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E-Government and Best Service Delivery Practices in the Palestinian Public Sector

The “Hukumati” (My Government) Platform: A Case Study

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Abstract

This research focuses on the notion of e-governance and addresses the critical role of the "Hukumati" (My Government) platform in the process of promoting better public service delivery in Palestine. It also explains the role of the platform in the fortification of e-governance in the public sector institutions. The main research problem is formulated by the general question: What is the impact of e-Government implementation on the provision of higher quality services in the public sector? Sub-questions include (1) the conceptual underpinnings of e-governance and its implications in the service delivery, (2) the operational role of the Hukumati platform in improving the performance of services, and (3) the predominant challenges that have hindered the diffusion and effectiveness of the Hukumati platform.

Methodologically, the work follows a descriptive - analytical approach and is based on a combination of relevant literature, selected international reports, and semi-structured interviews as the main research information tool.

The results show that platform participation remains low across the governorates, with registrants representing an extremely small percentage of the population. Furthermore, there is a consensus among relevant stakeholders regarding persistent operational, technical, and institutional challenges as the main constraints hindering the success and scalability of the platform.

In view of the results of such studies, the study makes several recommendations that include alignment of the legal and regulatory framework with the imperatives of digital transformation, continuous improvement of digital infrastructure to keep pace with technological developments, and implementation of structured training programs for government employees to reinforce the awareness of citizens and facilitate the adoption of the platforms.

Keywords: E-Government; Hukumati Platform; Public Sector Services.

1.1. Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century was a period of rapid growth in information flows, and a growing dependence on electronic communication, most obviously through the proliferation of the internet, increasing dependence on electronic mail, and growing online service platforms. In reaction to this scientific and technological change - and the concomitant emergence of digital technologies - governments around the world have successively attempted to deploy such technologies in administrative areas, to overcome the traditional administrative models. This trajectory contributed to the emergence of e-governance, a development usually associated with the diffusion of the internet in the mid-1990s, although the antecedents of the application of electronics within government go back several decades. As the internet became widespread, governments were driven forward with the transition from individual electronic applications to more comprehensive e-government systems that allowed information to be transferred online, complex processes to be simplified, and the public to be engaged with electronically (Matai & Ben Shenina, 2019).

Technological advancement has also led to new approaches to public service delivery, amid a shift from traditional public service delivery methods to ones that are technology and information-driven. In this context, the success of governments to achieve their goals lies increasingly in the effective mobilization of technology to benefit their beneficiaries through the most appropriate channels (Hafez, 2021).

Early applications of electronics in Government were largely concerned with internal administrative efficiency practices, but e -government has a much higher degree of citizen - centred focus on service delivery. In Palestine, the electronic system is located as an entrance for national digital transformation using cutting-edge technologies of information security to build a single portal for government services and data. This helps in making public services accessible to citizens - especially in remote communities; this can also increase integrity within the work of the government and improve the productivity of public employees. Such transformation, however, requires improvements in legal frameworks, the establishment of enabling regulatory environments, sufficient infrastructure, and process automation among ministries (Al Awaji, 2022).

1.2. Problem Statement

E-governance is a great product of modern technological development. The technological advancement of communication and sophisticated connectivity aids has motivated governmental agencies to use computers and internet networks to perform their tasks and to deliver their services electronically, thereby addressing the challenges of practical life, such as congestion and long waiting times in government offices. Thus, e-government became a pragmatic solution to the modernization of public service delivery, facilitating a more flexible and effective flow of work and strengthening the communication between the government units and the citizens through the internet-enabled interconnectivity.

Against this background, there is an urgent need to investigate the extent to which the new governmental approach, as manifested through e-governance applications, works to improve the performance of public sector services and the quality of services provided to the Palestinian society. This concern is especially relevant in the context of conditions created by the occupation (such as territorial fragmentation, closures, and recurring incursions). From the point of view of the researcher, e-governance is one of the most feasible tools to overcome these limitations.

