A SWOT ANALYSIS OF READINESS FOR E-GOVERNMENT: AS A CASE OF KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract:

The e-government system in Kurdistan Region is so behind if we compare to the developed countries, but it does not mean that Kurdistan does not have e-Government system, The strategy for E-government system has planned before but because of some problems it stopped in the early time. SWOT analysis for electronic government in Kurdistan Region is continuously improve now a days, I have made a model of SWOT analysis for e-government in Kurdistan Region and I have explained and made the model by searching on other researchers papers and the interviews that I have done before. The model and explanation of the model could find in the thesis. In Kurdistan Region there is some projects that have benefit for the Government and citizens, and E-government system existing in some areas of the government institutions and they are doing well if we compare to the situation that we are in in Kurdistan Region. If we divide SWOT analysis into four circles then the biggest portion is for weakness, because Kurdistan as a region needed more improvement in the electronic field. And according to my view the smallest portion is for opportunities because there are not that so many opportunities to reach. The qualitative research strategy used by doing interviews with the experts in IT and Electronics, and I have created a model for SWOT analysis of E-government. (National Card Project, DMS system, and Archive systems) are those electronic systems that used in Government and I have got information from the interviewees. The projects and the model that I mentioned above are included in the thesis.

Key words: Electronic government, Kurdistan Region, SWOT analysis, and Strategic management.
1. INTRODUCTION

Organization's strategy is well-defined as how we could reach competitive advantages and increase competitive advantages. (Nathaly & Fabio, 2012). Competitive advantage is a statement that defined as an advantage that one firm has over another firm in the area of competition. The aim of the research is to use electronic government system that offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) so as to bring better and good services to the public sectors and citizens & businesses could get benefit from it. Information & communication technology can be measured as a vital system that society could get benefit from it and be more developed society.

Proposing and establishing an electronic government according to people’s viewpoints and needs is a fundamental point that all countries should be aware of it, especially KRG because this system is new for its citizens and may face many problems during the implementation. E-government system service are provide very important values to people and businesses such as; Not wasting too much time and more financial and economic system that attract people’s thinking. Strong relationship between government and citizens will occur by dealing with this technological system so that the main goal is to achieve this proper system that we are fare from it. SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) is another aspect that really focused on in the research.

Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) is really behind of the developed countries in the area of (ICTs) and it has had effect on this region in almost all aspects of life. By implementing this strategy, KRG can be more emerge region in the upcoming years and can be a competitive region with its neighbors.

Government is a cooperative group of people that work and exercises in a nation to implement citizen’s needs and build a strong and economical country. People are government and government is people. One aspect of the research is considers the people’s needs, the one which can perform citizen’s needs is government, so that government’s institutions role is to find the easy way to achieve the ways that make the life more comfortable and more fasters than now.

The achievement of e-government initiatives is extremely belongs to citizens’ willingness to change traditional methods to online channels of engaging with government. This online channel will give some headache to some people, especially older and those who can’t use internet, but this problems going to solve gradually and this system will bring new world in the governments system. Electronic government is the most significant system that government’s authority can bring it to the KRGs system, by using this strategy government will fill a big gap in the citizen’s life in Kurdistan region. It is very important for government to have an open view toward strategic vision in regard it is electronic development planning.
2. Research Question:

1. What is the current SWOT analysis of e-government in Kurdistan Region Government?
2. What are the possible obstacles faced when applying E-Government?
3. What are the existing electronic services provided by the Kurdistan Regional Government?

3. Significance of the study:

Almost all people around the world want easiest way and paths to reach their goods and services. Governments, especially in developed countries always search for new techniques to make the citizens life easier. Because the e-government system is citizen’s desire and they are comfortable with the system around emerge countries, thus it going to have its own benefit for Kurdistan’s people, too. This study is contains the most important aspect of governments system which makes the peoples life more easy and has positive affect on government and peoples economy. This research shows implementing electronic government system which covers citizen’s need for good and service in the easiest way.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Strategic Management:

A strategy is a bunch of linked movements that managers take to rise their company’s implementation (Hill & Gareth, 2013). To measuring the organization's performance as it heads toward its vision to reach its outcomes, there is a system approach called strategic management. The System is also used to making and identifying the essential changes of the organization's execution (Wells, 1998).

