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Studying the Relationship between the Leadership Styles and the Foundations of E-government

¹Hosein Derakhshan Horeh, ²Dr. Seyed Abdollah Sajjadi Jagharq, ³Dr. Mohsen Ghadami¹Master of Urban Management, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.²PhD in Media Management from Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.³PhD in Public Administration Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

Considering the recent achievements in ICT and the effectiveness of such a technology on different aspects of the life and the appearance of digital era and its inevitable consequent changes in the human life, any incompatibility to these changes will lead to the inefficiency of the organizations. This research aims to find solutions by which the organizations can find the best strategies to cope with the mentioned changes. This research intends to study the leadership styles and the foundations of E-government. Methodology of this research is based on correlative descriptive method. The statistical population of the research includes the managers of different departments of the fifth municipal district of Tehran among which 200 managers were selected as the sample group in simple sampling method as the sample of the research. With regard to the variables of the research, first we conducted statistical analyses using regression and Pearson correlative method for studying the mutual relationship of the subscales in investigating the relationship between the foundations of e-government and the leadership styles. The results were as follow: consultative leadership has a relationship with the foundations of "government to government", "government to business" and "government to employees" at 0.99 confidence level; supportive leadership has a relationship with the foundations of "government to government" and "government to citizens" at 0.99 confidence level; participative leadership has a relationship with the foundations of "government to business", "government to employees" at 0.99 confidence level; and agreement-based leadership has a relationship with the foundations of "government to business", and "government to employees" at 0.99 confidence level. According to these findings we can conclude that our main hypothesis was confirmed, that is, there is a relationship between the leadership styles and the foundations of e-government.

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INTRODUCTION

Considering the recent achievements in ICT and the effectiveness of such a technology on different aspects of the life and the appearance of digital era and its inevitable consequent changes in the human life, any incompatibility to these changes will lead to the inefficiency of the organizations. Electronic marketing, business and government are few samples of such effectiveness. Nowadays, one of the missions of the information and communications era is to fulfill e-government. Although it is a relatively new term, but e-government is rapidly developing. Vinton Cerf, one of the founders of the world web started valuable his strategic plans in 2001 to create an electronic city and founding electronic government instead of the current governments. Electronic government or digital government is the application of the information technology by the government for transferring the data among the people, organizations, markets, and other governmental elements. The easy applicability of the information technology for providing governmental services for the customers directly and the application of IT by the state and other governmental organization in order to change their relationship with the citizens, commercial centers and other bodies that have interaction with the government is the main advantage of using IT for facilitating the governmental issues through providing effective and efficient services and information to the citizens and commercial companies. Electronic government includes the automation and computerization of the traditional procedures that will lead to new methods of leadership, new decision-making strategies, and new ways of doing business, new ways of communication with the citizens, and new organizational solutions and information delivery (Rezaei, 2010). On the other hand, leadership is the ability of influencing a group in order to meet some goals, while this influence

Corresponding Author: Hosein Derakhshan Horeh, Master of Urban Management, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
E-mail: Hoseinderakhshan89@yahoo.com

can have whether an official and organizational source or unofficial one. Leadership is the process of social influence in which the leader looks for volunteer participation of his subordinates in order to meet the organizational goals. In his theory of leadership, Fiedler has divided the leadership into four groups: consultative leadership (strictly believes in hard working, very inattentive to the employees, the employees know the exact expectations of the organization, and the orders are directly imposed from the leader's side); supportive (where the leader pays attention to both the work and the worker), participative (where the leader is attentive to the work while paying attention to the workers. The leader is open to any sort of employees' comments, but the final decision is made by the leader himself), and agreement-based leadership (where the leader does not intervene in the organizational issues at all, and the power is being assigned to the subordinates because it is believed that the employees are qualified enough to do their work and made the due decisions) (Rezvani, 2012). When formulating the strategies of the electronic government, any government can define and specify the territory of the influence of e-government phenomenon. The next step is to formulate the relevant strategy. This strategy is important because it conducts the re-engineering of the processes and procedures to be compatible with the e-government and to support it. Moreover, this strategy specifies the first steps toward e-government. In this research we have used a relevant research-made questionnaire whose reliability and validity has been assessed. This questionnaire is used to collect the needed data for analyzing the relationship between leadership style and the foundations of the electronic government.