1.3. Main Research Question

How will the implementation of e-government affect the delivery of better services in the public sector?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the e-government concept, and what is its role in delivering better public sector services?
2. How does the Hukumati platform work to provide better services for the public sector?
3. What role is played by the Hukumati platform in strengthening E-governance in public sector institutions?
4. What are the biggest issues that have challenged the success of the Hukumati platform?

1.4. Objectives

1. To explain the notion of e-government.
2. To identify the role of the Hukumati platform in providing improved services.
3. To identify the role of the Hukumati platform in strengthening e-governance in public sector institutions.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The current study is significant due to the consideration of e-governments, as this is a topic that has only recently gained importance and is becoming more important, especially considering the comparative dearth of research in this area. It aims at filling the gaps in the e-governance literature with a better definition and identification of the prerequisites for successful implementation of e-governance, as well as setting out the relevance to modern public administration. The study further intends to identify performance indicators and conditions that are essential for effective implementation of e-governance in information-based institutions, so as to contribute in a significant manner to the knowledge base.

Practically, the value of the study is in the results and recommendations that can be useful to the administrative decision-maker in improving performance, making staff more efficient and aware,

and providing better services faster, with less effort and cost. It also plans to assist policymakers in diagnosing obstacles to and addressing shortcomings that hinder effective e- government implementation.

Finally, the study is significant in providing a structured analysis of the contribution of the Hukumati platform in e-governance in an accessible way for employees of the public sector. The topic is especially relevant in Palestine, for the potential of digital platforms to overcome the constraints in accessing services related to the effects of geographic fragmentation and mobility restrictions.

1.6. Study Hypotheses

1. The Hukumati platform makes it easier to access government services.
2. The Hukumati platform bolsters e-governance in the public sector institutions.
3. The Hukumati platform faces some operational challenges that restrict, to some extent, the public benefit.

1.7. Key Terms

E-Government: The use and adoption of modern technology applications in governmental functions and procedures in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, improve control and transparency, and improve citizen participation and effective communication via diverse digital applications (Al-Khasawneh, 2019).

The Palestinian Electronic Government System (Hukumati Platform): A central system that aims to reach Palestinian citizens inside and outside the State of Palestine, allowing them to ask for government services, enquire about the services, and pay the service fees electronically through a special online account (Palestinian Government Services Electronic Portal - Hukumati).

1.8. Methodology

The researcher exerts a descriptive-analytical approach, which entails a systematic review of relevant Arabic and international theoretical and empirical research in combination with an inductive analysis of their important results to obtain evidence-based conclusions. In addition, interviews with decision-makers and relevant actors were developed and the answers received were analyzed in order to produce practical and implementable outcomes.

2. Literature Review

- Matai & Ben Shenina (2019) e-government concept, importance and status in Algeria, strategic vision, information infrastructure, and favorable legislation, information security, and reliability. Using an inductive approach and desk review, they indicated the obstacles, such as weak telecommunication data and low internet diffusion, that suggest awareness-raising and more investment in ICT infrastructure.
- Hafez (2021) examined the influence of e- government to organizational creativity in the Enforcement Court in Jeddah. Using descriptive-analytical method and a 24-item questionnaire (n=169), results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between e-governance application and organizational creativity, and recommend encouragement of employees and advanced training programs.
- Rababa'ah (2018) assessed the impact of E-government programs and their contribution to the performance of health services in hospitals in Irbid. With a 46-item questionnaire using a sample of 331 (doctors, nurses, administrators, patients), results indicated moderate levels of e-governments dimensions and service performance, and recommended awareness, better infrastructure, human capacity, and reducing reliance on paper.
- Malodia et al (2021) proposed an integrated conceptual framework for the future of e-governance based on 168 in-depth interviews with stakeholders in India. Findings emphasized citizen orientation as the most important factor for successful e-government projects, followed by channel orientation and technological orientation, with digital divide, economic growth, and political stability as mediating factors.
- Jamal & Anwar (2021) Determinants of citizen acceptance of e-governments in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq using quantitative methods n number of observations (n) = 256 Results showed that perceived ease of use is positively associated with behavioural intention, and positive attitude towards e-governance is associated with intention to use e-governance, suggesting that an attention should be given to the language of citizens and e-government knowledge.
- Aritonang (2017) stated that e-goverment alone is not enough without financial support, technology maintenance, and a revision of the work culture in bureaucracy to improve the quality of service. The study advised moving away from general e-governance implementation towards e-public services and general administrative reform.
- Sokim et al. (2015) analysed e-governments role in enhancing good governance under global competition in the context of administrative burden, service challenges, and the role of ICT in operational and administrative systems. The study emphasised that the transition from paper-based to electronic models leads to opportunities and challenges, which can create immense quality of life improvement.