The main elements of the strategic management process are: explaining the mission and vision, and control systems to perform the organization’s selected strategies, analyzing the internal and external atmosphere of the organization, defining the task, perspective, and main goals of the organization, taking organizational formation, and selecting a business model and plans that arrange an organization’s weaknesses and strengths with outside environmental opportunities and warnings are the main components of the strategic management process (Hill & Gareth, 2013).
4.2 SWOT Analysis:

The SWOT analysis is one of the numerous strategic planning tools that are used by business and other institutions to make sure that there is a clear objective explained for the plan and venture, and all those issues that linked to the exertion, both non-negative and non-positive, are recognized and addressed (Tsourela, 2011).

The association of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is typically stated to as a SWOT analysis (Hill & Gareth, 2013). The vital aim is to identify the strategies to achieve external opportunities, stand threats, develop and keep company strengths, and destroy weaknesses (Hill & Gareth, 2013). SWOT analysis could lead the firm to go on and on about a solo internal or external factor in expressing strategies (David, 2011). Moreover, the SWOT analysis technique could be also used to assess the planned framework in contradiction of best practice framework in emerging countries (as citation shareef, 2012).

A SWOT analysis could help as get understandings into the previous years and come up with possible answers for current or probable problems — for both present business and new venture. In SOWT analysis all member of your team have to work in efficient way within the process (Rezazadeh, Hamidi, & Rezazadeh, 2011).

4.3 Electronic Government:

The world experienced a quick progress in information and communication technology (ICT) that overtook all anticipations, and therefore wide change in economic, worldwide social change and political freedom. The globalization approach arose and increased the supremacy of internet which blasted because of the World Wide Web. In a few time, the idea of globalization bisected facilities of the internet, changed the world and took it into a worldwide and small village (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).

The fast progression of Internet and other digital media inspired professionals, official authorities and advisors to hire ICT in public service division to their customers. As a result, a new idea called electronic government (e-government) appeared, accredited to the use of Internet and other digital media to transfer service and information to people (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).

Electronic government is definite as the “use of information technology to enable and improve the efficiency with which government services are provided to citizens, employees, businesses and agencies” (Carter & Bélanger, 2005).
The term electronic governance shows the important of using information and communication technology for systematizing the government internal actions and its external connections with people inside the country and other agencies (Shastri, Sinha, & Rai, 2009).

E-Government is explained as a progressive governmental organization, which was recognized on the basis of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This system is created to maximize computerized service distribution and minimize bureaucrats' connection in monotonous processes (Avny, 2007).

Automation of internal actions decreases their price and develops their arranged time whereas simultaneously letting government processes to be longer so as to increase their effectiveness. Computerization of connections with citizens decreases the above for the government and the citizens, therefore generating value for the economy (Shastri, Sinha, & Rai, 2009).

Electronic government are used in all developed countries around the world in order to apply information and communication technology (ICT) to develop those services that offered from the government to the investors and stakeholders (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).

To develop the status of service transfer to the public, official associations have to conduct and assist the common resources and informations progression. The goal of this study is to evaluate one of the instituted e-government phase patterns, such as the UK, and to recognize accessible opportunities to neutralize them for use in the territorial governments of advancing countries (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).

The technology without citizens can’t progress e-government system, it needs citizen’s role to decrease the hole between design and reality, and fill the gap between both design and reality (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012). Electronic government expected to have an important role in the distribution of government service and governance in the upcoming years, mostly in the emerging countries. These growths caused many and compound challenges such as technological, political, societal, economical, and cultural (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).
The government's purpose in using these kinds of systems is to come to be more reachable, efficient, effective, accessible, and answerable to their citizens (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012). The main view for e-government is to become a major category of governance of the 21st century and will substitute the standard managerial government of the 20th century (Avny, 2007).

