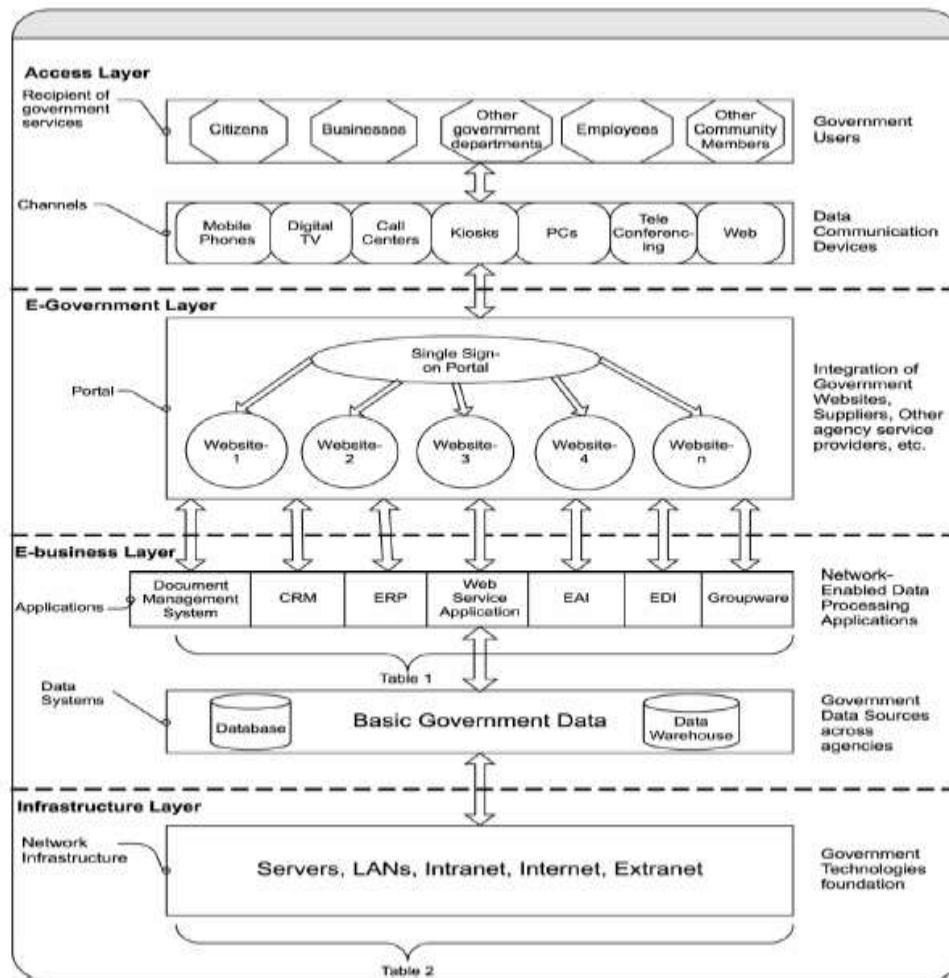


Figure 1: Framework for e-Government Architecture (Adopted from Ebrahim *et al*, 2005)

The e-business layer emphasizes the use of ICT applications and tools to harness a networks of trust, knowledge sharing and information processing that takes place both within and between organizations (Moodley, 2003). It does this through the integration of "front-end e-government layer applications, such as online catalogues and transaction interfaces in the government portal with back-end activities such as existing databases and data warehouses." This layer is touted to provide a strong foundation for the building of a single e-Government portal and to support the interactions amongst stakeholders. The integration of various ICT applications and components inside and outside the organizational boundary remains costly and time consuming, due to the heterogeneity of the computing environments involved in public sector organizations (Chen, 2003; Themistocleous and Irani, 2002).

There is also need to be recall that government departments and public sector organizations have traditionally maintained separate databases that are not connected to other government departments at the same level or even different level such as the local or central government level. This has resulted in barriers between organizations systems and processes, in term of data transmission and communication, and therefore, makes implementation of e-government single portal not easy. Therefore, the integration of government database systems, processes and applications play a critical role in this layer since e-government relies to a significant degree on existing basic government data, existing systems and existing processes. This layer implies computer systems and applications of different public departments and organizations are being connected to or at least communicating with each other (Ebrahim, 2005).