The present study is distinguished by the lack of research on the Hukumati platform and the effort to analyze the role of e-governance in improving service practices in the Palestinian public sector using the case of Hukumati. It gives a conceptual explanation adapted to the dimensions of the study and gives an empirically-based account of operational mechanisms and service impacts.

Methodologically, while some of the studies were based on desk review (e.g., Matai & Ben Shenina, 2019), and others used descriptive-analytical (e.g., Hafez, 2021), qualitative interviewing

(Malodia et al., 2021), or quantitative models (Jamal & Anwar, 2021), the present study is a descriptive-analytical work and interview-based.

2.1. Research Gap

Based on the review, one of the gaps in the current research is that previous local, Arab, and international literature had not directly addressed the specific topic of e-Government and the best service delivery practices in the Palestinian public sector using the Hukumati platform as a case study. In particular, previous studies also did not integrate the same independent/dependent variables within similar contextual boundaries.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Digital Transformation

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become fundamental to the work of administrative functions and institutional futures, both in terms of how activities are carried out and services are delivered. This requires the development of competence by managers and employees in digital systems, the value of data and tools enabled by the internet, if the goals of organizational, and more broadly, socio-economic development, are to be achieved. Contemporary ICT is also associated with the applications of artificial intelligence (AI) and smart automation, which, at first, raised concerns about job displacement. The diffusion of smart automation contributed to the fear of exclusion from work by employees (Rizk, 2021).

However, many technology experts claim that smart automation does not remove human roles, but it requires that systems, strategies, and advice be developed for different work activities - thus human expertise is indispensable, particularly in innovation-driven and technology-intensive institutions.

AI also represents a significant opportunity for governmental sectors to upgrade and unlock potential for tools and solutions that can enhance control, efficiency, and responsiveness (Bonnet, 2015). Digitalization efforts gained momentum in the Arab region as a result of pandemic-related restrictions such as lockdown and social distancing. Continued digitalisation is likely to enhance digital transformation and contribute to sustainable development goals, with e-governance initiatives and smart services channels continuing to expand and the ability to work remotely and to continue some public services, especially for those countries that were digitally advanced before the pandemic (Hasan, 2019).

3.2. Concept of E-Government

E-governance is a core concept of the times and is connected to ICT development and its implications for the public sector. Given the nature of social sciences, there is no single and comprehensive definition; rather, definitions are varied with disciplinary orientation. In this study, e-government is defined as the use of technological outputs to enhance the institutional performance, efficiency, and effectiveness in the attainment of institutional goals, which also includes capitalizing on the accumulated knowledge and technological progress to increase access to public services and the mode of delivery (Al-Azab, 2018).

3.3. National Development Plan (2021-2023)

The National Development Plan (2021 - 2023) is a set of 33 public policies that have been identified through coordination and partnerships with the public sector, civil society, and the private sector. It is organized around three main axes and ten national priorities that cover the following areas: gradual disengagement from occupation and state building, ending internal division and achieving unity, strengthening international presence, improving public services, build an effective non-bureaucratic government, economic disengagement and cluster-based development, social justice, quality education, universal health coverage, and social cohesion that enables steadfastness and development (National Development Plan Follow-up Report, 2023).