5.4 Kurdistan region e-government:

Iraq is a federal government, Kurdistan is the Iraq's region and Kurdistan is part of Iraq, Kurdistan has three big cities; contains Erbil as a capital, Sulaymani, and Duhok. The position of Kurdistan is located at the north of Iraq with three neighbours, Iran from the east, Syria from the west, and Turkey from the north. The Kurdistan’s zone is around 40,643 KM2 and with the population of 5,000,000 (Klun, Decman, & Jukic, 2011).

After the revolution of fifth of March in 1991 in Rania city, the Iraqi central nation removes its whole administrations from the Kurdistan region. This has made a big gap situation, but by doing efforts from the authority of Kurdish they have made administration (Shareef S. P., 2010).

The existing government contains of an alliance of numerous political parties that reproduce the variety of the Region’s people, who are Assyrians, Chaldeans, Turkmen, Yazidis and Kurds who freedom and peace collected them and they continue living together. The fundamental language in Kurdistan region is Kurdish, and has two central vernaculars, Sorani and Kurmanji. Languages such as Turkmani, Arabic, Armenian, and Assyrian are spoken in the region with all respect to each other's mother tongue (Ahmad, 2015).

The idea of electronic government appears from the awareness of converting the government department’s work to the Information Technology (IT) requests and communication to develop their implementation and offer effective and efficient services to people and diverse business areas (Dawood, 2012).

In other direction the effective electronic government systems are those that nearly reproduce the truth and don’t try to change fundamentally. The most significant aspect of e-government is how to hearten and encourage citizen and business faster to their government; also how to make new channel that going to have benefit for public. Moreover, the performance of electronic government varies from the culture of one region to other culture of other region. In other description it changes from one region to another region (Carter & Weerakkody, 2008).
Kurdistan region was late in information and communication technology (ICT) past to 1991. In the aspect of telecommunication infrastructure improvement, the progress of the fixed phone network through Iraq, particularly Kurdistan region was under anticipation. No mobile communication, no computer in the organizations schools and college, an even no satellite channel (Shareef, 2012).

The local administration continuously has attentive to the role of government for rebuilding the Kurdish region society, infrastructure, services, rise political freedom and touchable developments in the citizen’s daily lives. Wireless technology, mainly mobile telephones have entered the Kurdistan market faster than any other technology or product. Mobile phones become closer and closer to the people in daily life (Shareef, 2012).

The KRG begun to progress the region, they computerized the administrative organizations by putting computers to the colleges, schools, and universities so as to progress the education process and be with the global growth (Shareef, 2012).

About the electronic readiness (E-readiness) UN had a report about the e-government in 2010, Iraq very late in electronic government and according to the studies ranked as 136th (Shareef, 2012). This means that in Kurdistan, one of the important requirements for e-government is internet that should be in comparison to the whole Iraq (as citation Shareef, 2012).

It was discussed that electronic government create large benefits for governments and persons equally, and give significant infrastructure for the development as society and economy circumstances to emerging nations (Gregor, 2013).

If Kurdistan Region Government’s organizations would like to progress with the performance procedure, they should take action to overcome the difficulties that they practiced before, for example; strategic plan, information and communication technology substructure, lawful framework, HR, community consciousness, financial issue, information technology abilities, and security (as citation Shareef, 2012; Carter and Bélanger, 2005).

The study showed that the evaluated pattern is unable to be taken for use in KRI because of numerous major problems relating to Information and communication technique (ICT) framework, legal infrastructure, e-readings, cultural character, education level, political formation (Shareef, Jahankhani, & Dastbaz, 2012).
5. METHODS

The strategy that has been implemented for showing this research is qualitative by doing interview with four e interviewees who have expertise in (ICT) and electronic government.