The technology infrastructure layer focuses on building a responsive infrastructure that is needed before e-government services can be offered reliably and effectively to the public. The building of this layer lends support to the e-business layer through the integration of the systems and applications across different public sector organizations and departments. It achieves this by providing the necessary standards through network and communications technologies such as the intranet, extranet and internet. This layer is important since it supports the provision of user-friendly and innovative online services to the end users (Ebrahim, 2005).

8. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive to determine the impact of e-government technology in service provision in Kericho County. This approach was best suited for gathering data concerning the current status of phenomena with the purpose of describing what exists with respect to situation variables. The population under study composed of all the employees of Kericho county government. A sample of 50 departmental heads in the four major departments of IT, Accounting/Finance, Administration and Customer care were interviewed. The respondents were picked using judgmental sampling technique in which those with knowledge on the study area were sampled.

This study used both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was obtained from literature published as peer reviewed work by researchers, books, periodicals and other related publication. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire which contained structured questions where a 5-point Likert scale was used in the questions designed to seek respondent's perception regarding the impact of e-government technology in service provision in Kericho County. Likert scale has the advantage of providing the researcher with the opportunity of running a whole battery of items for the respondent to evaluate, yet there is only one uniform set of rating categories that the respondent needs to use (Luck and Rubin, 1992).

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher using the drop – and pick method. Data collected was analysed using factor analysis with the findings being presented using tabular form for the purpose of communicative effectiveness to ultimate users.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1: Pattern Matrix on Information System Evaluation

E-Government System Evaluation	FACTORS		
	1	2	3
Helping the County to attain its overall mission	-.044	.897	.156
Supporting specific goals of various departments and units in the County offices	-.121	.422	.694
Adequacy of the hardware to handle current and future needs	-.035	.300	.785
Adequacy of software to handle current and future needs	-.035	.300	.785
Comprehensive database to handle the current and future needs	.773	.176	.372
Competence of the IS/IT personnel to perform current and projected processing tasks	.613	.079	.360
Acceptance of e-government system's rules and procedures	.929	.120	-.051
Access of data and information in the County	-.044	.897	.156
Adequacy of training programs for e-government system users	.981	.338	-.508
Adequacy of information systems budget for maintenance	.240	.838	-.150
Reliability of the e-government system	.553	.132	.654
Efficiency of data and information production	.929	.120	-.051
Quality of data and information provided	-.044	.272	.781
Electronic communication between departments or units	.870	-.204	.248
Electronic communication to customers (e.g. customer billing)	.736	-.099	.394
Electronic communication to suppliers (e.g. supplier billing)	.141	.116	.921
Time taken to respond to inquiries during peak processing times	-.025	.565	.499
Simplicity to operate and maintain the e-government system	-.044	.897	.156
Adequacy of the e-government system documentation	.313	.592	.170

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Research Data (2017)

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	13.305	70.025	70.025	13.305	70.025	70.025	9.856
2	2.391	12.583	82.607	2.391	12.583	82.607	9.746
3	1.316	6.927	89.534	1.316	6.927	89.534	10.292
4	.522	2.749	92.283				
5	.399	2.101	94.384				
6	.261	1.376	95.760				
7	.244	1.283	97.043				
8	.158	.834	97.877				
9	.116	.611	98.488				
10	.098	.514	99.002				
11	.070	.368	99.370				
12	.068	.359	99.729				
13	.031	.166	99.895				
14	.016	.085	99.980				
15	.004	.020	100.000				
16	.000	.000	100.000				
17	.000	.000	100.000				
18	.000	.000	100.000				
19	.000	.000	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Research Data (2017)

Factor Loadings and Explanations

Factor 1: e-Government System Capacity

- Comprehensive database to handle the current and future needs 77.3%
- Competence of the IS/IT personnel to perform current and projected processing tasks 61.3%
- Acceptance of e-government systems rules and procedures 92.9%
- Adequacy of training programs for both users and IT personnel 98.1%
- Efficiency of data and information production 92.9%

- Electronic communication between departments 87.0%
- Electronic communication to customers (e.g. customer billing) 73.6%

Factor 2: e-Government System Contribution to the County's Development

- Helping the county to attain its overall mission 89.7%
- Access of data and information in the county 89.7%
- Adequacy of e-government system budget 83.8%
- Time taken to respond to users during peak processing times 56.5%
- Simplicity to operate and maintain the e-government systems 89.7%
- Adequacy of the e-government system documentation 59.2%

