

**Critical Factors Affecting the User Value of E-government in Sri
Lanka: An Empirical Study on Ministry of Public Administration
and Home Affairs**

By

Mohamed Nalim Noor Sufna

**A research submitted to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Business Administration on 2014**

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5266FMMBA2011045

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2014.08.09

The work described in this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Professor (Mrs) R.L.S Fernando and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree/Diploma.

.....


M.N.N. Sufna

5266FMMBA 2011045

2014.08.

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and this research is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation

.....*Salidha Srinivasan*.....

Prf.(Mrs) R.L.S. Fernando

09/08/2014

Critical Factors Affecting the User Value of E-government in Sri Lanka: An Empirical Study on Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs

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ABSTRACT

When receiving government services users want ease of access and consistency to increase the take-up of electronic services, governments therefore must develop a real User Value proposition that can be used to both citizens and public (OECD, 2005). According to Davis (2010), there are three main elements of User Value as Public Value, Political Value and Citizens Value. In this study Public Value is considered as User Value. Public Value is how the Public employees value the goods and services created by government organizations (Davis, 2010).

The research was conducted to find the most critical determinants of the Public Value of the website www.pubad.gov.lk, and the level of the Public Value of the website in order to age, gender, grade, experience, educational background, and number of ICT trainings received in the service period. The third objective of the research is to find the e-government maturity level of the website and the final objective is to provide policy recommendations to increase the Public Value.

Research was conducted in two steps. The qualitative data collection was done using a structured questionnaire. The population was the 2204 Sri Lanka administrative Service

officers and the selected sample is 10% from the population. Both postal mail and e-mail survey was conducted and analyzed using SPSS 16.0 version. The frequency analysis, regression analysis, multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis and factor analysis was conducted as qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis was done by the observation of the website according to the United Nations ASPA 5 stage e-government maturity model.

According to the study results significant determinant of the Public Value is service delivery of the website. Other four factors (Equity, Responsiveness, Openness and Environment Sustainability) are not statistically significant with the Public Value. The Public Value level of the website is 3.34. There are 20% of the officers agree, that the website have Public Value (2% strongly agree and 18% agree) .The website belongs to the second e-government maturity level.

The respondents recommended updating the website regularly, publishing the contents in all three languages (Sinhala, Tamil and English), following international web standards when publishing information, developing facilities to conduct online transactions and speed up the transactional speed. Speed up the service delivery is essential to increase the User Value of the website.

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1. CHAPTER – INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Information and Communication technology offers an array of tools, which can be used to help government services become more agile, responsive, seamless and accountable (OECD, 2005). When receiving government services users want ease of access and consistency to increase the take-up of electronic services, governments therefore must develop a real user value proposition that can be used to both citizens and public (OECD, 2005). According to Davis (2010), there are three main elements of User Value as Public Value, Political Value and Citizens Value. In this study Public Value is considered as User Value. Public Value is considered as how the Public employees value the goods and services created by government organizations (Davis, 2010).

According to Moore (1995), the concept of Public Value is a popular means for evaluating the performance of public services. Public organizations create value by efficiently operating the organizations for meeting citizens desire (Moore, 1995). Governments have been engaged in developing information and communication technologies for several decades to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their functioning (Bhatnagar and Singh 2009).

Kearns (2004) identified that the E-government offers numerous opportunities for governments to improve the delivery of public services through numerous automating processes. But there is a lack of studies on assessing the Public Value of E-government in developing countries even though such a study would be of great significance to developing countries in their developments of E-government (Karunasena and Deng, 2012). With the rapid development of E-government, adopting the concept of Public Value for evaluating the performance of E-government from the perspective of citizens is not only appropriate but also necessary (Karunasena et al., 2011). Therefore, this research is conducted to measure the Public Value of e-government.

This chapter discusses the research objectives and research problem of the study to evaluate the Public Value of the website “www.pubad.gov.lk” of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in Sri Lanka from the perspective of Sri Lanka Administrative service (SLAS) officers.

