



THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CUSTOMER HAPPINESS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND E-GOVERNMENT PORTAL SUCCESS IN ABU DHABI



AHMED IBRAHIM AL HOSANI

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2024





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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND E-
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AHMED IBRAHIM AL HOSANI



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effect of customer experience dimensions i.e., comfort, security, and usability, on customer happiness, the effect of customer experience dimensions and customer happiness on e-government portal success, as well as the effect of customer happiness as a mediator in the relationship between customer experience dimensions and e-government success. This study adopted a quantitative approach. The sample consisted of 400 users of TAMM, the Abu Dhabi e-government portal, were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CBSEM) using IBM SPSS AMOS software was utilised to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that all the customer experience dimensions, namely comfort ($\beta=0.318$, $p\text{-value}=0.001$), security ($\beta=0.289$, $p\text{-value}=0.001$), and usability ($\beta=0.310$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) have significant effects on customer happiness at a significance level of 0.05. The effect of customer experience dimensions, namely comfort ($\beta=0.165$, $p\text{-value}=0.019$), security ($\beta=0.357$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$), and usability ($\beta=0.205$, $p\text{-value}=0.009$), as well as customer happiness ($\beta=0.312$, $p\text{-value}=0.001$) on e-government portal success, are also statistically significant at 0.05 significance value. The findings also revealed that customer happiness significantly mediates the relationship between customer experience and e-government portal success ($p<0.05$). In conclusion, the dimensions of customer experience and customer happiness play an important role in ensuring the success of the e-government portal. In implications, the study suggests that customers' experience and happiness in TAMM services should be monitored regularly as it is the key to the success of e-government in Abu Dhabi.





PENGARUH PENGANTARA KEBAHAGIAAN PELANGGAN DALAM HUBUNGAN ANTARA DIMENSI PENGALAMAN PELANGGAN DENGAN KEJAYAAN E-KERAJAAN DI ABU DHABI

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji pengaruh dimensi pengalaman pelanggan, iaitu keselesaan, keselamatan, dan kebolegunaan, terhadap kejayaan portal e-kerajaan, pengaruh dimensi pengalaman pelanggan dan kebahagiaan pelanggan ke atas kejayaan portal e-kerajaan dan pengaruh kebahagiaan pelanggan sebagai pengantara dalam hubungan di antara dimensi pengalaman pelanggan dan kejayaan portal e-kerajaan. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 400 orang pengguna TAMM, portal e-kerajaan Abu Dhabi, yang dipilih menggunakan pensampelan rawak berstrata. Analisis pemodelan persamaan berstruktur berasaskan ko-varians (CB-SEM) digunakan bagi menguji hipotesis menggunakan perisian IBM SPSS AMOS. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa semua dimensi pengalaman pelanggan iaitu, keselesaan ($\beta=0.318$, nilai- $p=0.001$), keselamatan ($\beta=0.289$, nilai- $p=0.001$) dan kebolegunaan ($\beta=0.310$, nilai- $p=0.000$) mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kebahagiaan pelanggan pada aras keertian 0.05. Pengaruh dimensi pengalaman pelanggan iaitu, keselesaan ($\beta=0.165$, nilai- $p=0.019$), keselamatan ($\beta=0.357$, nilai- $p=0.000$), dan kebolegunaan ($\beta=0.205$, nilai- $p=0.009$), serta kebahagiaan pelanggan ($\beta=0.312$, nilai- $p=0.001$) ke atas kejayaan portal e-kerajaan, juga signifikan secara statistik pada aras keertian 0.05. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa kebahagiaan pelanggan menjadi pengantara yang signifikan dalam hubungan antara pengalaman pelanggan dan kejayaan portal e-kerajaan ($p<0.05$). Kesimpulannya, dimensi pengalaman pelanggan dan kebahagiaan pelanggan memainkan peranan penting untuk memastikan kejayaan portal ekerajaan. Implikasinya, kajian ini mencadangkan pengalaman dan pelanggan dalam perkhidmatan TAMM perlu dipantau secara berkala kerana ianya menjadi kunci kejayaan ekerajaan di Abu Dhabi.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADDA	Abu Dhabi Digital Authority
AMOS	Analysis of a Moment Structure
CH	Customer Happiness
CX	Customer Experience
CXC	Customer Experience- Comfort
CXS	Customer Experience- Security
CXU	Customer Experience- Usability
E-GS	E-government Portal Success
G2C	Government to Customer
HEART	Happiness, Engagement, Adoption, Retention, and Task Success
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDT	Innovation Diffusion Theory
IS	Information Systems
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PLS	Partial Least-Squares
PU	Perceived Usefulness
PULSE	Page views, Uptime, Latency, Seven-day activity, and Earnings
SEM	Structural Equation modeling
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social sciences
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TAMM	Abu Dhabi E-Government Standard Web Portal
UAE	United Arab Emirates

UTAUT Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

LIST OF APPENDICES

- A Questionnaire
- B Questionnaire Structure Based on Expert Feedback



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



This study is framed to investigate the mediating role of “Customer Happiness” in the relationship between customer experience dimensions and e-government portal success. This research thesis has five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis, and conclusion. This first chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the study. It includes the research background, the problem statement, the research objectives, and the research hypotheses. It also provides a conceptual framework, the research's importance, the study's scope, and operational definitions. Therefore, the focus of the discussion is the trend of e-government portal initiatives and the examination of the actual performance of e-government portal services in the United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi.