3.4. Excellence in Serving People

Institution-building efforts over the past decade improved the preparedness of Palestinian institutions to function well. Within this context, in the National Development Plan, "resilient steadfastness, disengagement and cluster-based development towards independence" has been defined as a new phase of administrative and institutional reform. It seeks to transform the relationship between the government and its citizens by enhancing participation and inclusion in decisions that impact their lives, as well as enhancing the mechanisms of how services are provided.

The plan's second axis, Excellence in Serving the Citizen, includes the following priorities and policies:

- Government in the service of the citizen: improving the responsiveness of local authorities, improving the quality of public services, redesigning the land sector, and developing it.
- An effective, non-bureaucratic government: building strong integrity, accountability, transparency, anti-corruption efforts, and making government institutions more efficient and the management of public resources more effective.

3.5. The Hukumati E - Services and E - Payment System

The electronic government services and electronic payment (e-payment) system (Hukumati) were set up according to Decree-Laws No. (11) of 2023 on the electronic government services system. Its objectives include:

1. Governance of the e-services system in the form of administrative, operational, technical, technological, and financial aspects to achieve user satisfaction.
2. Making it possible for citizens to demand services and fees, and services electronically, and get services securely and continuously with quality, efficiency, and transparency of operations.
3. Increasing effectiveness and productivity in institutional work to advance transparency and guarantee the provision of better government services by more effective administration

The system is also designed to establish a better business environment between the government and citizens through improvement in services, interconnecting government departments to facilitate the smooth flow of transactions, and providing secure and streamlined channels of e-payment in line with the technological development in the world, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions.

4. Evidence and Findings from Empirical Studies

4.1. Statistics of interviews and registrations

To enhance the analysis of the impact of e-government on the improvement of public sector services, specific interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders to answer the research questions in the study (concept, platform operations, e-governance role, account creation, information security measures, challenges, and adoption statistics). According to data from the Ministry of Interior as of March 2024, the number of people registering for the hoon exam on the platform Hukumati reached 9,908 (6,835 men and 3,073 women), which corresponds to a 31 per cent female and 69 per cent male participation (interview with the Ministry of Interior Under-secretary, 14 April 2024). The original manuscript has a figure with geographic distribution.

The figure shows that registration is very low in comparison to the Palestinian population, and female registration is much less than male registration. Some areas show extremely low registration - for instance, Qalqilya Directorate with 400 registrants out of an estimated population of approximately 130,000, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics cited in the Arabic text - and similarly low registration areas such as Dura, Jericho, and Yatta.

4.2. Survey findings (n = 74)

For investigating the reasons for low uptake and getting the citizens' point of view, a questionnaire was designed and distributed via simple random sampling in the governorates. The total number of valid responses for completed questionnaires was 74, and the key findings are as follows:

- 45% had used or at least viewed the Hukumati platform; 55% had not used it.
- 74% of platform users said that registration was easy.
- 76.6% of users expressed that the existing services were useful.
- 75.5% of users reported missing/insufficient services on the platform.
- 54% of users said they felt insecure when using the platform.
- 55.5% of users mentioned low trust (lack of reliability).
- 70 % of users said they lacked guidance materials.
- 63% of users experienced difficulty navigating procedures to obtain a service.
- 65 % of the users reported that the need to visit the Ministry of Interior is impeding.
- 81% of the users considered the platform to be a good development, in terms of saving time and effort.
- 70.5% of users revealed that platform services do not fulfil their requirements.

Overall, the researcher concludes that the platform is not yet socially "institutionalized" among citizens: more than half of the sample had not registered or even viewed the platform, and most users consider services insufficient despite acknowledging time/effort savings. Moreover, more than half of users have issues with security and trust. Even though many users find the registration easy and recognize the benefits of services, they still report missing services, insufficient guidance, difficulty with service procedures, and the burden of mandatory in-person verification at the Ministry of Interior.