Factor 3: County's Reliance on the System

- Supporting specific goals of various areas and departments of the county 69.4%
- Adequacy of the hardware to handle current and future needs 78.5%
- Adequacy of software to handle current and future needs 78.5%
- Reliability of the e-government system 65.4%
- Quality of data and information provided 78.1%
- Electronic communication to suppliers (e.g. supplier billing) 92.1%

Factor 1: e-Government Capacity

This factor captures the IS capacity in terms of handling different tasks in the organization. 77.3% of the respondents believe that the system evaluation was based on the database that will be needed to handle on a day to day operation, according to 61.3% of the respondents, IS/IT personnel have the competence to perform current and projected processing tasks. On the adequacy of training programs 98.1% of the respondents agree that training offered was adequate, while 92.9% concur that data and information is efficient. There is also a reliable communication between departments and customers with 87.0% and 73.6% response rates respectively.

Factor 2: e-Government Contribution to the county Development

This factor identifies the system's contribution to the overall development of the organization, 89.7% of those interviewed agree that the system will help the county attains its overall mission, while 89.7% said the system will help the stake holders in accessing the county data and information. With a good IS in place there will be little time taken to respond to users during peak processing time that is according to 56.5% of the respondents. Simplicity of system operation and maintenance was also said to be a major factor in system evaluation according to 89.7% of the respondents. Lastly the need for adequate systems documentation and budget were rated 59.2% and 83.8% respectively.

Factor 3: County Government Reliance on the e-Government System

This last factor on e-government system evaluation in Kericho county is on the county's reliance on the system, 69.4% of the respondents concur that the system must supports specific goals of various departments the organization, while 78.5% said that adequacy of system hardware and software to handle both current and future needs is critical. Reliability of the system should also be looked at to avoid disappointments according to 65.4% of those polled. On the other hand 78.1 % of the respondents are of the opinion that quality of data and information provided to the users should be key while evaluating the system. Finally electronic communication to suppliers is the most important issue according to 92.1% of the respondents.

10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

E-government is a clear priority in all the counties in Kenya, while questions of scope, approach and level of technology need to be determined by each county according to its own needs, achieving the cultural change needed within the public administration is a common challenge. In fact, counties that are in the process of perfecting their civil service may find themselves at an advantage in that they can incorporate new governance models into their civil service rather than trying to reinvent old models. This study established that the e-government system in Kericho county has the capacity to handle various operations in and contributes to the overall development in the since it will enhance service delivery while reducing wastages that used to be experienced in various departments. It also documented that the county government is so much relying on the system since most of its operations have been digitized and can now be accessed real time.

County governments and other public institutions should make sure that they have an adequate supply of trained public sector managers. In addition to learning from the e-government experiences of other public institutions, the breath taking pace of the information society means that not only are technologies being tested and generalized, but a whole new generation is growing up with increasing familiarity with the Internet and other electronic platforms. Also, as e-commerce matures, e-government can also follow in its wake, piggy-backing on tested technologies, falling chip costs, infrastructure as it is established and new consumer confidence in electronic transactions. Instead, the challenge is to understand how the use of new ICT tools can be used to leverage a transformation in the culture and structure of government in order to provide better services to citizens. This entails determining the appropriate level of technology and service that meets the needs and the citizen preferences in the county; it does not mean importing wholesale systems and solutions regardless of whether citizens and businesses truly stand to benefit.

Kericho county and indeed most counties in Kenya are beginning to understand better that real value can be obtained through the use of ICT, but that the need for basic assessments of benefits and costs, risks and opportunities remains. The driving force of e-governance in Kericho County is the public demand for online services and information that increases democratic participation, accountability, transparency, and the quality and speed of services. The implementation and use of ICT can support governance reforms. E-government will become more and more present in many public institutions in Kenya.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study evaluated the e-government system as used in Kericho County in service delivery with the aim of understanding its capacity to handle county requirements; contribution to the county development and the extent of county reliance on the system. This particular study can be extended to other counties in Kenya to establish the success of this e-government platform in service delivery. Empirical studies can also be carried out among government institutions that have not fully adopted e-government technology to establish the underlying reasons behind and also find out their perception about the same.

Similarly this study sets up future contributions that will enable academicians; government agents and e-government architects to better understand how to evaluate different information systems in public institutions. It will help provide an indication of readiness of e-government technology in Kenya. Lastly, this paper further recommends that more research should be conducted to clearly present measures that should be undertaken to address the challenges associated with implementation, management and use of these

electronic solutions especially because the counties are still struggling to attract the best calibre of skilled professionals to run and manage their systems.

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