1.2 Background of the Study

The e-government portal generally uses information and communication technology in public administration that involves organizational changes and new skills to improve public services and democratic processes (European Union, 2020). (Li & Sheng, 2020) defines e-government as the use of information technologies to provide government information and services through an online distribution mode, where the contact between government and residents, government and business organizations, and inter-agency dealing is protected by the reach of e-government. While the academic literature on information technology in government dates back to the 1970s, the e-government portal emerged as a studied concept in the late 1990s and has been extensively covered in numerous conferences and scholarly journals, and debate



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Governments globally have been on the move where trials to obtain e-government portal success are at the fore front just because of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) developments. E-government portal success is the extent to which the government meets its goals more efficiently and effectively, increasing public satisfaction (Li & Sheng, 2020). The measure includes better service delivery, improved government interaction with citizens and businesses, enhanced information access among citizens, and efficient government management. Therefore, the success of an e-government portal is the ability to augment government services to meet citizens, businesses, and government's needs for services and management.





While Maharaja and Munyoka (2019) illustrated the global e-government development index among 193 countries in 2018, developing countries were found to have lacked modernized online governance services provided through the internet. Geneiatakis et al. (2020) similarly held that e-government promotes cost-effectiveness and efficiency within the public sector service delivery and improves communication between stakeholders and the government.

1.2.1 E-government in the UAE

In the Middle East, several Arabic states, such as Abu Dhabi, are developing portals to expand services to their users (Lallmahomed et al., 2017). E-government services improve public accountability, make access to information more straightforward, and ensure enhanced quality in public services, leading to improved customer experiences and engagement with e-government services (Mensah et al., 2018). Furthermore, states must prioritize establishing digital transformation visions, objectives, and strategies and rally citizens around the vision. In 2022, digital transformation in government services was still challenging, with few citizens engaging in e-government and partially utilizing the services (Al Hosani & Zainol, 2020). Even though the high level of e-Readiness indexes is expected to determine acceptance and usage of electronic services, people do not have the expertise to use e-services. Citizens' knowledge of e-government in the UAE was assessed, and it was found that the public had myths and misconceptions about the e-government initiative (Al-Menhali, 2018). The finding occurred when the latest phase of e-government implementation placed citizen awareness as a top priority (Alketbi, 2018).



Alvedi et al. (2019) proposed "usage and the provision of e-services must be known by all citizens the idea of situation awareness among citizens in the UAE has a huge gap that needs to be fixed with immediate attention" (Alketbi, 2018). Therefore, the government must provide essential education services involving e-government learning and necessary training to citizens and public workers to embrace e-government. Education paves the way for the smooth implementation of e-government and will also lead to the effective development of e-services in the UAE (Alvedi et al., 2019).

Capgemini (2020) strongly indicates that it is essential for the Abu Dhabi government to provide world-class services and skilled workers and improve customer experience with a population of approximately 1.6 million people, businesses, and their employees. It was later believed that this would be a milestone in successfully implementing the e-government portal.

1.2.2 Tamm

Tamm is an Abu Dhabi e-government standard web portal, <https://www.tamm.abudhabi/>, developed to offer quality digital service to the public. Tamm is not an abbreviation but an adjective in Arabic that means complete, entire, or comprehensive. As a result, the Abu Dhabi government called its digital services portal Tamm to demonstrate a one-stop website that provides all public services under one platform. The government cooperated with all its entities to develop Tamm, a digital solution to offer seamless services to the public. As a result, Tamm

houses Abu Dhabi government digital services from different departments. TAMM allows users single-point access to government services, including housing, water, electricity, and school search, any place, anytime. Users can get all information they need without moving from one government department to another following coordinated data sharing. Through TAMM, Abu Dhabi Government's goal was to advance digital transformation along with vision 2021 and provide its citizens with efficient and quality services through a safe and integrated digital platform.

E-Government services have great potential to develop national guidelines for collaboration, transparency, open communication, and public dialogue between the public sector and individuals, companies, and government based on customer experience. The success of the e-government portal depends on 20% on technology through the portal and 80% on people and organizational processes (Will Cruz, 2017).

Citizens are one of the critical success factors of e-government, and their attitude towards e-government portals should be known. The fundamental need to motivate people to accept e-government services has led to significant interest in evaluating the success of e-government portals by looking at the perspective of website users (Kanaan and Mossad, 2018), and thus this study.