4.3. Palestine in comparative international context (GEMS-2023)

In reference to the Government Electronic and Mobile Services (GEMS-2023) maturity indicator issued by UN-ESCWA, the Arabic text states that Palestine is still relatively low in the world. On its part, Palestine obtained a 34 in 2023, after gaining 23 in 2022. Comparatively, Jordan has an index of 64 (59 in the year 2022), and the UAE has an index of 92 (83 in the year 2022). Algeria scored 37 in 2023 (19 in 2022). The text concludes that Palestine is relatively at the bottom of the ranking of e-governments when compared with Arab Countries (ESCWA/Arab League context, 2024, as cited in the Arabic manuscript).

4.4. Stakeholder interviews

Ministry of Interior (Electronic Services Department): Account creation is triggered online by inputting the national ID number, creating a new account, and submitting user information. Account activation then requires a visit to the directorate of the governorate's Ministry of

Interior, and receiving a password. Technical procedures include individual passwords and measures relating to securing the user's mobile phone and account information.

Ministry of Telecommunications and Digital Economy (Director-General of E-Government): The objectives of the platform correspond to the objectives of the National Development Plan (2021-2023), which include better citizen services, gradual transition to the digital economy, etc. The platform was aimed to give citizens a consistent service experience with standardised procedures backed by a ministerial committee that agreed to the financial policy on e-payment and a governance document for the Hukumati system.

The Hukumati system is described as a unified system with Single Sign On (SSO) and a unified window for the government institutions to provide services digitally. It consists of four integrated components: (1) SSO, (2) the unified e-services portal (Hukumati), (3) a mobile application (Hukumati), and (4) an e-payment gateway. These elements are interconnected with government systems with the help of the National Data Transporter in order to be able to exchange data in a safe and efficient way.

The platform offers 42 e-services: 22 paid services and 20 inquiry services, offered by 13 governing entities. Payment channels - integrating with credit/debit operators and e-payment companies, such as POS, cash payment options, Palestinian Monetary Authority systems - of licensed methods, including bank accounts and e-walkthrough.

Salfit Governorate (Interior Directorate): Registration is "moderate and perhaps can improve with time". Adoption requires more aggressive media activities via social media and informational leaflets to educate citizens about the use of the platforms and how they can benefit from services that allow them to save time, effort, and cost. Current services do not cover all government services or all steps of a given service. Barriers include limited trust, inequitable access to the Internet, a lack of digital literacy for certain groups of people (particularly older adults), poor connectivity in rural areas, older devices that prevent interoperability, poor promotional efforts, and a lack of citizen guidance materials.

Qalqilya Governorate (Interior Directorate): The uptake is poor; services are poor and focused on documents, i.e., birth certificates and the processes associated with them. Barriers include inadequate laws and systems regulating financial transactions by means of electronic transactions, poor awareness, low culture on the use of e-transactions, poor promotional services, and poor services.

The researcher comments on the overlap between results of the interviews and survey, which have found that there is still limited uptake, low trust in citizens, and governmental intervention is required, particularly concerning awareness campaigns, scaling up services, and employing feedback mechanisms to enhance the platform.

4.5. E -services available on "Hukumati" (translated list)

A translated version of the service list as presented in the manuscript (42 services) is given below:

- Ministry of Transport and Communications: Renewal of driver's license (Paid)
- Ministry of Transport and Communications: Theoretical exam result (Inquiry)
- Ministry of Transport and Communications: Practical driving examination result (Inquiry)
- Ministry of Health: Inquiry regarding Coronavirus (Covid-19) test result (Inquiry)
- Ministry of Health: Reimbursement fees for replacement health insurance (Paid)
- Ministry of Health: Inquiry and payment of health insurance fees (Paid)
- Ministry of Health: Issue of optional individual health insurance (Paid)
- Ministry of Health: Health insurance validity enquiry (Inquiry)
- Ministry of Interior: Inquiry on the status of passport (Inquiry)
- Ministry of Interior: Newborn registration (Paid)
- Ministry of Interior: Issue of birth certificate (Paid)
- Ministry of Interior: Issue of Birth certificate annex (Paid)
- Ministry of Interior: Booking of appointments (Inquiry/Service as defined)

4.6. Challenges and facilitating conditions (synthesis of stakeholders).

One of the key informants, from Experts for Integrated Solutions (Business Analysis & Quality Department), noted issues faced throughout the design, development, and post-launch activities:

