ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE IN UKRAINE AND ESTONIA CURRENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the peculiarities of e-governance, which distinguish it from the traditional ways of conduction of governance in Ukraine and Estonia. It has been established that e-government has a number of advantages, including the ability to improve the quality of public services provided to the population, ethical behaviour and professionalism of government officials, trust of citizens in government, and the social situation in the state. The factors restraining the introduction of e-government, in particular, corruption, lack of understanding by society of its importance, and lack of funding were emphasized. The emphasis was placed on the current state of e-government in Estonia. It has been identified that the issue of increase in the digital divide between states is urgent for the countries of the world, because of the introduction of e-government in some states and its lack of others. The possibilities of solving this issue were considered.

Keywords: E-Governance, E-Government, E-Services, Informatization.

INTRODUCTION

The development of computer technologies has led to their use in virtually all spheres of public life, including in the field of public administration, and has been called e-governance, which is not just a technological solution, but a modern innovative concept of state governance, a significant lever of massive transformations in society, especially in the sphere of decentralization of power and its interaction with business. At the same time, the process of introduction of e-governance is not straightforward and depends on a number of factors, therefore, in each state; e-governance is at different stages of development.

Thus, according to the United Nations E-Government Survey 2016 on E-Government Development Index, Ukraine was ranked 62th among 193 countries. Such a situation, as noted by Fesenko and Fesenko, is due to the fact that electronic services in Ukraine are aimed only at provision of information, whereas electronic financial services and electronic participation of citizens in solving administrative issues remain insufficiently developed (Fesenko & Fesenko, 2016). Whereas, for example, in Denmark, according to the latest data from the European Commission, 80.8% of citizens and 89% of Danish enterprises interact with state authorities through internet portals, which is a rather high indicator in the world. In addition to Denmark, the highest quality e-government we have today in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, and

beyond the European region in Canada, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia, where a wide range of online services was introduced for the first time.

Formulation of the Problem

The development of society opens a question before the countries of the world, including Ukraine, on creation of all the necessary conditions for the full implementation of e-governance. In this regard, today it is relevant to search for the best ways to solve the issues that hamper the development of e-governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Frost & Lal point out that the studies of the issue of e-governance emphasize the adoption of these technologies by the state governments with the aim of effective provision of services. However, the adoption of the e-governance was successful not in all the developing countries, considering the non-taking into account links between it and real process of policy formation or professional practice in such countries (Frost & Lal, 2018). Twizeyimana & Andersson, draw attention to the fact that the benefits of e-governance are not only in improvement of the quality of public services provided to the population, but also in improvement of the administrative efficiency of government agencies in general, ethical behaviour and professionalism of their employees, increase of citizens' trust in government and improving social situation in the state. (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). Hussain Wasly & Ali AlSoufi point out that the financial and economic crisis that began in 2008 has forced the government and the private sector to focus on finding ways to maximize cost savings and quality services (Hussain & Ali, 2015). According to Saab et al. one of the benefits of e-government is the reduction of public expenditure on the maintenance of the premises, where citizens can apply for services, and the relevant government employees can provide them, as well as get payment for their labour (Saab et al., 2019).

The scientists also focus on the ability of e-government tools to influence the level of corruption in the state. So, Talab et al. came to the conclusion that it is expedient to introduce e-government in order to deter ever-increasing levels of fraud and corruption (Talab et al., 2019). In turn, there is the opposite position, namely, Khan & Krishnan, emphasize that the high level of corruption in the state negatively affects the implementation of e-governance (Khan & Krishnan, 2019).

Ammar et al. described the lack of safety and confidentiality, lack of trust of citizens, resource scarcity, digital divide, inappropriate governance, lack of awareness, legal barrier, and lack of necessary infrastructure as factors that hamper the introduction of e-government (Ammar et al., 2018). So, an overview of recent scientific publications shows the emphasis on the benefits of e-government over traditional government and the reasons hapmering the introduction of e-government in many countries of the world.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the current state and prospects of e-government in Ukraine and Estonia was carried out using general scientific and special methods of cognition. The mentioned methods allowed us to reveal the features of e-government in Ukraine and Estonia, to find out the problem issues of introduction of e-governance in Ukraine and the perspective areas of their

solution. One of the main methods that allowed critical analysis of normative and doctrinal sources about the current state and prospects of e-government in Ukraine and Estonia was the method of critical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In accordance with the Concept of the development of e-government in Ukraine approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated September 20, 2017 No. 649-p. e-government is a form of public administration that promotes the efficiency, openness and transparency of the activities of state authorities and local governments using information and telecommunication technologies to form a new type of state oriented to meet the needs of citizens. The implementation of the state policy in the area of e-government in Ukraine is entrusted to the State Agency on e-Governance, the activities of which are guided and coordinated by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine through the Minister of Regional Development, Construction and Housing-and-Communal Services.