1.2.3 E-Government success in the Gulf

Arab countries have experienced steady growth since oil prices rise in the 1970s. In addition, public sectors are improving in all Gulf countries; for example, global



awareness of e-government services shows that the UAE is at the forefront of the Arab world (Alharmoodi & Lakulu, 2020).

Internationally, the UAE ranks 25 in the implementation of telecommunication infrastructure, 49th in e-government development and implementation, 86 in e-participation, and 99 in offering online services globally. The nature of the public sector in the UAE requires appreciation due to its working practices and ethos; in this case, the working ethos and practices differ from their western counterparts (Ameen et al., 2018). The antecedents of public administration in these states remain as legacies of the colonial period, customs, culture, and religion (Mohamed et al., 2019).

Therefore, the public sector and government sector experiences a dualistic approach in providing e-government services to their citizens. The Gulf region contains a federation of seven states; hence the federal and local authorities ought to co-exist peacefully through a mixture of informal and formal administrative practices. Each sheikh informally takes control and ensures the management of the personal emirate's economy in the assembly without conflicting with federal policy.

UAE continues to fully develop e-government strategies to help nationals by utilizing technology, the service levels in UAE, specifically Abu Dhabi, have improved, and the citizens' participation through the government models has also improved over time. Contextually, in Abu Dhabi, an e-government service portal (TAMM) was developed to assist information dissemination among its people. The government of Abu Dhabi set it to achieve service excellence in Abu Dhabi by changing the service delivery framework into a single online platform.





Much as Li and Shang (2020) considered it worth being a potent mediator between the standard of service and the desire of citizens to use it. There are still significant issues with technology-centered development, which involve the failure to consider customers' choices and expectations by decision-makers, who instead emphasize cost reduction and system structure (Ramli, 2017). Also, the execution and usage of e-Government are limited in most countries due to high dependence on supply-related factors (Máchová et al., 2018).

Marzooqi et al. (2017) argue that the fundamental problems affecting e-government success in the UAE are the increased gap between reality and design based on information, processes, values, objectives, technology, skills and staffing, management systems, money, and time. The digital gap between generations, a lack of national policies concerning science and technology, and a lack of sufficient ICT applications are other problems facing e-government success in the UAE. Besides, according to Alharmoodi and Lakulu (2020), a lack of an experienced workforce, technological illiteracy, and insufficient funding challenge e-government success in the UAE. According to Almuraqab and Jasimuddin (2017), the UAE faces internal challenges, such as a lack of ensuring an improved understanding of a shared vision for e-government.

Alketbi (2018) thought that situational awareness among citizens exposed a considerable gap, and the Abu Dhabi government was still challenged with attracting the citizens to use the e-Government services (Almutairi, 2020). Literature on the e-Government success in Abu Dhabi remained neglected (Obodo & Davidson, 2018). To date, e-Government still registers cavities to the extent that people do not engage





in the e-service. Thus such occurrences sparked the current study. Rana et al. (2017) suggested that the government must foster security and comfort and improve customer service in the e-government systems. Al-Kaseasbeh et al. (2019) found notions of customer satisfaction and experience significant pillars for assessing multi-service firms. Zahid and Din (2019) also called for establishing e-government systems in countries with proper accessibility to improve customer experience and satisfaction.

This research, therefore, prioritized the need to improve e-government perception of customer experience to enhance customer happiness in using Abu Dhabi e-government services that significantly will contribute to Abu Dhabi's e-government success. It suggested taking advantage and acknowledging success or failures and executing knowledge from cases of the countries which already implemented e-Government services. It was realized that technology-related issues could not be the only challenge faced by e-Government but the major hindrance in utilizing the technology to a maximum level so that the competence of the state can be improved. The experience of the citizens, who are the product's significant consumers, can also be improved by restructuring the relationship between citizens and the states (Al-Rawahna et al., 2019). That being said, the primary emphasis of many nations' governments is not on Information and Communication Technology but the usage of the technical execution of the use of online services. Thus, the central goal of states is to enhance online services by giving the best and most effective services to the citizens (Aneke et al., 2019).



The concept of customer experience emerged as an essential concern for service providers, especially government-related services aimed at providing services to the citizens. Customer experience has several dimensions that different studies have adopted, and frameworks have been made to evaluate the customer experience. The components of the customer experience model were designed to define different dimensions of customers' experience (the perceived instrumental qualities, the perceived non-instrumental qualities, and the emotional reactions) (Van Der Linden et al., 2019). The model presented by Zarour and Alharbi (2018) provided a framework that included dimensions of customer experience (usability and satisfaction). Havř (2019) model showed different dimensions of customer experience, including personalization, customization, comfort, speed, trust, and security.