1. Digital infrastructure: having a robust network infrastructure and cybersecurity is a prerequisite.
2. Inter-agency coordination: integrated services require effective coordination; many services are still supported by limited, fragmented programs, which do not reflect real end-to-end service flow.
3. Awareness and training: the functioning and maintenance of the platform requires the development of trained teams across institutions, with expertise in policies of e-services, platform technologies, and integration methods.
4. Legacy system heterogeneity: Different institutions using different service systems. Interoperability (required to develop and manage multiple APIs and integration interfaces)
5. Funding and sustainability: continued investment required; change requests may have budgetary repercussions and can be postponed because of financial constraints.

A second group of factors was found to be driving weak citizen registration:

- poor awareness and public education;
- technical barriers and limitations of digital literacy;
- manual activation requirements (in-person visits);
- privacy and security concerns from being linked with civil registry and government databases; and
- persistence of traditional service-seeking behaviours (preference for in-person contact).

4.7. Information security measures (reported)

Some measures that are mentioned to improve security and the trust of the citizens are:

- Encryption and safe communication (e.g., HTTPS).
- Strong authentication, including manual identity verification and two-factor verification using SMS.
- Role-based access control to restrict user permissions to the functions and data that are required.
- Inter-system authentication between platform components with security tokens that change periodically.
- Monitoring and logging (audit trails, system logs, etc.).
- Compliance with PCI{DSS} standards for payment card security.

5. Conclusions and Discussion of Hypothesis

This part explicates the empirical trends revealed by registration statistics, stakeholder interviews, and the citizen questionnaire by a public-administration prism, paying attention to the interaction of the effectiveness of the Hukumati platform abiotic with the following variables: adoption, service design, and institutional capacity.

5.1. Hypothesis 1: Hukumati platform makes it easier to access government services

On the face of it, the design logic behind the platform is consistent with the classic promises of e-governance: transactional convenience, decreased time costs, and increased geographic coverage, at least under circumstances of territorial fragmentation. The evidence points to the fact that this hypothesis is conditionally supported - not because access is absent but because access is uneven and incomplete.

The important subtext is that access in the context of delivering a public service is not so much the presence of a digital portal; rather, it is the product of the three factors of availability (what services are available), usability (how easy it is to navigate), and convertibility (can the citizens actually access the service end-to-end). While others in the market are aware of the platform as a positive development for

saving time and effort, the platform currently functions more like a partial access channel than a fully substitutive service pathway. The need for in-person activation (verification at the Ministry of Interior) acts as a hybrid bottleneck: it enhances the integrity of identities, but reintroduces transaction costs (that digital government is meant to reduce). Essentially, the platform enhances accessibility among given users (those who are nearby, during a given time, and those who are digitally assured) and replicates the obstacles for other users (rural folks, the elderly, and digitally disadvantaged groups). Therefore, H1 is most strongly held where services are complete, guidance is clear, and institutional procedures are geared to "digital-by-default" and not "digital-as-an-add-on."

5.2 Hypothesis 2: The Hukumati platform strengthens the process of e-governance in public sector institutions

The architecture of the platform (single sign-on, integrated portal, e-payment gateway, interagency connectivity) implies the aspiration towards e-governance, not just e-services. In a public administration sense, e-governance implies more than just digitization but instead points to standardization, transparency, auditability, and coordinated inter-organizational action.

The description of governance documents by the stakeholders, the ministry control, and the linkage with the national data transportation mechanisms portend actual progress towards institutionalization. However, this hypothesis relies on the existence of the so-called governance effects at scale: transparency and coordination can only matter when the system is adoption-wide, when transactions are end-to-end, and agencies have interoperable standards. Low rates of participation undermine the benefits of the governance dividend because a small number of users means there is less systemic learning, less pressure for service improvement, and less data on performance.

In short, the platform seems to strengthen e-governance as an institutional capability (systems, standards, integration pathways), but its governance impact is still nascent until such time that uptake increases, and service processes become more fully digitized. H2 is thus partially given support: it is structurally plausible and operationally limited.