The research sample and data collection

The research is contains the review and study of journal articles, books, and academic research papers. Because my research is belongs to government sectors and ministries, so that I have done my interviews in Kurdish language and then I converted to English language by considering the legality. Primary data has been collected and analyzed through interviewing of expertise people. All questions that I have done with the interviewers are responded and all questions that I have asked is belongs to the SWOT analysis, E-Government, governments problem and behave for e-government, and information and communication technology (ICT). The data that I have used and focused for secondary data is books, documents, and many journal articles to reach the information. For the research, data was collected from the expertise people who are inside the ministries of the government. The objective for my study is to conducting with five experts who they have expertise in: information technology (IT), E-government, and ICT. I decided to ask them four to six questions in a proper way.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics state to the rightness of your behavior in comparative to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it (Saunders, et al., 2009). If the research is crash with unethical issues then mostly this research fail considering probability (Adams, et al., 2007). Therefore, I have respected and followed all ethical issues and considerations for my research and I had attention to all the recommendations and legal ways in guiding the interviews. Also, as a researcher of this research, I did not act and behave in an immoral way with interviewers and i conduct the interview by considering all ethical and legal ways. Clearly, the environment of ethical problems in quantitative research is dissimilar compared to qualitative research problems in the difficulty to get into to contributors (Orb, et al., 2001). Moreover, the documents and information gained in the interviews have been used in this research with their permission.
6. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative data is collected from four-interviews with IT managers and expertise of electronic government. The findings based on the interviews that I did with interviewees showed following headlines:

According the interviewing with one of the expert of National Card Project I found that, their Strength is: Barcode (*****) given for each of the participants. (Each person has its own barcode). Only in national card centers you can enter tour card via the given barcode. In the future you can enter you card easily in all governmental institutions.

I also found that they had on weakness that they could solve it after doing some courses. That weakness is the lack of the employs and experts in this electronic system. The supported by Iraq government and Kurdistan government this is a good opportunity for the project.

If I come to threat then I can say that I found that, Because of its recent launch of the system it might not be very welcomed by the people specially the old people. These are the fundamental founding’s that i have mentioned above for national card project.

Another interview that I have done is in the Municipality of Erbil and one of the IT managers answered my questions and helped me to find some disappear areas in SOWT analysis. For strength I found that:

- Inside the municipality of Erbil, this system is worked in a kind of way that made both people and employ’s tasks faster and easier, which is very difficult to obtain a file or any other data before using this system.

- All the dates in this system are safe, because of the (external hard drive) which is all information could be back up.

And for Weakness as I mentioned in national card project they have lack of the employs and experts in this electronic system.
The Ministry of Electricity of Erbil is one of the areas that I had interview in there. IT manager Soreen Salam Toma was helped me to find some other areas in SOWT analysis. In **strength** side I found that the E-government system will:

1- Decreasing Routines.

2- Decreasing the number of employees.

3- Decreasing the expenses.

4- Back up (saving the files and protect it from extinguishing).

And in **Weakness** side I found that we have these problems;

1- The system is continuously under attack of hackers.
2- Having electricity problem in Kurdistan Region.
3- Having problem of slow internet connection.

I also found that the big problem that we have in **opportunity** side is that: Due to an inappropriate ideology, the implementation of that system has delayed and still it is a big obstacle in front of the process. For the **threat** I found that we are having some trouble-makers within the governmental cabinet that they are political party members.

My last interview was with Khalid Nuree, I had a perfect interview with him and I found new ideas about SOWT analysis of e-government in Kurdistan. In our interview I found these models that I have mentioned below:

**For strength,**

1- A high rate of routine exists in Kurdistan authorities. By implementing e-government system this routines rate could decrease and people will see results easier.

2- Our government's financial situation is not good, as oil price are decreased and not expected to increase and not expected to increase as it was before some years. For this reason e-government could decrease the cost of KRG by decreasing number of employees and by decreasing managerial expenses.