1.2.4 Significance of E-government and E-government Portal Success

States cannot ignore the success of e-government due to its contribution to digital transformation, the relationship between citizens and the government, economic growth, and reduced cost of public services. Studies demonstrate that e-government reduces resource wastage due to paperless and non-contact transactions (Mbaidin, 2021). In the last three months of 2020, Abu Dhabi had at least 8 million digital transactions with the government (Abu Dhabi Digital Authority, 2020). Abu Dhabi Digital Authority (2020) said the visits saved around 300,000 days for 16 million users and government employees. Abu Dhabi's digital transformation reveals how the government can reduce staff expenses and the time citizens spend accessing its services. The efficient services attract confidence and trust in the government to



receive more support from the public. Citizens believe that a government that facilitates public services with ease is democratic and dedicated to their welfare. As a result, people become engaged with confidence in state operations to seek more services for business and personal growth. A successful government cannot ignore the success of its e-government platform to have smooth service delivery for the benefit of all.

The demand for quality public services has been the driver of e-government. Citizens and governments have pressured public services with transparency, ease of access, and confidentiality (Mensah et al., 2020). Thus, ICT has become a key component of government services to meet public demand and enhance state performance to citizens. Governments and citizens expect that e-government will contribute to public confidence and trust, safety and security, performance expectancy, accessibility, a more efficient government, better services to citizens, improved democratic processes, transparency, a better business environment, and improving the quality of life for disadvantaged communities.

1.3 Problem Statement

The public expects that government makes efforts that improve its quality of life. Thus, citizens in Abu Dhabi should utilize TAMM services because the government aims to have quality services through a robust ICT-based infrastructure and digital sustainability (The National, 2020). A robust ICT-based infrastructure was among Abu Dhabi's visions for 2021, with the UAE ranking ninth in the future readiness





index 2019 (Chang & Almaghalsah, 2020). Thus, Abu Dhabi was much prepared with the TAMM strategy to optimize people's experience in service delivery through the transition to digital services. The depth deployment of technology and combining the various government websites into one that includes other physical services such as house search would mean more quality services, including comfort and security.

Unfortunately, TAMM has not successfully transformed services to digital platforms in Abu Dhabi. Reports on e-government success demonstrate that only 15% of Abu Dhabi e-government services have succeeded (Mouna et al., 2020). The remaining 85% have partially or entirely failed (Mouna et al., 2020). Success means that the services meet users' expectations leading to utilization. Most people have continued to use the traditional physical government services of paper and manual work, such as searching for schools and paying for water and electricity. Maharaj and Munyoka (2019) comment that the low utilization of TAMM has led to the slow growth of e-government services against expectations. The slow growth implies that TAMM does not address the public's expected service improvement needs.

The unsuccessful TAMM implies a sustained high cost of government services, including printing, filing, and storing. Abu Dhabi has not achieved efficiency in its services by having people access them without visiting physical offices and ensuring access to all needed information. The minimal utilization of e-government services also places Abu Dhabi behind its vision for 2021, which it aimed at an era of a robust ICT-based infrastructure and digital sustainability. E-services utilization indicates the emirate transformation into a technology-based region. The Abu Dhabi government cannot move on to other technological services where the



public has resisted using TAMM due to low quality as the foundation of other applications.

Partial TAMM success is also significant to the public because of low-quality government services and unmet needs. Most of the information that the public requires from the government is in the TAMM. Getting the same services from the physical offices implies a slow process that depends on staff availability, moods, and ability to help. The public has to use low-quality TAMM services or move from one office to the other with the speed of getting services depending on the availability of resources, including printers and papers. TAMM's low-quality service also creates a negative perception of transformation to technology. Such people might be more resistant to adopting other beneficial ICT infrastructures in the future to slow growth.

The identified underutilization of TAMM is a lack of unfulfilled customer expectations. Customer experience affects e-government services in the UAE (Al Hosani & Zainol, 2022). The growth of smart services through digitalization is due to the need to create customer value (Dreyer et al., 2019). Internet and technology enable service providers to interact with customers and co-create value. In nonprofit organizations, the objective of integrating smart technology in service delivery does not change. Studies demonstrate that innovation in e-government services in the UAE aims to meet customer expectations and develop the nation's competitiveness (AlEisaei, 2019). In business, digital applications have been one of the ways that public and private sectors are creating competitiveness by revolutionizing customer experiences (Abu Dhabi Digital Authority [ADDA], 2021). According to ADDA (2021), the success of the applications is above being a one-stop shop. E-government

services must make the government an enabler where users' lives are easier through automatic benefits (ADDA, 2021). Thus, governments must build digital platforms with customer knowledge to enhance the experience and increase utilization. The successful incorporation of the customer experience element in TAMM can address the problem of e-government portal success in Abu Dhabi. Current literature also lacks research and findings on the mediating role of customer happiness in the relationship between customer experience and e-government portal success.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the mediating effect of customer happiness in the relationship between customer experience dimensions and e-government portal success. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- RO1: Assess the effect of customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] on customer happiness (CH).
- RO2: Examine the effect of customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] on e-government portal success (E-GS).
- RO3: Examine the effect of customer happiness (CH) on e-government portal success (E-GS).
- RO4: Investigate the mediation role of customer happiness (CH) on the relationship between customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] and e-government portal success.

