

Relationship between e-government and e-tourism: case study of Sultanate of Oman

Muatasim Al Salmi, Shahimi Mohtar, Norlena Hasnan

School of Technology, Management and Logistics (STML), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

Abstract- Earlier, countries used relationships with citizens in outbound and inbound manners and have used them for a better positioning of the nation. Nowadays, both relationships emerged and industrialized through the usage of ICTs to find solutions in attracting tourists and promote their own destinations. In addition, the complete structures of different sectors of goods and services have been partially revolutionized globally by an innovative modern interaction between agents involved. Therefore, the e-government construction requires technical development and implementation solutions from private sector in the country. Both sectors, tourism and government are facing obstacles and challenges generated by the advance and improvement in the use of ICTs by consumers and citizens. This report presents an overview of the relationship between e-government and e-tourism as an e-service under ICT technology. The relationship further explained using a case study of Sultanate of Oman with conclusion and recommendations to the nation.

Index Terms- ICT, e-tourism, e-government, ITA, TRA, G2B, B2C

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the World Wide Web (WWW) establishment and development, considerable attention has been given to the different adaptation of web-based technologies especially to the business environment like: business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) sectors. After that, new other sectors have been gaining more attention, including the involvement of government such as: government-to-business (G2B) and government-to-citizen (G2C). Since governments are traditional and considerably more conservative entities, slower to change or adopt new initiatives than other operators in the faster commercial field, it is reasonable and not surprising that governments in general have been slower to clamber onto the bandwagon of the web-enabled. Indeed, it is more reasonable to query about whether governments really require and want to make the service transition from government to e-government. Anthopoulos and Tougountzoglou (2012) said that most of nations give special focus on ubiquitous computing applications for the delivery of various e-services like e-tourism. Ku and Chen (2015) illustrated that it is important to governments to adopt a knowledge-sharing culture in their relationship strategy with tourists by developing a competence long-term relationships.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Desplas and Mao (2014) illustrated that the accelerated development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Internet expansion have transformed business-consumers relationships (B2C) and government-citizens relationship. Gatautis and Vitkauskaite (2015) argued that enterprises started to make significant use of e-government services in different modern approaches, stimulated by process and progress in the online public services greater availability and sophistication. It is interesting that marketing, tourism and customer support have overtaken different old approaches like production and logistics as primary application areas for ICT in large nation's scenarios. In tourism sector, online information and reservation services in general have become a commonplace (Gatautis and Vitkauskaite, 2015). E-tourism is one of the most dynamic modern areas of e-business and specifically in G2B area under e-government category, with a major significant impact for nearly all stakeholders involved. The usage of ICT would enable service providers interacting directly with customers and citizens, which puts severe heavy pressure on traditional intermediaries such as old fashion travel agencies and tour operators (Gatautis and Vitkauskaite, 2015). E-government should establish, promote and enhance the idea of e-tourism as a business to the private sector in order to conduct it in a wide manner to improve the tourism in the country and to improve its contribution to the nation's economy.

Ayo et al. (2015) mentioned that Technology Task Fit theory (TTF) has been used in prior research for predicting individual adoption of information system in e-tourism and it shows significant relations (Usoro, 2010). Hence, in every nation tourism should gain special treatment and special consideration while in planning stage in order to implement the most suitable tourism aspect for it. Natworadee (2014) indicated that every nation which consider tourism as a target approach should have a "Pull factor" which contains of the following:

- **Low Cost:** every tourist would like to get the best tourism ever with the best cheaper price possible
- **Country reputation and image:** the country 's image is important to the tourist since going to unstable country in terms of security, wars or bad behavior aspects may alienate them.
- **Culture, landscapes and nature:** every tourist would like from the tourism to change the life style to new one with new environment, culture and nature. Therefore, countries should make its culture and nature as part of the tourism not only copying others tourism aspects.

- **Great care:** tourists usually won't go to a country which do not give care and attention to its tourists and often they will keep the first image of the nation from the first visit
- **Low Political Regulations:** nations with heavy and hard political and regulation procedure usually will be neglected or alienated by tourists like: visa, airport long checking and procedures and forbidden list
- **Variety of Services:** more services with different varieties would attract more tourist and make their tour more pleasant in terms of hotels, food, activities to different ages and hobbies...etc.