Literature review:

What is leadership:

Leadership is something different from the management but any qualified and capable manager has to know how to lead. Leadership defines one of the manager's tasks as follow: the process of influencing others so that they become willing to play a role in meeting the goals of their organization or their group. Leadership is one of the most important aspects of the management. Indeed one of the aspects of all successful managers is that they are an efficient leader. The manager has to do all management tasks to come to the relevant goals by combining its available material and human recourses. Undoubtedly, the manager has a clear role and he has to have full authority (Daft, 2011). Different theorists have different attitudes toward the leadership. Harry Truman defines leadership as "the ability to make the employees do what they don't like and to make the, like it".

John Cutter describes the leader as a person who deals with the changes. He draw a picture of the future path, then considering this view and his own relationship with that view, he coordinate the employees and inspire them to solve any relevant problem (Farahani, 2011).

John Garabou and John Cutter have added another part to their definition of the leadership: any successful manager has to have a healthy relationship and communication with his boss. Such a relationship is based on mutual dependency. Hence the manager has to understand his boss's goals and know sort of things are considered important in his boss's eyes, and then try to pay enough attention to those goals and things. Since the people tend to follow those leaders whose vision can help them meeting their personal goals, thus the managers have to identify the factors that are motivating for the subordinates and to know how these factors can motivate. The more they understand and use this understanding, the more successful such managers are (Behrangi, 2001). On the other hand, Robert House believes that the charismatic leaders have some specific traits such as self-confidence, high verbal expression ability, ability of changing the messages with regard to high expectation. By and large, according to the available researcher, there are six characteristics that distinguish the leaders from non-leader persons: energy and ambition, desire to lead the others, honesty and trust, self-confidence, consciousness, and having relevant knowledge and information.

Foundations of the e-government:

The foundations of the e-government are as follow:

a. Government to citizen: this type of the e-government focuses on the "ability of the government and the citizen to make information communications through the efficient electronic channels". In this regard, the citizen gains more benefits from the governmental communication. As a simple example we can refer to sending electronic postal forms.

b. Government to business: this type of e-government focuses on the "ability of reducing the costs and collecting better information". This dimension allows the government to purchase commodities, pays its bills, and communicates with the business market in more effective economic ways. Moreover, this aspect of the e-government helps the government catch its data needed for analysis in order to come to making the decisions. One of the goals of this type of e-government one can refer to the followings: the ability of adjusting its representatives in a more dynamic way, the increasing electronic abilities for receiving the taxes from the commercial sectors, the establishment and reinforcement of the commercial information relating to the imports and exports, making the commercial acceptance.

c. Government to government: this part of e-government tries to increase the efficiency of delivering the services when the information is going to transfer within the government or between a government and other

governments. This part allows the government to make its communication in more effective way without the traditional barriers. Moreover, this dimension of the e-government can make the crime inspections and security of the country possible. For example of such a dimension one can refer to the inter-governmental cooperation, development of emergency response systems and the communications between the legal administrative authorities.

d. Government to employees: this dimension of the e-government square focuses on the systems of information and services delivery that reside within the e-government system. This dimension aims to fulfill real savings by providing a context for the management of problems and issues in the support chain as well as the information collection. This part allows the government to manage its support chain in a more effective way so that it can catch the minimal prices (Naqshineh, 2007).