5.3 Hypothesis 3: The platform has operational challenges that limit public benefit

This hypothesis is highly supported by evidence. Interview accounts converge around a coherent set of constraints that would fall in the social science of public administration into:

- Institutional constraints (divided accountability, lopsided inter-agency coordination, split-half service ownership)
- Operational constraints (partial digitization of steps of the service, poor guidance materials, complexity of procedures)

- Technical limitations (heterogeneity of the legacy system, interoperability overheads, infrastructure disjunctions)
- Socio cognitive constraints (trust, perceived risk, digital literacy, habituated preference of face-to-face service)

These constraints are not independent, but they constitute a reinforcing loop. For instance, low services and imprecise procedures discourage adoption; low adoption as a measure of performance discourages political and administrative investments in improving services; underinvestment perpetuates service and trust deficits. This is a classic case of a low-equilibrium trap in digital government diffusion.

5.4 Making sense of low participation: adoption is not merely a by-product of awareness.

The constant low participation among the governorates (compared to population size) should be interpreted as a systemic indicator, rather than a lack of behavior. In public administration, adoption is an indicator of the credibility of the service promise of the state: citizens adopt when they expect reliability, procedural fairness, and value.

The uptake seems to be depressed by several features:

1. Trust and security perceptions: the higher the perceived risk by the citizens, the stronger the guarantees demanded.
2. Service sufficiency: in case the platform fails to address the essential needs, citizens will reasonably switch to traditional channels.
3. Procedural friction: mandatory in-person activation and complicated steps lead to "last mile" failure.
4. Digital inequality Digital access, access capabilities, and literacy generate stratified use.

Thus, low registration is more acceptable as a mismatch between the platform's promises and the lived service experience. The citizens are not renouncing the idea of digital government; instead, they are making the rational decision of cost-benefit under uncertainty.

5.5 Literary convergence: scaling demands redesigning of the institutions and not just technology.

The combination of interview and literature review synthesis of the study focuses on a critical insight: the scaling up of an e-governance platform is not an ICT project but a public management reform project. Reform is possible with the help of technology; however, it cannot replace:

- Process reengineering (simplifying steps, making requirements clear & eliminating redundant approvals),
- Service completeness (end-to-end digitization of services), and
- Organizational alignment (clear accountability for the outcomes of services across agencies).

This is consistent with the overall results of e-governance research: Citizen orientation and channel usability are important, but continuous success requires institutional capacity: budgets, skills, governance frameworks, and feedback loops of performance.

5.6 Training - continuous development - capacity is the binding constraint.

There is a consensus among all stakeholders about the need for ongoing staff training and ongoing platform development. In practice, training should be conceptualized as capability - building on three layers:

1. Frontline capability: staff who are the face of the organization and help citizens through the verification process and answer questions.
2. Managerial capability: process owners, redesigning of services, monitoring of performance, and coordination of agencies.
3. Technical capability: teams that ensure interoperability, cybersecurity, and improvements in user experience.

Ongoing evolution is also not a negotiable option since the digital trust is easily lost: errors in usability, ambiguous workflow, or inconsistent data practices can very easily undermine trust. Hence, training and iterative development are not supplementary suggestions, but the platform's main governance infrastructure.

6. Conclusion

The evidence shows the Hukumati platform is yet to enter the level where a national e -government initiative can create system - wide public value. Registration continues to be significantly low across the governorates in proportion to their population, which means that the benefits of the platform - efficiency gains, transaction cost reduction, and better experience for citizens - are distributed unevenly and are only realized in pockets. Put simply, in public administration terms, low participation is not just a communication deficit; it is an institutional signifier that citizens are not yet sufficiently convinced that the platform is a reliable, complete, low-friction service in comparison to traditional services. In this context, adoption cannot be discussed outside of trust in the provision of the state: when citizens are willing to trust the state in its service, they can choose digital government as long as it is predictable, procedurally clear, and payoff-meaningful.