Hence, every nation should implement tourism plan with coordination between government and private sector through modern technology because It is believed that tourism organizations in a country that can respond fast, efficiently and effectively to the constant innovation in ICT applications to support their business and private sector could outperform competitors and maintain long-term successful progress (Buhalis and Law, 2008). Thus, it is apparent that e-tourism is an evolution service sector due to the advancement of ICT. The search for different knowledge base and selection of the most suitable tools, technological solutions and supporting infrastructure in a nation is a remarkable challenge to e-tourism (Qin, Atkins. and Yu, 2013). Furthermore, nation should divide its tourism into two main aspects:

- **Common tourism:** it is a common tourism space that are usually found in many countries like having national parks, theme parks, cinemas, malls and many other entertainments to suit all ages, genders and hobbies
- **Special tourism:** this tourism aspect is important to have it in countries as special which is usually attached to culture and nature of the country. For instance: cities with deserts and mountains should illustrate activities attached and more focused with its nature rather than with snowing and nations with Islamic religion should have Islamic attached culture.

III. SULTANATE OF OMAN CASE

The Omani government has developed clear mission and vision for the e-government in Oman (e-Oman) achievement; the key e-Oman mission statements is begin with streamlining the government services to achieve Oman 2020 as a cycle (AlRahbi, 2011). Whereas, the strategic visions are also set from developing society for increasing and promoting awareness among local public citizens in all aspects required and targeted from e-government including e-tourism. Information Technology Authority (ITA) is the main responsible of the e-Government project in the Sultanate of Oman since it provides efficient services, integrates processes and enhance service efficiency. Additionally it is responsible to implement, supervise and maintain Digital Oman Strategy (Information and Communication Technology Surveys Results, 2012). E-Government and Information sector in the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) is responsible for overseeing the process of e-transformation from old

traditional services towards modern services based on technology and modern platform via ICT, follow up the e-Government implementation plan, ensure the promotion possibilities common infrastructure for government and raise readiness transformation of e-services (including e-tourism) provided by the government for clients. In the recent years, Omani government has scored a remarkable progress in the area of e-Government transformation due to the effort targeted in developing ITA. ITA is an autonomous body seeking and taking care of the successful implementation improvising of Oman's e-Government. It emphasizes upon the e-Government played role in the process of sustainable development. This development would give a great boost and enhancement in other attached e-services in the country like e-tourism in order to rise its affect in the nation's economic. Ahmed et al. (2015), the number of tourists visited Sultanate of Oman increased from 2011 to 2012 by 48% to exceed 2 million tourists. However, this number is still low compared to its contribution to the country's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of only 3.9%. However, compared to 2.2% only in 2004 (Rami, 2007). Thus, it can be observed that tourism is exceedingly vital to the world's economy and Oman is willing to give special consideration to it as well. Many institutes have worked on developing various e-services through implementing e-products in order to serve tourists and facilitate their tour trips.

IV. CONCLUSION

The importance of local people's participation e-government will give an effect in tourism in general and e-tourism specifically if it is implemented correctly in tourism basis where all ministries in the country connected together for implementation of different e-services together. Rami (2007) argued that tourism sharing in each nation vary upon to the country's effort in the sector and upon to the implementation procedure to match different stakeholders requirements with good modern technology platform of ICT. In Oman, local individuals' entrepreneurial and private sector organizations incentives should evolve in more community-oriented approaches along with government in order to develop sustainable tourism and e-tourism in the country, whether through micro-scale enterprises, activities of larger domestic and international tour operators or through other future tourism projects through ICT platform still there will have to be more local communities involvement especially in planning and decision-making processes. There is also need for qualified training in e-government, e-tourism and other electronic aspects to be involved in local tourism, both in industry-related issues and in natural and social environment in order to serve local historiography and archaeology. Finally, cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations should have concerted action in order to reach the optimum approach goal in e-tourism through e-government and ICT.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Muatasim Al Salmi, alsalmi.m@gmail.com, School of Technology, Management and Logistics (STML), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

Second Author – Shahimi Mohtar, shahimi@uum.edu.my, School of Technology, Management and Logistics (STML), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

Third Author – Norlena Hasnan, norlena@uum.edu.my, School of Technology, Management and Logistics (STML), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia