

e-Government Towards Organizational Performance of Malaysia Local Authority: Mediating Effect Information Technology (IT) Capability

Rohana Husin^{1*}, Abdul Aziz Othman², Zakirah Othman³, Hanita Kadir Shahar⁴, Norashikin Baharom⁵

¹ Faculty of Business, Management and Information Technology, Universiti Muhammadiyah Malaysia, 02100 Padang Besar, Perlis, MALAYSIA

^{2,3} School of Technology Management and Logistics, College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, MALAYSIA

⁴ School of Economics, Finance and Banking, College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, MALAYSIA

⁵ Islamic Business School, College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, MALAYSIA

*Corresponding Author: rohanahusin@umam.edu.my
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Abstract

This study proposes electronic government (e-Government) conceptual model to determine the effect of e-Government toward local government performance while investigating the mediating roles of organizational IT capability. By examining the gaps from the prior research, this study intends to answer question about the association among electronic Government, organizational IT capability and organizational performance. The theory of Resources Based View (RBV) is used as a guiding theory to support the proposed conceptual framework. The model was tested using valid and reliable data gathered from a sample of 87 survey forms out of 149 survey forms was passed out to Local Authority in Malaysia. This study uses partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to test and validate the research model and proposed hypotheses. Finding indicates that the organizational performance is not significantly influenced by e-Government. More importantly, the analysis revealed that IT capability plays a mediating role between variable e-Government and outcome variable organisation performance. It is anticipated that the results of this study will expand the body of knowledge in government studies.

1. Introduction

In recent years, e-Government has become a critical component of public-sector transformation, as digital government platforms enable agencies to deliver services and information more efficiently to citizens and users. e-Government extends beyond internal administrative processes to include external applications that support a wide range of governmental operations and functions (Moon et al., 2014; Alkhwaldah et al., 2024). Driven by rapid Internet development and the pervasive use of information and communication technology (ICT), governments worldwide have intensified efforts to improve public service accessibility, responsiveness, and overall quality of life (Dias, 2020). As a result, many developed and emerging countries leverage e-government

platforms to strengthen citizen engagement (Tegethoff et al., 2019) and enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Cordella & Paletti, 2018).

Despite this growing global emphasis, research and practice continue to face a persistent challenge: e-Government initiatives do not consistently translate into improved government effectiveness. While studies commonly discuss broad barriers such as infrastructure limitations, social readiness, and cultural factors—particularly in developing contexts (Aleisa, 2024; Tiika et al., 2024)—the mechanisms through which e-Government contributes (or fails to contribute) to local government effectiveness remain under-examined and are often reported in a fragmented manner. This gap is especially relevant in Malaysia's local government context, where service delivery outcomes are expected to improve through digital initiatives, yet implementation constraints and uneven organizational readiness may limit performance gains. In other words, existing literature frequently highlights general implementation challenges, but offers less empirical clarity on how e-Government adoption translates into measurable effectiveness at the local authority level, and under what organizational conditions these benefits are realized.

Another key limitation in prior studies is the tendency to treat e-Government implementation as a standalone driver of performance, without sufficiently accounting for internal enabling capabilities. Although many definitions of e-Government have been proposed (Husin et al., 2017; Husin et al., 2018), there is no universally agreed definition (Lu & Nguyen, 2016; Yildiz, 2007; Husin et al., 2018). In this study, e-Government is defined as the use of digital information technology to support service transactions, management, and commerce. Importantly, public sector reforms increasingly stress performance-oriented management, strategic flexibility, knowledge management, and faster service delivery (Ndou, 2004), which aligns with the broader goals of transparency, efficiency, and accessibility (Aleisa, 2024; Tiika et al., 2024). However, these outcomes are unlikely to be achieved without adequate organizational IT capability, which may explain why e-Government initiatives sometimes underperform or fail.