1.5 Research Questions

In achieving the objectives above, this study answered the following research questions.

RQ1: Do customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] significantly affect customer happiness (CH)?

RQ2: Do customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] significantly affect e-government portal success (E-GS)?

RQ3: Does customer happiness (CH) significantly affect e-government portal success (E-GS)?

RQ4: Does customer happiness (CH) mediate the relationship between customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] and e-government portal success (E-GS)?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

To provide answers to the research questions and achieve the research objectives, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:

H1: Customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), usability (CXU)] have a significant influence on customer happiness (CH)

H1a: Comfort (CXC) significantly influences customer happiness (CH).



H1b: Security (CXS) significantly influences customer happiness (CH).

H1c: Usability (CXU) significantly influences customer happiness (CH).

H2: Customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] have a significant influence on e-government portal success.

H2a: Comfort (CXC) significantly influences e-government portal success (E-GS).

H2b: Security (CXS) significantly influences e-government portal success (E-GS).

H2c: Usability (CXU) significantly influences e-government portal success (E-GS).

H3: Customer happiness (CH) has a significant relationship with e-government portal success (E-GS).

H4: Customer happiness (CH) significantly mediates the relationship between Customer experience (CX) dimensions [comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU)] and e-government portal success (E-GS).

H4a: Customer happiness (CH) significantly mediates the relationship between comfort (CXC) and e-government portal success (E-GS).

H4b: Customer happiness (CH) significantly mediates the relationship between security (CXS) and e-government portal success (E-GS).

H4c: Customer happiness (CH) significantly mediates the relationship between usability (CXU) and e-government portal success (E-GS).



1.7 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between Customer experience (CX) and e-government portal success (E-GS) directly and through the mediating effect of customer happiness (CH). The conceptual framework seeks to relate the independent, dependent, and mediating variables and give the theoretical connection as explained in the sub-sections below.

1.7.1 Customer Experience

The first construct of this study, the independent variable, is the customer experience (CX), which brings satisfaction and, therefore, the public value of e-government portal that promotes the success of e-government portal. Through the uniqueness and benefits of e-government portal, the whole government realizes its success of e-government. Studies demonstrate that user experience is an essential factor in influencing the impact on adoption means that customer experience defines the structure of e-government to motivate use. Although this study does not consider adoption, the results guide that consideration of customer experience in developing e-government portal leads to success due to the inclusion of user needs. The results demonstrate a direct relationship between customer experience and e-government portal effectiveness (Uchenna & Nworah, 2020). Customer experience motivates the operation of e-government portal by guiding specific features, including usability, which contributes to overall efficiency and meeting service objectives, including access to information.

Scott et al. (2016) explained that the success of e-government portal processes and systems depends on how users or citizens perceive the value realized from using those systems [PEoU]. The perception is the customer experience of how the e-government portal services meet their needs and impact satisfaction. The six e-government portal success factors must be identified across all maturity levels, including the external environment, citizens, employees, organizational setup, management, and technology.

Davis originally proposed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in 1985 to study and explain clearly the users' acceptance of the information system (ISs) using the ideas of rational behavior theory. TAM applies in the context of this study to explain elements of customer experience. Customer experience is the difference between expectations and provided services. Expectations lead to acceptance of a system or service due to the belief that it has the needed quality or elements. Thus, TAM guides customer experience face that e-government portal users expect and assess. TAM serves to unfold the most critical aspects that the users broadly acknowledge. According to the model, two factors are vital for users to accept technology. The first factor is perceived usefulness (PU) which reflects the level at which individuals consider using a specific scheme to improve their efficiency. The second factor is perceived ease of use (PEOU), reflecting the extent to which people believe it is simple to use a particular system. Similarly, human factors (or ergonomics) apply scientific knowledge of structures, things, and environments for human needs. It is frequently considered how businesses design duties and office spaces to optimize the quality and effectiveness of their staff's work to satisfy the

customer. Thus, TAM provides two dimensions of customer experience; CXU and CXC.

Hedonomics theory defines customer experience in technology-related interaction (Jeon, 2017; Helander & Khalid, 2017). In this case, customer experience components or qualities are ergonomic and hedonic. The former refers to functionality and usability, while the latter relates to pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction (Jeon, 2017). According to Oishi and Tay (2018), the theory assumes that any occurrence occurs based on a specific level of complexity and subsumes others at a minimal level. As a result, the approach supports TAM in demonstrating CXU and CXC as critical dimensions of customer experience in e-government portal.

experience dimension in the relationship with e-government portal success. According to Shamsi et al. (2018), users of e-government portal fear using the service due to insecurity, such as losing their payments. Experience of security is a crucial determinant of intention to use e-services because of risks, including privacy and loss of money that comes with technology compromise. As a result, a successful e-government portal serves customers' security needs resulting from services exchanging crucial information and money. Research such as Al Hosani and Zainol (2022) found that user security affects the success of e-government portals. Security factor influences the government to build a system with enough security measures, secure from hackers, and embraces confidentiality. Such considerations are a technology's success because they will lead to quality services, including safe and correct data and transactions.