Ali and Green (2007, cited in Nfuka and Rusu, 2011) mentioned recently in many Public sector Organizations, the technology (IT) use becomes pervasive in endeavors to evolve public service. Gauld et al., (2010 cited in Karunasena and Deng, 2011) the governments around the world continuously use E-government methods for transforming their public service delivery, promoting greater interaction between their citizens and government streamlining the two way communication between citizens and governments, improving the efficiency of public organizations, and saving tax payers money.

The ultimate question about the success of E-government depends on how citizens perceive its value (Scott et al., 2009). While success is evident in providing services online, engaging citizens online in a meaningful way remains a challenge (Kolsaker and Lee-Kelley, 2008). This challenge recognizes the advances that have been made through enabling key services online, but argues that public agencies are falling short of the transforming potential of E-government (West , 2004). According to Blaug et al., (2006), by carefully interacting with the authorization environment, the public, politicians, stakeholders such as trade unions and other organizations on which delivery depends in which the service operates providers discover and orient to the citizen/consumer. In this way, goals and plans, delivery and evaluation all draw on a richer understanding of public preferences than is afforded by other approaches to public service reform (Blaug et al., 2006).

Like many other countries, Sri Lanka began its public sector electronic services initiatives in early 2003 (Karunasena and Deng, 2012). ICTA (2012) reported that Sri Lanka government invests more than 2000 million Sri Lanka rupees annually on E-government implementation and adoption. According to ICTA annual report of year 2011, the investment for E-government in 2011 was 2045 million Sri Lanka Rupees. These expenditures are incurred from the tax payers' money. The E-government world index of Sri Lanka is declined from 111 to 115 from 2011 to 2012(UN, 2012), though the government of Sri Lanka invests considerable amount of money on E-government activities. So a considerable attention should be given to improve the Public Value of implemented E-government projects.

In accordance with Kearns (2004), Public Value can be used both as an aid to judgment by governments when deciding what activities to undertake and as a yardstick against

which to access government performance. According to Chatfield and AlHujran (2007), in E-government the stakeholders include citizens, businesses, other governments, government employees and international development agencies. Public Value is predicated on the stakeholder's preferences, because only the stakeholder's preferences, not the government, can determine what is truly of value to them (Chatfield and AlHujran, 2007). However, public is also predicated on the new capacity E-government to understand the different ,stakeholders needs and provide services they value, thereby creating Public Value that justifies and legitimizes the sustained government spending on E-government (Chatfield and AlHujran,2007). Public services serve, the "public", no matter how oriented to the individual consumer they are (Chatfield and AlHujran, 2007).

There are 2204 SLAS officers attached to different Public sector organizations in all over the Sri Lanka in January 2014. As such they appeal to the individual as a member of society the latter cannot be boxed off (Chatfield and AlHujran, 2007). Therefore, this study will focus on the Public Value of the government employees, not the general public or the grass root level citizens. There is an important set of employees who supports and involves in human resource management activities of the Ministry. They are the practitioners of the public policies including E-government policies. Administrators are public managers who operate the E-government projects. Simultaneously they are the users of the E-government projects of the Ministry of Public Administration. The government officials are a subset of Sri Lankan citizens and they are the implementers of the E-government projects of Sri Lanka. Among the government employees Sri Lanka Administrative Service officials are in the key positions covering up the duties of the governmental organizations. Therefore, Sri Lanka Administrative Service officers are considered as the public in this Study.

Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) Officers involve in two ways in E-government implementation and diffusion of Ministry's E-government projects. Firstly, they are the officers who involve the policy making and secondly implementation activities of the E-government projects. Especially, Sri Lanka Administrative Service Officers are the direct users of the Ministry E-government website. Ministry of Public Administration has especially chosen to conduct the study because of the following reasons. The Ministry of public administration and Home Affairs have the responsibility of handling the human resource management of the ministries,