To address these gaps, this study focuses on Malaysia's local government setting and examines not only whether e-Government improves local government effectiveness, but also how organizational IT capability shapes this relationship. The research objectives are as follows:

- To examine the relationship between e-Government implementation and local government effectiveness in Malaysia.
- To assess the effect of organizational IT capability on local government effectiveness.
- To test the mediating role of organizational IT capability in the relationship between e-Government implementation and local government effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 e-Government

The development of e-Government typically progresses through several phases, as outlined in prior research. This growth is generally divided into four key stages: the first is the *informative* or *catalog* phase, characterized by one-way communication; the second is the *interactive* phase, involving two-way communication; the third is the *transactional* phase; and the fourth is the *integrative* phase (Fan & Yang, 2015; Gorla & Chiravuri, 2016; Oh, 2013a). Based on the e-Government maturity model, the third and fourth phases are stages of progress (Layne & Lee, 2001). Mature e-Government requires two-way interactive services required strong institutional frameworks, digital infrastructure and public engagement (United Nations, 2022). However, previous research found that the integration phase is a challenging phase for the entire government administration because most government departments still work in silos and separate from each other (Paramashivaiah & Suresh, 2016). Given the limited in-person interactions, it is essential to find a new approach to understanding employees' needs and demands in order to determine how to motivate them in performing for better at their workplace (Okanga & Davis Adesegha, 2025).

As e-Government continues to spread globally, numerous studies have explored its design, implementation, and growth (Husin et al., 2024; Moon et al., 2014). These systems, which leverage digital technologies to improve government processes, have been implemented at the federal, state, and local levels. While much of the research focuses on national and state-level practices, there is a growing recognition that the local government sector remains underexplored (Gartika & Widiyanto, 2024). The need for e-Government at the local level is particularly pressing, as local governments are closest to citizens and thus play a critical role in delivering services and fostering public engagement (Gartika & Widiyanto, 2024). With regard to Malaysia, local authority is increasingly expected to utilize digital tools to improve service delivery, enhance public participation, and address issues of transparency and efficiency (Husin et al., 2024).

However, research on the implementation and outcomes of e-Government initiatives at the local level in Malaysia remains limited, with most studies focusing on federal or state-level systems (Husin et al., 2024; Lim et al., 2020). This gap is particularly concerning given that local governments are directly involved in the day-to-day

lives of citizens and must adapt e-Government solutions to meet local needs and challenges. To address this research gaps, this study used a quantitative research technique to analyze the impact of e-Government on organizational performance of local authority. The study seeks to identify key factors that affect outcomes, with a particular focus on collecting data to describe people, events, or situations.

2.2 e-Government and Organizational Performance

The literature indicates a relationship between e-Government and public sector performance particularly in terms of process and administrative efficiency, increased productivity, and cost reduction (Hameed & Al-Shawabkha, 2013; Mungai, 2017; Kareem & Haseeni, 2015). However, the implementation of e-Government varies across public sector organizations, as it is influenced by factors such as financial resources, technology maintenance, organizational culture (behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, practices, thinking and etiquettes) and technical challenges (Okanga & Davis Adesegha, 2025; Ibrahim & Benabdelhadi, 2022). Such factors influence the implementation of e-Government, leading to uneven development and usage across different public sector organizations (Zheng et al., 2013). This imbalance can hinder the successful attainment of the primary objectives of e-Government implementation (Aritonang, 2017). In response to these concerns, the present study aims to re-examine the established association focusing on the specific context of local government. Consequently, the hypothesis below is put forward:

H1: There is a significant relationship between e-Government and organizational performance

2.3 Organizational IT Capability

Organizational capability refers to an organization's ability to acquire, integrate, and deploy resources effectively to achieve desired outcomes. Such capabilities are closely linked to organizational performance and are often difficult to imitate, making them a key source of sustained advantage (Danook & Omar-F, 2024). In the public sector, the strategic deployment of information technology (IT) is increasingly essential for long-term effectiveness, service improvement, and institutional sustainability.

In this study, organizational IT capability is conceptualized as a higher-order capability that reflects how effectively an organization mobilizes IT-related resources to support operations and strategic goals. Consistent with prior literature, organizational IT capability comprises three complementary dimensions: (1) technical IT infrastructure (e.g., functionality, connectivity), (2) human IT infrastructure (e.g., technical and managerial expertise), and (3) intangible IT-enabled capabilities (e.g., knowledge management, user orientation, and synergy among government, citizens, and businesses) (Dahiya & Mathew, 2016).

From the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), these IT capabilities represent valuable organizational resources that can strengthen performance when they are effectively developed and utilized. Accordingly, this study positions organizational IT capability as a mediating mechanism through which e-Government initiatives can translate into improved organizational outcomes and effectiveness.

Given that e-Government implementation relies not only on system availability but also on an organization's readiness to deploy and sustain digital resources, it is important to examine how e-Government relates to the organization's IT capability—particularly in terms of whether stronger capability enables better implementation and, conversely, whether digital initiatives strengthen capability over time.