1.7.2 Customer Happiness

This study considers Arampatzi et al. (2019) definition of happiness as a 'users' experience resulting from customer satisfaction with positive experiences. Happiness is a subjective feeling of satisfaction and quality of life. Studies from China, Thailand, and Japan demonstrate a bidirectional effect between joy and customer happiness (Malkoç 2017). Thus, satisfaction brings about happiness because of the overall development of achieving quality of life through served expectations (Yalçin, 2017). Each discipline and subject has specific measures of happiness depending on how they conceptualize subjective well-being.

Studies on government and e-government portals argue that good governance, health, income freedom, and honesty contribute to happiness (Shamsi et al., 2018). A government that prioritizes its citizens' well-being in different policies contributes to happiness by addressing factors that affect overall well-being and satisfaction. In an e-government portal, happiness would occur when the government enhances satisfaction and public well-being in various provided services. For example, the public wants adequate housing, schools, and electricity information. Such detailed information addresses uncertainty, fear, and stress related to a lack of awareness about location and where to find the needed services. Following Shamsi et al. (2018) study, happiness is a dependent variable, and the e-government portal is an independent variable in the relationship.

Al Hosani and Zainol (2022) further concluded that promoting happiness through customer experience leads to e-government portal success. The study



investigated the relationship between customer experience and e-government portals, showing that the former influences the latter. Al Hosani and Zainol's (2022) results relate to the customer experience dimension, which affects the quality of life and, thus, subjective well-being. For Al Hosani and Zainol (2022), e-government portal success is a dependent variable, and happiness is the independent variable in the relationship. In developing a successful e-government portal, happiness would be the starting point to assess what customers consider services that support overall well-being with satisfying effects. A government that focuses on ensuring citizens' happiness in e-services would be successful through an efficient system that provides for users' needs. Thus, this study considers the e-government portal as a dependent variable.



provisions that bring about satisfaction and subjective well-being. According to Al Hosani and Zainol (2022), promoting customer experience leads to true happiness. Shamsi et al. (2018) conceptualize happiness as a philosophy that motivates the government to increase citizens' satisfaction. As the government looks for ways to make citizens happy, innovation improves to raise satisfaction among the public. The two studies demonstrate that joy brings about happiness. Shamsi et al. (2018) were direct in results showing that innovation mediates the relationship between smart government and happiness. Innovation adds to the quality of services in smart government with increased satisfaction leading to happiness. Satisfaction results from customer experience that changes with change in creation. A government that focuses on making the citizens happy will explore ways to raise satisfaction through quality e-



government portals. Thus, customer experience leads to happiness as the government increases the quality of services to meet users' needs to improve satisfaction.

1.7.3 E-government Portal Success

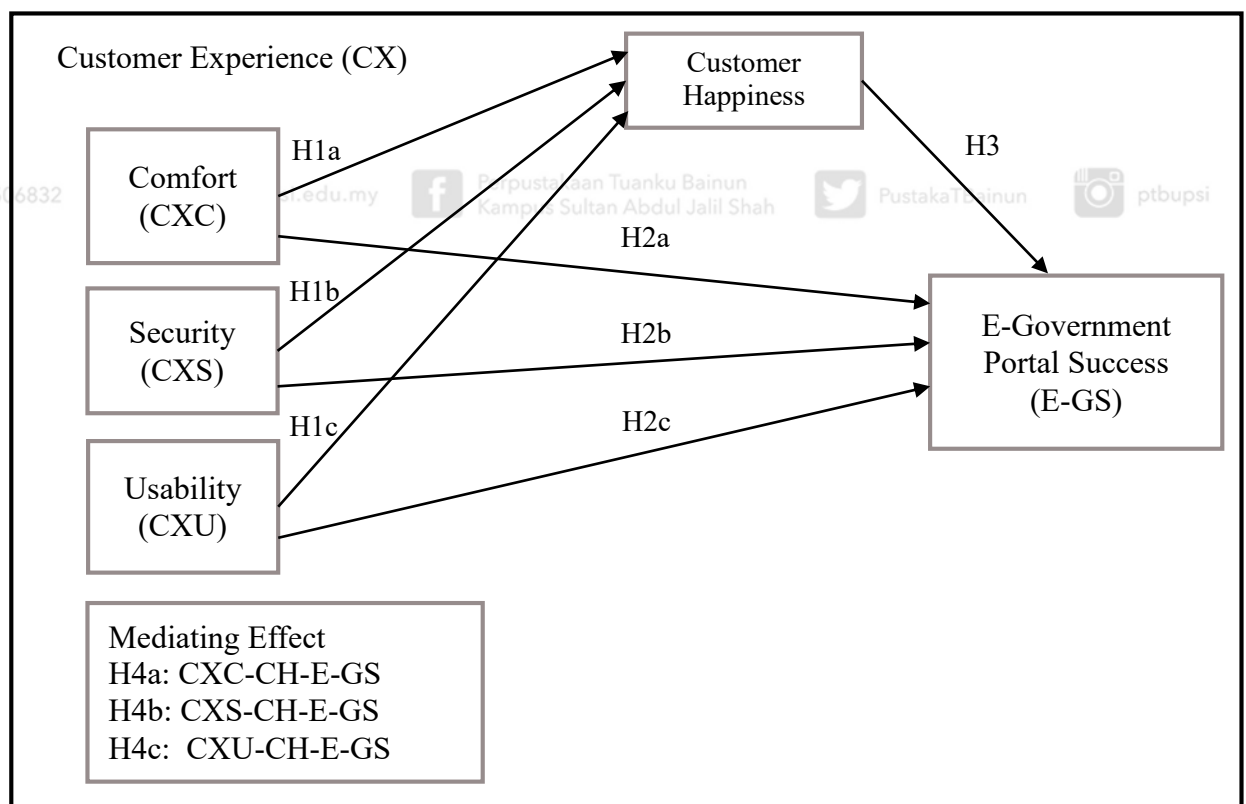
E-government portal success supports quality in providing services to citizens according to the user and public expectations (Government of the UAE, 2018a). The variable results from different studies on user expectations from the e-government portal and Abu Dhabi's goal of developing TAMM. Abu Dhabi's purpose for TAMM was to digitalize its services to improve quality. The UAE also supported its e-government portal strategy with the claim of enhancing customer and public experience through quality services. Citizen perspectives have also measured e-government portal success in different studies. For example, Uchenna and Nworah (2020) used user satisfaction to measure the e-government portal quality dimension. Customer satisfaction is how the online platform serves them better than the conventional approaches through physical offices. Suri and Sushil (2017) also researched the implementation of e-government portal using user expectations. Quality services are those that meet customer expectations. Thus, e-government portal success is adopting digital technology that optimizes services such as accessibility, timeliness, up-to-date, and integration across government entities.