Stakeholder interviews offer an additional and more similar diagnosis: the limited performance of the platform is not more an institutional and operational readiness issue than a matter of technological ambition. The most enduring barriers seem to lie at the border between digital design and administrative

reality, the biases of partial digitization of service lifecycle, uneven cross-agency coordination, unequal ownership of end-to-end service results, and procedural bottlenecks, e.g., in-person activation requirements. Such features create a hybrid environment of services where the platform is an additional channel rather than a genuinely substitutive channel. Because of this, the platform can claim to be convenient at the entry point and fail to be convenient at the so-called last mile, where citizens have to face vague instructions, non-linear procedures, or an element of continued reliance on face-to-face verification and paperwork. Such a disconnection between the digital front-end and administrative back-end develops into a structural block to scaling.

At the same time, the study suggests, the contribution of the platform to e-governance is real but still in an early stage of institutionalization. The architecture of single sign-on, service integration, and e-payment mechanisms announces a shift towards standardization, traceability, and coordinated service provisioning; all core characteristics of e-governance, and not the digitization of it. Nonetheless, the governance dividend of this type of system is intrinsically scale-based: as the usage increases, data is compounded, and institutions start intending to use digital workflows as their regular administrative infrastructure, transparency, auditability, and performance learning compound. The promise of governance of the platform is structurally plausible but poorly realized empirically, with a low uptake and incomplete coverage of the service.

As it all comes down, the analysis ends with a definite conclusion: scaling Hukumati is essentially a public management reform initiative, and not an ICT rollout. The institutional capacity that is binding is institutional capacity process reengineering, interoperability governance between agencies, user-centered service redesign, and sustained human capital development. Training is therefore not a marginal recommendation but the operational backbone of the diffusion: the frontline staff must be equipped so that they are able to guide citizens, for managers to be able to redesign and monitor the service processes, and for technical teams to work continuously on strengthening cybersecurity, usability, and integration. If these capacities are consolidated and paired up with constant development of the platforms, Hukumati can leap from a limited digital interface into one integrated public service system that can improve access, strengthen governance, and provide measurable improvements in service quality across the Palestinian public sector.

6.1. Recommendations

1. Align and update the legal regulations to digital transformation requirements.
2. Recommend to the Ministry of Telecommunications and Digital Economy the constant upgrade of digital infrastructure to cope with rapid technological change.
3. Develop training programs for government employees on ways to enhance their ability to educate citizens to use platforms.
4. Recruit and retain technical talent within the government to assist in the further development of the e-government system.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interviewees (as listed)

Name	Position	Date
Mr. Yousef Harb	Undersecretary, Ministry of Interior	14/04/2024
Mr. Malek Shahadeh	Director, Electronic Services Dept., Ministry of Interior	05/03/2024
Mr. Mustafa Salameh	Chairman, Experts for Integrated Solutions	04/04/2024
Mr. Tareq Selaous	Director, Business Analysis & Quality Dept., Experts	04/04/2024
Mr. Fadi Marjaneh	Director-General of E-Government, Ministry of Telecommunications & Digital Economy	28/03/2024
Mr. Saeed Sa'sa'	Director-General, Interior Directorate (Qalqilya)	25/09/2024
Ms. Tahani Qalalweh	Director-General, Interior Directorate (Salfit)	25/09/2024

Appendix 2. Opinion Questionnaire (introductory text)

“Opinion Questionnaire”

Dear citizen

Greetings

This correspondence is to inform you that the researcher is conducting a study entitled E-Government and Best Service Delivery Practices in the Palestinian Public Sector: The Hukumati Platform as a Case Study. In order to achieve the goals of the study, the researcher would like to respectfully request that you answer the following questions with maximum thoroughness and accuracy. All information provided will be used only for academic purposes and will be strictly confidential. You are not expected to provide your name.

Thank you for your cooperation

Section 1: General information (Please check off the appropriate option, ✓ or by making a check mark.)

Section 2: Questionnaire items (Please answer the statements below.)

If your answer is "Yes," please go ahead and answer the following statements below.

Thank you for your cooperation.