The exploitation of e-government facilities can lead to better governmental services for the citizens and make all citizens use and access such services equally, the effective interactions with the involved parties, and the enrichment of the citizens. In sum, e-government can lead to more effective public management. Among the expected results of such a process we can refer to the reduction of official corruption, more transparency, increasing the accountabilities, constant improvement of the processes and procedures, more ease of use, growth of the resources and the reduction of the services. The appearance of the information and communication technologies make servicing the customer closer and the people can receive their needed services even by their personal computers. Moreover, the e-government will lead to the saving the time and money for the government, citizens, and the businesses. Additionally, globalization will force the governments to sell their goods and services and to export their culture in order to introduce themselves to other cultures and civilizations while the establishment of e-government can help the governments in this path (McKean, 2010).

Nowadays, e-government implies the application of the information and communication technologies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency, transparency of the information and the comparability of the information and fiscal exchanges within the government and/or between the government and its associated organization, between the government and the citizens, and between the government and the private sector. E-government is indeed the easy 24/7 application of the information technology for distributing the public services directly to customers. The other dimension of the e-government is the technology used for connecting the citizens to the communicational network of the organizations which provide some user-related services. In nonprofit, private, and public sectors, there are some networks for providing participatory services such as the health care, welfare, properties, economic development, job trainings, and other public investment services. In other words, electronic government is a general term for some concepts like the electronic services, electronic democracy, and above all, the electronic management/ supervision. This application of the information and communication technology (ICT) increases the access to the public services for the users on one hand, and the services that are provided by the government for benefiting the citizens, commercial partners of the government, and public and private sectors on the other hand. Electronic government mechanizes and digitalizes the current paper-based procedures and this digitalization will lead to the acceleration of new management methods. This system fills the gaps between the state authorities, public sectors, and the citizens. Moreover, the mentioned system makes it possible to apply a more effective control mechanism for the government in order to optimize the social, political and economic capitals at the path of the development of the government (Ashtarian, 2008). By and large, electronic government is the process of improvement of working procedures of the governments, sharing the information, and providing services to the internal and external customers by controlling the information technologies in order to change the way of communicating the citizens, commercial centers, and other public sectors (Sabhash, 2002).

A review on the previous studies on leadership and the foundations of e-government:

In his research on the personality model of the leaders, Rich Johnback (2007) concludes that the organizational successfulness is related to the personality traits such as the independence, success, creativity and risk-taking. He found that 59% of the managers have had high success, 71% of them have had a high risk-taking, and 89% of them have had a strong will.

In another research on the role of the educational level and college preparation on the preparation of the managers and leaders of the organization, Wickman (2006) concluded that the persons who have learnt the theoretical foundations and basic components of the management in the universities are very successful in this regard.

In a study on the effective factors on the successfulness of the managers, Turner (2010) found that some important factors such as the family support, society support, public and governmental legislations, and the self-confidence of the managers are completely effective on the level of the managers' successfulness.

Apart from the international researches, there are several relevant Iranian studies which have focused on the subject among which we can refer to the followings:

In his MS dissertation titled "the barriers of the successfulness in the leadership of the organizations", Farajjollahi (2012) introduced the existence of supportive rules and policies of the government, the existence of

secure work conditions, and the access to the needed authorities for the decision making in the organizations as the most important solutions for the managers' successfulness.

Rezaei (2012) studied "the effect of the leadership models of the organizations on the level of the employees' job satisfaction". This research which had been published in the Quarterly of the Iranian Social Sciences University has concluded if the managers have a close relationship to their employees, and if the employees are respected and can decide on their own relevant issues, their motivation will be increased.

In his MS dissertation of the industrial management, Sadouqi (2011) studied "the role of the education and experience of the managers" to conclude that the experienced managers who have being educated in the field of the management of organizations have a better understanding and stronger management and leadership.

In an article published in *Development of the Leadership in Organizations*, Safari (2010) studied "the solutions for developing the authority of the managers and leaders of the organizations". He found that the supportive rules and policies of the organizations play a very important role in the development of the authority of the managers in the organizations.

A review of the national and international researchers show that the level of the successfulness of the managers and their management methods in the organizations is affected by the personality traits and the environmental factors so that if the organizations can identify and select suitable managers and leaders, they can expect a better future for the improvement of the performance of their managers and the performance of their organization.

Methodology:

The statistical population of the research includes all managers of the fifth municipal district of Tehran. The total number of the mentioned managers was 990 persons among which 227 managers were selected as the sample group to be studied. This number was obtained using Cochran formula. Since some of the questionnaires were filled incompletely by the respondents, we decided to choose the questionnaires of 200 subjects in simple sampling method among the statistical population. In terms of its objective, this research is functional, and in terms of its data collection method it is a documentary survey. After collecting the needed information, we designed a questionnaire including 48 items for assessing the proposed variables, and to assess the content or construction validity of the questionnaire, we ask the experts of the field to evaluate our research-made instrument. The questionnaire includes 48 questions in 4 parts each of which focuses on the relationship between a different leadership style and the different foundations of the electronic government including the assessment of the consultative, supportive, participative, and agreement-based leadership styles on one hand and the foundations of the e-government (i.e. government to citizens, government to business, government to government, and government to employees) on the other hand. The evaluation of each question is based on a 5-item Likert scale (including "completely disagree", "disagree", "no idea", "agree" and "completely agree"). These items were scored on a 5-rank scale. Thus the minimal obtained score is equal to 48 and the maximal score will be 240. The methodology of this research is correlative-descriptive, and in order to calculate the relationship between leadership styles and the models of the e-government, and to assess the level of such a relationship we used Pearson's correlation statistic and regression statistic.

Collected data analysis:

Since one of the objectives of this research has been to standardize the mentioned test, to evaluate the validity of the instrument we used correlation coefficient of Cronbach's alpha to that shows the level of internal homogeneity, and to obtain its reliability we used the analysis of the main components of the instrument. Moreover, in order to obtain the factors that underlie the test, we used Scree plot and Varimax rotation. Besides, the following criteria were used for naming the factors:

- a. Factor loading
- b. Experts' opinions

Accordingly, we applied the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy for determining the correlation values. This measure was obtained as 0.843 that is higher than significance level (0.7). This result shows the adequacy of the items for the factor analysis. Considering the Scree plot, the number of extracted factors in this research includes 4 main factors, i.e. consultative leadership, supportive leadership, participative leadership, and agreement-based leadership. In each of these 4 factors, a relationship with the 4 main bases of the electronic government (i.e. government to government, government to business, government to citizens, and government to employees) was going to be studied. The validity of the questionnaire factors were obtained using Cronbach's alpha statistic as follow: in factor 1 (consultative leadership) the factor validity was obtained as 0.802, in factor 2 (supportive leadership) it was obtained as 0.733, in factor 2 (participative leadership) it was 0.789, and in factor 4 (agreement-based leadership) it was obtained as 0.824.

Results of testing the hypotheses:

In order to test the hypotheses of the research and to study the probable relationship between the variables using Pearson's correlation statistic, first we investigated the presuppositions of the possibility of using this statistic. That is, the presupposition of the normal data distribution was assessed. The significance of the normality of data distribution is confirmed at 99% by Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. After confirming the normal distribution of the data, we analyze the hypotheses of the research. In the first hypothesis, the relationship between the consultative leadership model and the four foundations of the e-government was tested. Table 1 shows the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 1: Results of testing the hypothesis 1

Variable	Sample size	Std. Deviation	Mean	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig. level
Consultative Leadership (G2G)	200	5.62079	47.4733	.619**	0.000
Consultative Leadership (G2B)	200	2.73073	16.1133	.326**	0.000
Consultative Leadership (G2C)	200	2.78899	18.0067	.150	0.087
Consultative Leadership (G2E)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.239	0.047
Variable	B	Std. Deviation	Beta	T	Sig. level
Consultative leadership	8.594	.946	-.232	9.081	0.126
Government to government (G2G)	.567	.106	.423	5.353	0.247
Government to employees (G2E)	-.195	.093	-.172	2.100	0.290
Government to business (G2B)	-.276	.090	-.245	3.058	0.143

According to the hypothesis 1 and table 1, we can claim at 99% of confidence level that there is a significant relationship between the consultative leadership and the foundations of the e-government, i.e. government to government, government to employees, and government to business. In order to assess the level of such significance, we use step-by step regression statistic. The equation for predicting the consultative leadership model from the e-government is as follow:

Consultative leadership = 0.567 government to government + 0.195 government to employees + 0.276 government to business

In the second hypothesis, the relationship between the supportive leadership model and the four foundations of the e-government was tested. Table 2 shows the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 2: Results of testing the hypothesis 2

Variable	Sample size	Std. Deviation	Mean	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig. level
Supportive Leadership (G2G)	200	2.78899	18.0067	.218**	0.007
Supportive Leadership (G2B)	200	2.73073	16.1133	.219**	0.124
Supportive Leadership (G2C)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.534**	0.000
Supportive Leadership (G2E)	200	2.78899	18.0067	.299**	0.104
Variable	B	Std. Deviation	Beta	T	Sig. level
Supportive leadership	2.836	.573		4.949	.000
Government to government (G2G)	.562	.068	.587	8.242	.000
Government to employees (G2E)	.127	.066	.137	1.918	.057

According to the hypothesis 2 and table 2, we can claim at 99% of confidence level that there is a significant relationship between the supportive leadership and the foundations of the e-government, i.e. government to government and government to employees. In order to assess the level of such significance, we use step-by step regression statistic. The equation for predicting the supportive leadership model from the e-government is as follow:

Supportive leadership = 0.526 government to government + 0.127 government to employees

In the third hypothesis, the relationship between the participative leadership model and the four foundations of the e-government was tested. Table 3 shows the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 3: Results of testing the hypothesis 3

Variable	Sample size	Std. Deviation	Mean	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Sig. level
Participative Leadership (G2G)	200	2.39234	16.1133	.152	.064
Participative Leadership (G2B)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.155	.058
Participative Leadership (G2C)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.145	.089
Participative Leadership (G2E)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.156	.058
		Std.			Sig.

Variable	B	Deviation	Beta	T	level
Participative leadership	2.348	.689		3.406	0.001
Government to government (G2G)	.036	.052	.037	.682	0.469
Government to employees (G2E)	-.276	.090	-.245	3.058	0.143

According to the hypothesis 3 and table 3, we can claim at 99% of confidence level that there is a significant relationship between the participative leadership and the foundations of the e-government, i.e. government to government and government to employees. In order to assess the level of such significance, we use step-by step regression statistic. The equation for predicting the participative leadership model from the e-government is as follow:

$$\text{Participative leadership} = 0.036 \text{ government to government} + 0.277 \text{ government to employees}$$

In the fourth hypothesis, the relationship between the agreement-based leadership model and the four foundations of the e-government was tested. Table 3 shows the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 4: Results of testing the hypothesis 4

Variable	Sample size	Std. Deviation	Mean	Pearson's coefficient correlation	Sig. level
Agreement-based leadership (G2G)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.155	0.128
Agreement-based Leadership (G2B)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.146	0.024
Agreement-based Leadership (G2C)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.175	0.042
Agreement-based Leadership (G2E)	200	2.72330	14.9200	.149	0.043

Variable	B	Std. Deviation	Beta	T	Sig. level
Agreement-based leadership	7.411	1.346		5.508	0.000
Government to citizens (G2C)	.056	.076	.050	.727	0.468
Government to employees (G2E)	.264	.074	.248	3.576	0.000
Government to business (G2B)	-.011	.083	-.009	-.128	0.898