Hala and Habin (2019) also studied the relationship between e-government portal success and customer acceptance. Customer acceptance is not a construct in the current study but informs about satisfaction and experience that motivates use (Hala

& Habin, 2019). Acceptance of using technology increases satisfaction because it serves the needs. Hala and Habin (2019) found that perceived support for the e-government portal increases the intention to use it. The study considers the choice to use an e-government portal success. Thus, e-government portal success results from satisfaction and focus on customer acceptance. A government that reflects the chances of customer acceptance and intention to use develops a system that will serve security, privacy, ease of accessing information, and comfort.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework





1.8 Scope of Study

Firstly, the study and data collection focused only on those working in Abu Dhabi, whether residents or no residents because, being the headquarters of the government, including ministries, embassies, and diplomatic missions, educational, financial, agricultural, cultural, technical, commercial, and social organizations were factually 80% of the activities in the country take place.

Conceptually, the current study was guided by two primary theoretical considerations, which assisted in identifying and understanding the three primary study variables. Customer experience (CX) is the independent variable, E-government portal success is the dependent variable, and customer happiness is the mediating variable. Statistical analysis processes were limited to data assembled from the field of study, where constructs: comfort, security, usability, and customer happiness as proxies for customer experience were studied. In contrast, customer happiness was the mediating variable between customer experience and e-government portal.

Finally, this research only used a quantitative research approach. The study analyzed the data using Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) through International Business Machines Corporation [IBM] Analysis Of A Moment Structures (AMOS) software. The study also used Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) in data screening, predicting missing data, and determining outliers, evaluating the sleekness and kurtosis, and examining the presence of standard method variance. The proposed conceptual model was incorporated for insights based on quantitative information; also, hypotheses were tested to verify the mediating effect



caused by customer happiness on customer experience and e-government portal success.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The researcher acknowledged the importance of studying technological implementations, mainly e-government portal services, in Abu Dhabi. The e-government portal systems have provided people with almost everything technology can give instead of asking what citizens want them to deliver (Arfat et al., 2018). Thus, the researcher emphasized the requirement to pay attention to what makes the customer's best experience when they obtain the service and the need to measure happiness to achieve e-government portal success. The study highlights the current strategies and initiatives used in the e-government portal, exploring the customers' perspective, giving a significant fit to the customers' requirements, and constructing and providing tools for the evaluation. This research explores the success factors in the e-government portal services of Abu Dhabi. Findings target the authorities in understanding the critical problems that impact the experience and happiness of the citizens with the e-government services and can use these factors to evaluate the service delivery procedure.

The research focuses on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a theoretical background of the study used in the topics related to technology and innovation adoption. It assessed the applicability of TAM in the context of government digitalization success. The research extends the present theoretical model



by adding different variables applicable to e-government portal, analyzing and forming new relationships that contribute to significant academic contributions. As per Bakunzibake (2019), the competence to integrate such tools into the e-government portal success will help develop and mature customer-centric perspectives on the government's future strategies related to e-government portal services.