3- Decreasing the corruption rate because in e-government there is no way to do something to a person in illegal way or to make an easy work difficult to get some money for doing it.

4- We have many holidays in Kurdistan Region, but E-government as per our knowledge works 24/7 and this is also a good point.
For weakness,

1- Having bad internet connection because our internet system in Kurdistan is connected through satellite not through Sea cable.

2- Our internet companies are not following the limitation for number of customers, so there network becomes weak due to high number of customers.

3- Internet security for people and e-government system is required, because in Kurdistan we do not have highly experienced IT people.

4- Electricity problem exists in Kurdistan region, which means that e-government system could not work properly.

For opportunity,

1- International companies in IT sector which are IT giants may contact KRG to develop Kurdistan’s e-government, which will let the system grow in a very short time.

2- Big international companies (investors) will be motivated to visit Kurdistan and invest here, because of this e-government system which let works get done easier.

3- Kurdish people who live abroad can easily follow up his/her works with government from his/her place without necessity to visit any authority.

4- With e-government system the post address also will be created.

For threat,

1- Electronic attacks may happen to the system.

2- For national security, it may be risk, because in electronics there are always ways to spy.

The above finding is all from the interviews that I have done for my research. Findings indicate that we have a small groundwork for e-government system in Kurdistan and it is not that much easy to progress it easily. I found that this system is not used in all ministries and institution, and it is not that much supported. Also I found that we need to prepare our self in a proper way to become an electronic government.

According to the research findings it can be able to give as a new model of SWOT analysis for Kurdistan Region, and I have done and create SWOT analysis model for our Region.
All above that explained in FINDING AND DISCUSSION is come out from the interviews that I did with the experts. They gave me lots of information regarding to my thesis but it dense not mean that I'm fully with their ideas; in some questions for example instead of opportunity somehow they gave me advantages.

According to my view for SWOT analysis of E-government we have many Strengths and Weaknesses as internal factor and many Opportunities and Threats as external factors. I will discuss and explain many of these factors in a proper way.

We have some **strength** for e-government for example it can make the managements procedure more efficient in KRG, Removing a huge part of routine in institutions and formal work from civil servants. This system can make cooperation between the public and private sectors, it means that this e-system can combine public and private sectors with each other and make them to exchange information and data inside the system. Another vital strength is to Simplifying administrative routines, like not using too many files, and with this system finding files and data is very easy and very fast by just searching on the system we can have it.

The **weaknesses** that we have is the lack of the employs and experts in this electronic system, whatever we are, where ever we are, if we are not be able to use the e-system in government then could not find a good position. By having electricity problem using e-government system going to be hard to implement in a proper way and this is a headache for the government. Another aspect of this factor is hacker attacks that always the system is under a problem and under the attack of hackers. Having bad internet connection is another weakness that we face in Kurdistan region because our internet system in Kurdistan is connected through satellite not through Sea cable and our internet companies are not following the limitation for number of customers, so there network becomes weak due to high number of customers, High illiteracy rates is another weakness because they can’t deal with this e-system and even they do not know what is this system.

Electronic government system also has **opportunities** in Kurdistan Region, like big international companies (investors) will be motivated to visit Kurdistan and invest here; this investing will increase the economic area and has good effect on finance. KRG can contact with the International companies in IT sector like CISCO Company, Tata Consultancy (TCS) Company, Microsoft Company, etc. These are IT giants to develop Kurdistan’s e-government. This contact is important for Kurdistan government because in this way e-government system will progress more and more. Post address currently available, it means that every individual can get their things through posts by just E-mailing the place. Kurdish people who live abroad (Diaspora) can come back and they
can use the system easily and they can be managers and could take a good position in this new e-government system.