According to the hypothesis 4 and table 4, we can claim at 99% of confidence level that there is a significant relationship between the agreement-based leadership and the foundations of the e-government, i.e. government to business, government to employees, and government to citizens. In order to assess the level of such significance, we use step-by step regression statistic. The equation for predicting the agreement-based leadership model from the e-government is as follow:

$$\text{Agreement-based leadership} = 0.056 \text{ government to citizens} + 0.264 \text{ government to employees} + 0.011 \text{ government to business}$$

Conclusion and discussion:

This research aimed to study the relationship between the leadership styles and the four foundations of the electronic government. Moreover, an objective of this research was to design a standardized questionnaire to measure the mentioned relationship. In conducting this research, we selected a sample containing 227 managers of the fifth municipal district of Tehran. The sample was selected based on the simple sampling method. Among the returned filled questionnaires, 200 questionnaires were analyzed and the 27 remaining ones were ignored due to their incompleteness. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire containing 48 items based on Likert 5-scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree" and they were scored on a 5-ranked scale/ the content validity of the questionnaire was evaluated by the experts of the field. The validity of the factors of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha that showed 0.802 for consultative leadership, 0.733 for supportive leadership, 0.789 for participative leadership, and 0.824 for the agreement-based leadership. These results confirm the validity of our test and show that we can trust the consequent results and calculations. The four obtained factors totally explained 77.971% of the variance. The interpretation of the variables came to the following results:

Based on the content reliability and the Fiedler theory (1993), the obtained factors were named as follow: factor 1: consultative leadership; factor 2: supportive leadership; factor 3: participative leadership; and factor 4: agreement-based leadership.

In studying the relationship between the consultative leadership and the foundations of the electronic government, we found that the consultative leadership has a significant relationship with the foundations of "government to government", "government to business" and "government to employees" at 99% confidence level.

In studying the relationship between the supportive leadership and the foundations of the electronic government, we found that the supportive leadership has a significant relationship with the foundations of "government to government", and "government to citizens" at 99% confidence level.

In studying the relationship between the participative leadership and the foundations of the electronic government, we found that the participative leadership has a significant relationship with the foundations of "government to business", and "government to employees" at 99% confidence level.

In studying the relationship between the agreement-based leadership and the foundations of the electronic government, we found that the agreement-based leadership has a significant relationship with the foundations of "government to citizens", "government to business" and "government to employees" at 99% confidence level.

The available literature shows that the effective factors on the leadership have been studied on in personal, organizational, network, and environmental fields; and each of the researchers has offered his own model on the basis of these 4 factors (Kate Davis, 1999; Harold Koontz, 1999; Shabbir and Gregorio, 1999; George Terry, 2001; Brush, Hisrich and Lerner, 2005; Orhan and Vadan, 2010; Moller, *et al.* 2009). In this research we have mainly used Terry, Hisrich and Brush's model (2005). This model studies the performance of the managers from 5 theoretical dimensions. The effective factors on the performance of the managers in this research are the personal motivations, social development, network communications, human capital, and environmental effects. Additionally, we considered the index of the annual sales revenue gains, monthly income, and size and development of the jobs as the indexes for evaluating the performance of the managers' business. Moreover, three factors including the economic performance, personal economic performance, and the social performance were identified as the most important factors for the managers (Brush and Hisrich, 2005: 5-10).

Suggestions:

1. To offer a suitable and integral model for implementing the foundations of the electronic government by the leaders and managers;
2. According to the obtained results, the public policies of the government affect the style of the leadership and management of the organizations. So it is to be suggested that the government increases and/or reforms its supportive policies by providing more facilities.
3. According to the obtained results, the leadership style in the organization affects the tendency toward using the foundations of the electronic government. Thus it is to be suggested that the organizations try to reform the attitudes of their managers through the training courses, seminars, etc. to make their attitudes positive toward the usefulness of the electronic government.
4. Although the hypotheses of this research were confirmed but it is natural to expect that the relationship between the leadership style and the foundations of the e-government is affected by different variables. So it seems necessary to study the other effective variables such as the managers' personality traits, social and political barriers against the application of the electronic government, etc.

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