2.4 e-Government and Organizational IT Capability

Prior studies indicate that organizational IT capability plays a central role in shaping the success of e-Government initiatives. Research across public and private sectors consistently shows that organizations with stronger IT capability tend to implement and sustain e-Government systems more effectively (Alshaher, 2021; Dahiya & Mathew, 2018). Alshaher (2021) emphasizes that strategic support, adequate infrastructure, and continuous training enhance an organization's ability to utilize IT effectively, thereby supporting the continuity and performance of e-Government systems.

In addition, the relationship can be mutually reinforcing. As e-Government systems expand and mature, organizations often develop improved digital routines, coordination practices, and data-driven decision-making, which can further strengthen their IT capability (Dahiya & Mathew, 2016; Gupta & Jana, 2003). Therefore, this study examines the relationship between e-Government implementation and organizational IT capability through the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant relationship between e-Government and organizational IT capability.

2.5 Organizational IT Capability and Organizational Performance

Organizational IT capabilities are positively related to organizational performance. Organizations with strong IT capabilities are more likely to realize various benefits and improvements in cost-efficiency and performance (Bharadwaj, 2000). According to Aral and Weill (2007), the organization's IT capability further strengthens the impact on performance as well as further expanding the goals of an organization. An organization enhances its IT capabilities by investing in IT efficiency, and with each investment, it gains additional value that further boosts overall performance (Yoshikuni et al., 2022; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024; Mehmood et al., 2023; Aral & Weill 2007; Tippins & Sohi; 2003). Bhandari et al., (2022) explain that a strategic blend of IT resources, when paired with the efficient use of other resources, can enhance various aspects of organizational performance. Guided by this theoretical foundation, the current study proposes the following hypothesis to examine the relationship:

H3: There is a significant relationship between organizational IT capabilities and organizational performance

2.6 The Role of Organizational IT Capability as a Mediating Variable

This study investigates the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance, introducing the organization's IT capability as a mediating variable to explore the nature and extent of the existing relationship. Previous research has demonstrated that the adoption of e-Government positively and significantly impacts the performance of the public sector (Hameed & Al-Shawabkha, 2013 Mungai, 2017) particularly at the local government level (Oh, 2013b). This positive impact is reflected in areas such as cost efficiency, process effectiveness, administrative costs, employee productivity, procurement efficiency, and a reduction in departmental expenses (Mungai, 2017; Moon et al., 2014b). However, the past studies also prove that e-government has a different influence on an organization. This difference is due to different levels of acceptance and level of technology usage (Aritonang, 2017). These disparities suggest that the benefits of e-Government are not uniformly experienced and may depend on additional organizational factors. Given these dynamic and building on existing studies that have established link between e-Government and IT capability, as well as IT capability and organizational performance, that mean this study investigates whether the mediator variable (organizational IT capability) mediates the association between independent and dependent variable in the context of Malaysia Local Authority. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H4: Organizational IT capability mediate the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance.

Figure 1 conceptually depicts the relationship between e-Government, organizational IT capability, and organizational performance. In this model, e-Government is the independent variable, organizational IT capability serve as the mediating variable, and organizational performance is the dependent variable. This conceptual framework is supported by the resource-based view (RBV) theory.

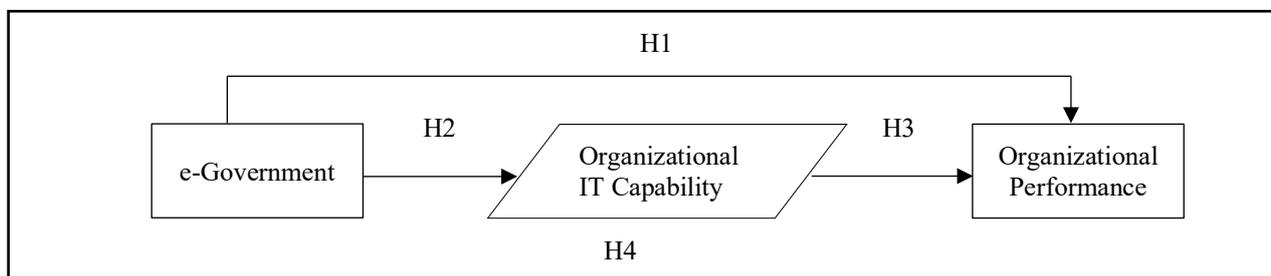


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of the study

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of e-Government on organizational performance and to test the hypothesized relationships in the proposed conceptual framework. Specifically, the study investigates: (i) the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance, (ii) the relationship between e-Government and organizational IT capability, and (iii) the relationship between organizational IT capability and organizational performance.