Studies related to e-government portal success have focused on adopting e-government services. Not many attempts have been made to evaluate the success of such sites and their competence, resulting in the provision of negative experiences to the customers (Marzooqi et al., 2017). The present study is focused on the customers' perspective on the digitalization success of e-government; therefore, the researcher aims to include customer-centered variables to evaluate the success of e-government.



Al Mansoori's (2017) study used a modified Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model to determine the citizen adoption of e-government in Abu Dhabi. The present research is making a significant theoretical contribution by integrating Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to describe customers' experience of the e-government portal success of Abu Dhabi. Therefore, the study examined adopting the TAM and the customer experience and happiness variables to successfully use TAMM-Abu Dhabi e-governments services. This study explored and analyzed the relationship between constructs based on the two variables, customer experience and Technology Acceptance Model with the mediating variable "happiness," to provide more comprehensive findings enabling e-government success. It explored the factors that impact customer happiness related to the overall success of e-government implementation in Abu Dhabi.



The research has significantly contributed to the e-government portal's success by exploring the scenario of Abu Dhabi. The study is unique in that the data was collected from the users availing services of TAMM, the e-government portal of Abu Dhabi, to provide adequate knowledge on the customer experience of using e-government services. Thus, the results can be explicitly generalized to Abu Dhabi. Moreover, the focus of the study on Abu Dhabi is precious as past studies on e-government services usage, implementation, and experience are limited to the studies conducted in the UAE. The research contributes to the knowledge of different e-government practitioners and governments by improving customer services according to their needs and perspectives.

The primary concern of different countries is to increase the citizen's awareness regarding their e-government services initiatives (Al Mansoori, 2017). The research is significant for the government of Abu Dhabi in understanding what determines the success of e-government portals. Moreover, after reviewing the literature, it is unclear whether dimensions related to customer experience and happiness can achieve e-government success. This research clarifies the most dominant and least important factors that impact e-government success, which can help the government formulate appropriate strategies to achieve high success.

Although the scope of the study is limited to the government of Abu Dhabi, the research is significant for the other government parties from the Gulf Region and other countries to understand the role of customer experience on the success of e-government. The study results are valuable to the existing literature and open new doors for future studies. Since the study involves a unique mediating variable,

"customer happiness," it can serve as a secondary source of information for future research in similar topics and dimensions. The study adds to the existing literature on e-government portal success and serves as knowledge material for students and other researchers.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

The key terms extensively applied are defined below to enhance understanding and clarity.

TAMM

TAMM is the Abu Dhabi e-government platform coordinating information sharing from various government entities to have a standard website where customers can access public services.

Customer Experience (CX)

Customer experience is the customers' holistic perception of the e-government system and service to the extent it serves their needs and expectations. User experience primarily focuses on the user's interaction with the e-government portal service system, which involves thoughts, feelings, and views about the actual and expected services (Hinderks et al., 2020). In this study, customer experience is divided into three dimensions, namely comfort (CXC), security (CXS), and usability (CXU).

Comfort (CXC)

Comfort is a relaxed feeling from freedom, autonomy, and minimal challenges due to the flexibility of the e-government portal system and services. The construct involves relief, ease, well-being, and greatness due to the enhanced ease of use of e-government portal in accessing services (Arfat et al., 2018).

Security (CXS)

Security is freedom from privacy risks and money loss during transitions in e-government portal. The construct involves data and information protection or any harm or threat to individuals and their precious values after using e-government portal services (Li et al., 2020).

Usability (CXU)

Usability is the ease of accessing and using e-government portal systems and services. A user-friendly e-government website has features that allow use without struggle, including location, cost, graphical user interface, and ease of navigation (Hinderks et al., 2020).

Customer Happiness (CH)

Customer happiness in the context of e-government portal is the 'users' experience resulting from customer satisfaction and perceived quality of life (Arampatzi et al., 2019). The happiness occurs due to contentment from using e-government portal as users achieve their expectations (Lee, 2019).

E-government portal success (E-GS)

E-government portal success is the level of government performance in service delivery through ICT where the system is simple, safe, effective, uninterrupted, and convenient. The definition results from various studies measuring the success of e-government portals in the UAE and other countries, revealing improved productivity in serving the citizens after embracing technology such as smart government (Andry et al., 2019).

1.11 Summary

This chapter formed the study's foundation. The background of the study issue and its key ideas were covered. The chapter then focused on the issue statement and the research objectives, allowing learners to understand the concept and the study's subject. After establishing the research questions, the chapter highlighted the study's hypothesis. The researcher constructed a set of sub-hypotheses tested in later chapters, followed by a conceptual framework discussing the relationship between variables, shown with the figure's help.

Subsequently, the chapter provided the operational definitions of the variables used in the study. Moreover, the chapter also included the significance and contribution of the research. The next chapter of the study is intended to provide a substantial base on which the research is founded and a foundation to discuss significant findings and interpretations.