The last factor which is external factor is threat. For national security it is a risk, because in electronics there are always ways to spy and attack, so that private and special government’s information could be under the problem, and always there is a risk for it. Trouble-makers within the governmental cabinet is another threat that e-government system for sure face, and this trouble-makers most of the time from the big parties, they make troubles because they are afraid that they loss their position inside the government, they prefer normal government because there is always ways to the venality but E-government system it is not going to help them to be corrupt. This system needs a big and proper budget but as I see we have Lack of sufficient budget in Kurdistan Region. As the system is very new for the Kurdish people it might not be very welcomed by the people specially the old people. An inappropriate ideology is a big problem that governments face in implementing electronic system. Revolution of the public sector may happen because there are too many illiterate people and they may follow the trouble makers inside the cabinet of the Kurdistan government.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study is to find a new and proper model of SWOT analysis of e-government in Kurdistan Region by getting information from other thesis and the interviews that I did with experts. The research strategy that I have used is qualitative research strategy by interviewing with four interviewees in four different areas.

In this section, by answering the research question in the first chapter the whole research is going to be done.

1. What is the current SWOT analysis of e-government in Kurdistan Region Government (KRG)?

*Table 5.1 – SWOT analysis model of Readiness of E-Government for KRG (internal factors)*

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<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>INTERNAL FACTORS</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
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...
1. Efficient management procedures.
2. Removal of big part of the routine and formal work from civil servants.
3. High-tech based economy.
4. Cooperation between the public and private sectors.
5. Simplifying administrative routines.
6. Making public administration more transparent (Clear).

1. The lack of the employs and experts in this electronic system.
2. Having electricity problem in Kurdistan Region.
3. The system is continuously under attack of hackers.
5. No having highly experienced IT people in Kurdistan.
6. Unemployment
7. High illiteracy rates
8. Workers and older generation are computer illiterate.

Table 5.1 – SWOT analysis model of Readiness of E-Government for KRG (external factors)
1- Big international companies (investors) will be motivated to visit Kurdistan and invest here.
2- KRG can contact with the International companies in IT sector which are IT giants to develop Kurdistan’s e-government.
3- Post address currently is available.
4-Kurdish people who live abroad (Diaspora) can come back and they will be able to use the system easily.

| 1- For national security it is a risk, because in electronics there are always ways to spy. |
| 2- Having some trouble-makers within the governmental cabinet. |
| 3- Lack of sufficient budget. |
| 4- Finical crisis issue. |
| 5- It might not be very welcomed by the people specially the old people. |
| 6- An inappropriate ideology. |
| 7-Revolution of the public sector |

The two tables above are shows the new model of SWOT analysis of e-government for Kurdistan region. This model has prepared and founded after doing interviewees with experts and searching for other SWOT analysis of other E-governments.

2. **What are the possible obstacles faced when applying E-Government?**

There are many obstacles that we may face during the implementation of electronic government, for example lack of the employees and experts in this electronic system, the system is a recent launch and because of that the system it might not be very welcomed by the people specially the old people, finical issues that also called (Financial crises) have big effect and it is one of the big difficulties that e-government could see, Kurdistan region has a big problem with electric so that having electricity problem also another obstacles, slow internet connection is also a difficulty that has its own effects on the system, Budget also a big issue because without budget the system could not go even on step further, and having some trouble-makers within the
governmental cabinet is another aspect of difficulties, these trouble-makers mainly are political party members.

3. What are the existing electronic services provided by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)?
As Kurdistan Region is new for the e-system and we do not have too much electronic services, but it does not mean that there is no any electronic services. In 2006 KRG started to create an electronic system but because of some problems the system was stopped. One of the existing electronic services is National Card Project, this card used instead of ID card, information card and etc. Document Management System (DMS) is another e-service that used in ministry of electricity of Erbil, The system protects documents from lost and it notifies you if a document has not reached yet. It helps the organizations to find the old documents, each document has a code and whenever you supplement the code to the server it directly brings you the document. Another good point of this electronic service is that the SMS system is connected to the DMS system. Another e-service that used is (Archive System) that Soft Max Company made this system for the principal of municipality of Erbil.

References