Given the international experience, e-government development is one of the key factors in ensuring the success of reforms and increase of the country's competitiveness. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), Estonia became the leading state in the field of digital utilities in 2017, although it ranked second in 2018 (Kattel & Mergel, 2018).

As of 2015, Estonia already had: e-cabinet (government meetings, daily budget changes), e-elections, e-tax department (control of tax and customs declarations), e-business register, e-cadastral book, e-case (judicial documentation and documentation management), e-notary, e-law (inter-ministerial environment for the approval of bills), e-police (automatic registration of the fact of violation and sending a decision on the imposition of a fine), e-school, e-depository, e-pension, e-invoices and e-receipt.

The e-government system in Estonia has an X-Road model, according to which all e-government services are interconnected. In this case, e-government in Estonia is a decentralized system that guarantees that no individual or institution can fully control the system. Given that citizens have the opportunity to interact directly with the government on the Internet without intermediaries and the need to offer or render unlawful benefits. Finally, the system standardizes service for the whole country. So, the same service in all regions has the same value and requires the same amount of time to provide it. It also improves equality of access to public services (Kees, 2016).

Hendrik et al. draw attention to the fact that significant attention is paid to reduction of redundancy in data collection in Estonia. So, if citizens submit their personal information to government authorities once, the next time they need not to provide it, as it will already be available to other government departments through e-government services (Hendrik et al., 2018).

In the opinion of Serhii et al. e-government concerns the right of citizens to access public information, their involvement in decision-making at all levels, and the modernization of the public administration system. That is, the idea of e-government is not just the use of computer technology, but a democratic initiative aimed at improvement of the lives of ordinary citizens. Therefore, one of the areas of implementation of e-governance should be the formation of the leadership potential of the state servants and officials, public and business (Serhii et al., 2018). Awareness of the importance of e-governance by citizens, government officials is a key factor in its successful implementation and functioning in Ukraine (Tsap et al., 2017). The on-line public

participation in local government consultation and decision making is a key element of a successful digital democracy. Moreover, the interaction of citizens, public authorities, law enforcement agencies among themselves is one of the conditions for effective counteraction and fight against crime (Olga et al., 2018). Accordingly, e-government is the tool through which the above-mentioned subjects can collaborate.

The financing of the process of full implementation of e-governance in Ukraine is no less problematic. According to Forbes, funding for e-government and informatization programs in Ukraine amounted to UAH 2 million for 2015. For comparison, the amount was significantly higher-$20 million in Estonia in the same year. Obviously, the problems of citizen's confidence in e-government and financing of its development are hampering the process of its introduction in Ukraine. This is also confirmed by the lack of opportunities for citizens to influence the governance process. In fact, today there are only electronic petitions, and electronic services are also limited, there are fewer than half out of a thousand services.

Today, not only Ukraine is facing the problems of implementation of e-governance. This is due to the fact that the social and economic development of not all states indicates their readiness for the introduction of e-government, and therefore the existence of e-governance in a more developed state and its absence in another further exacerbates the digital divide in relations between such states. Given this it is desirable to simultaneously introduce e-government in several geographically located countries (Warf, 2018). Agreeing with the stated position of the scientist it is necessary to supplement it. In particular, we consider it is expedient to take into account not only the geographical principle when implementing e-government, but also the state of socio-economic development of the state.

RECCOMENDATIONS

The foregoing outlines the appropriateness of introduction of e-government in the state, but at the same time the establishment of e-government is in fact at an initial stage in Ukraine today, due to a number of restraining factors. Therefore, it is recommended that the governing bodies of Ukraine pay attention to the issue of awareness of the benefits of e-governance by the public and civil servants, its importance for the development of society and the state, increase of financing of the informatization area, and reduction of corruption. Only subject to elimination of these factors, one more step towards the introduction of e-government is possible in Ukraine and in other countries of the world. In addition, at the world level, the readiness of the state to e-governance should be taken into account, as ignoring this further exacerbates the existing digital divide.

CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of e-government is a requirement for the development of information technology, which has a number of advantages over traditional government. At the same time, there are factors that hold back the implementation of e-government in the state, in particular, the high level of corruptions of public authorities, distrust of citizens to government bodies, and lack of financing for the development of the informatization sphere. For Ukraine, these factors are not an exception, which indicates the need to create appropriate conditions for the introduction of e-government tools. An illustrative example in this regard is Estonia's experience. At the same

time, the digital divide between the states of the world remains a pressing issue, due to the existence of e-government in some countries and the lack of it in others.

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