3.1 Population, Sampling Frame, and Respondents

The population of this study comprises Malaysian Local Authorities. The primary respondents were IT managers and senior-level officers, as these individuals are directly involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of e-Government initiatives and are therefore most suitable to evaluate both technological capability and performance outcomes.

Sampling and selection of authorities. A total of 149 local authorities were selected based on a purposive sampling strategy. This approach was used to ensure that the participating authorities met the study's criteria—namely, (i) having formal administrative structures for service delivery and ICT operations, and (ii) being actively involved in or exposed to e-Government or digital service initiatives. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study required informed respondents and organizations with relevant implementation experience, rather than general public sector agencies with limited digital engagement. Thus, the selection was not purely random; it was guided by the need to obtain data from organizations that could provide valid and meaningful responses regarding the constructs studied.

3.2 Survey Instrument and Measurement

The survey instrument was structured into four sections and intentionally kept concise and focused to support a higher response rate. All constructs in the research model were measured using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) to encourage clearer directional responses and reduce neutral answering. Measurement items were adapted from established prior studies to ensure content relevance and theoretical alignment. The instrument underwent refinement through pre-testing and expert feedback to improve clarity and contextual suitability for the Malaysian local government setting.

3.3 Q-sort Procedure

To strengthen instrument validity and improve item placement, a Q-sort procedure was conducted before full-scale distribution. In this procedure, a small group of informed participants (e.g., academics and practitioners familiar with e-Government and IT management) were asked to sort the questionnaire items into their intended construct categories (e.g., e-Government, organizational IT capability, organizational performance) based on item meaning. Items that were frequently misclassified or perceived as ambiguous were revised, reworded, or relocated to ensure that each item clearly represented the construct it was intended to measure. This step helped improve content validity and construct clarity prior to the main survey administration.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Following the instrument refinement process, 149 questionnaires were distributed to the selected local authorities across Malaysia. A total of 87 responses were deemed usable for further analysis after screening for completeness and consistency. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is appropriate for hypothesis testing in predictive models and for examining relationships among latent variables in the conceptual framework.

4. Findings

This section presents the results of the data analysis, focusing on the relationships and hypotheses that were previously discussed.

4.1 e-Government and Organizational Performance

Table 1 shows the direct relationship between e-Government and organizational performance as hypothesis, along with path coefficient (β), t-value and p-value. The results suggest that the hypothesized relationship (H1) is not supported, with $\beta = 0.075$, $t = 0.532$, and $p = 0.595$. This indicates that the implementation of e-Government does not have a significant impact on the organizational performance of local government.

Table 1 Hypothesis testing result (1)- direct effect of e-government on organizational performance

Relationship	Coefficient (β)	Standard Devision	t - value	p- value	Result
e-Government -> Organizational Performance	0.075	0.141	0.532	0.595	Not Significant

These findings differ from those of studies by Yang et al. (2007), Mungai (2017), and Hameed et al. (2013), which found a significant positive relationship between e-Government applications and organizational performance. The discrepancies observed in the present study may be attributed to challenges encountered during the implementation process in Malaysia local government context. While federal initiatives such as the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and the MyDigital Blueprint have aimed to enhance digital governance (Husin et al., 2024). Local authorities often face distinct hurdles. These include limited budget allocations for ICT development, a lack of technical expertise, and insufficient training for local government staff (Siddiquee, 2008). Moreover, many local councils operate in silos, leading to poor system integration and data-sharing inefficiencies (Lim et al., 2020). Resistance to change among staff and a lack of citizen engagement in digital services further hinder adoption. Collectively, these issues undermine the effective implementation of e-Government applications, potentially accounting for the limited improvements in local government organizational performance observed in this study.

4.2 e-Government and Organizational IT Capability

Table 2 shows the hypothesized direct relationship between e-government and organizational IT capabilities is significant with a value of $\beta = 0.762$, $t = 16.224$ and $p = 0.000$. Therefore hypothesis (H2) is supported.

Table 2 Hypothesis testing result (2) - relationship between e-government and organizational IT capabilities

Relationship	Coefficient (β)	Standard Devision	t - value	p- value	Result
e-Government -> Organizational IT Capability	0.762	0.047	16.224	0.000***	Significant

***significant at the level $p > 0.01$

The findings of this study align with the results of the study by Gupta and Jana (2003). Viewed from a different perspective, specifically in the business sector, this finding is consistent with a study by Badri and Alshare (2008) and Thompson et al., (2005) which found that e-Government has a significant relationship with an organizational IT capability. This result also suggests that e-Government initiatives act as a catalyst for building IT capability within local authorities. Practically, implementing e-Government typically requires councils to improve infrastructure, establish more formal IT governance, strengthen data management practices, and enhance staff competency through training and exposure to digital systems. In other words, even if e-Government does not immediately improve performance outcomes, it can still strengthen internal IT capability, which is an important foundation for future improvements.

4.3 Organizational IT Capability and Organizational Performance

Table 3 shows the hypothesized direct relationship organizational IT capabilities and organizational performance is significant with a value of $\beta = 0.304$, $t = 2.238$ and $p = 0.025$. Therefore hypothesis (H2) is supported.

Table 3 Hypothesis testing result (3) - relationship between organizational IT capabilities and organizational performance

Relationship	Coefficient (β)	Standard Devision	t - value	p- value	Result
Organizational IT Capability->Organizational Performance	0.304	0.136	2.238	0.025**	Significant

**significant at the level $p < 0.05$

The PLS structural model results empirically confirmed a significant association between the variables. According to the definition by Barney (1991) capability is a resource that enables the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV theory posits that IT is a form of organizational capability that can be transformed into a valuable, rare, and inimitable asset, enhancing competitiveness. The findings of this study also reinforce the statement by Tippins and Sohi (2003) that IT capabilities enhance organizational performance by lowering long-term costs.

4.4 The Mediating Effect of Organizational IT Capability

The mediation effect refers to the degree to which a variable influences the relationship (cause-and-effect relationship) between exogenous and endogenous constructs in the PLS path model (Hair et al., 2014). As recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008) testing the mediation effect through indirect effect bootstrapping is highly effective, and PLS-SEM is more suitable for this purpose. Hence, this method is employed to investigate the mediating role of organizational IT capability in the relationship between e-government and organizational performance. Table 4 shows the hypothesized mediation relationship is significant where a value of $\beta = 0.232$, $t = 2.149$ and $p = 0.032$. Therefore, the hypothesis (H4), which posits the mediating effect of organizational IT capability on the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance, is supported.

Table 4 Hypothesis testing result (4)

Relationship	Coefficient (β)	Standard Devision	t - value	p- value	Result
e-Government -> Organizational IT Capability -> Organizational Performance	0.232	0.108	2.149	0.032**	Significant

**significant at the level $p < 0.05$

The mediating effect of IT capability has been confirmed, this mediation effect is characterized as a full mediation. This study has empirically demonstrated that the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance is not direct; instead, there are other factors that mediate this relationship. Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that IT capability is an important requirement for the effectiveness of e-Government (Dahiya & Mathew, 2016) in order to improve the performance of an organization.

For policy and practice, the findings suggest that investments should not focus only on digital platforms. Greater emphasis is needed on capability-building initiatives such as continuous training, shared services and interoperability, internal change management, and strengthening IT governance, so that e-Government implementation can translate into measurable improvements in local authority performance.

5. Conclusion

For a nation's economy to function and expand, the public sector plays a crucial role. Unlike the private sector, its primary mandate is not profit generation but the delivery of high-quality services that meet community needs. Enhancing service performance therefore remains a central priority, and the adoption of e-Government is a strategic move to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery. Nevertheless, realizing the government's digital vision requires overcoming multiple obstacles, particularly those related to infrastructure readiness as well as social and cultural factors.

This study confirms significant relationships among the variables and supports the proposed hypotheses. Importantly, the findings show that organizational IT capability fully mediates the relationship between e-Government and organizational performance, indicating that e-Government initiatives do not automatically translate into performance gains unless local authorities possess sufficient IT capability. This underscores the critical importance of strengthening IT capability especially within local councils in developing countries such as Malaysia, so that digital initiatives can be effectively implemented, sustained, and operationalized.

The results suggest that local councils must prioritize building organizational IT capability (e.g., infrastructure reliability, skilled IT personnel, system integration, and user support) as a core investment alongside e-Government platforms. In practice, e-Government benefits are most likely to be realized when councils pair digital service rollouts with continuous capability development, including training, governance, and long-term maintenance planning. Unlocking the full value of e-Government therefore requires not only adoption, but also strong internal capability that enables digital systems to improve service processes and performance outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: Rohana, H and Abdul Aziz, O took the lead in **writing the manuscript**; Zakirah, O and Hanita, K, S. contributed to **Planned the experiment and interpreting the result**.

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