

Factors Influencing E-Government Adoption in Sri Lanka: A Concept Paper for Developing a Conceptual Framework

Ayesha Godagama¹; Dr. Ali Khatibi²;
Dr. S. M. Ferdous Azam³; Dr. Forbis Ahamed⁴

¹ Chief Research Officer, Parliamentary Research Division, Parliament of Sri Lanka
^{2,3,4} Prof., Graduate School of Management, Management and Science University, Malaysia

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Abstract: This study aims to present a comprehensive conceptual framework to examine the factors affecting behavioral intention (BI) to use e-government services towards e-government adoption in the Sri Lankan context. After reviewing previous literature, a model is proposed for e-government adoption in Sri Lanka which includes five factors: Perceived Behavioral Control (Self-efficacy and Facilitating Conditions), Attitude, Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, and Trust in Government. According to the framework, Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) (Self-efficacy and Facilitating Conditions), Attitude (AT), Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Trust in Government (TG) have direct impact on behavioural intention (BI) to use e-government services. Further, Behavioural Intention (BI) use e-government services has indirect impact to e-government adoption.

Keywords: E-Government Adoption, Digital Government, Behavioural Intention, Perceived Behavioral Control, Self-Efficacy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation to modernize the public sector has been underway since the 1980s. However, with the rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in recent times, public sector modernization has gained even greater momentum [1]. As a result of the transformation of the public sector with globalization, in 2001, the United Nations endorsed the concept of e-Government by member states. According to the United Nations, e-Government can be considered as online government, which provides citizens, businesses, and government with information and services electronically [2].

E-government initiatives directly benefit citizens, government, business, employees by providing better and more convenient and more efficient public services. With the provision of these ICT-enabled public services, traditional administrative systems have undergone transformational change [3]. Furthermore, implementation of e-government goes beyond traditional service delivery by providing greater service delivery, connect people more closely and reduce traditional bureaucracy [4].

Empirical evidence reveals that the benefits of e-government cannot be completely realized without the successful adoption of e-government initiatives [5]. However, the phases of e-government adoption remain uneven between developed and developing countries. In particular, developing countries continue to lag behind developed countries in adopting e-government initiatives. For instance, Denmark provides practical insights into modern e-government systems as a leading example among developed countries [6].

Furthermore, countries such as Estonia and Australia have successfully implemented multiple e-government initiatives that assist citizens to interact with the public sector through online platforms [7]. Totonchi et al. [8] note that while countries such as Estonia, Singapore, and South Korea have developed most advanced e-government systems that offer citizens high quality online access to a variety of public services, in contrast, developing countries continue to face challenges in implementing e-government initiatives, due to inadequate technological infrastructure, low level of digital literacy, and insufficient financial resources.

Sri Lanka is a developing country located in the South Asian region. The country has been implementing e-government programs since the early 2000s [9]. With the gradual development of information technology and the support of the World Bank, attention was targeted toward the use of ICT for the delivery of public services and information [10]. Accordingly, the first official project related to e-government is the e-Sri Lanka Project, commenced in 2001 [11]. Since then, the Government of Sri Lanka has introduced a variety of e-government services by allocating financial resources to implement e-government related projects and by establishing multiple online platforms and services across national, provincial and local government institutions in the country.

However, government reports and previous studies indicate that the utilization of digital government services in Sri Lanka continues unsatisfactory. According to the utilization report published by ICTA [12], less than three percent of the population has accessed several government online platforms. Likewise, Withanage et al. [13] state that citizen usage of e-services has not been effectively realized within the Sri Lankan context. This situation is further reflected in Sri Lanka's performance in the global e-Government Development Index (EGDI), where both the EGDI and e-Participation Index rankings have shown a declining trend from 2020 to 2024 [14][15].

Empirical findings show that limited scholarly attention has been given to studying e-government adoption within the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, to address this research gap, there is a need for comprehensive conceptual framework to study on e-government adoption in Sri Lanka.

Research on e-government adoption in other countries has empirically confirmed that citizens' use of e-services is critical to the successful implementation of e-government initiatives [16]. Specifically, researchers have found that citizens' behavioral intentions influence their actual usage behavior or adoption behavior through a combination of psychological, external, and cognitive factors [17].

The existing literature has theoretically and empirically recognized various factors that affect e-government adoption and acceptance. Tremblay-Cantin et al. [18] categorized these influencing factors into nine groups: citizens' internal factors, risk and security factors, sociodemographic factors, social factors, perceived benefits, user adoption factors, citizens' trust, and government-related factors. However, when reviewing the existing body of research, it is clear that limited attention has been assumed to internal and social factors, particularly within the Sri Lankan context.

Among these factors, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and self-efficacy are mainly associated with psychological (internal) factors, which have recently received increasing scholarly attention. However, these factors have not yet been empirically observed within the context of e-government adoption in Sri Lanka. Previous studies in the Sri Lankan context have mostly focused on institutional and

demographic factors, rather than on citizens' internal or psychological determinants [19], [20],[21],[22].

Existing scholarly literature suggests that these psychological and behavioral constructs should be empirically investigated in the Sri Lankan context to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of citizen adoption of e-government services.

However, subsequently there is no comprehensive study on e-government adoption that focuses exclusively on personal internal factors, it is essential to consider other influencing variables as well. Well-established behavioral and technology adoption theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [23], its extended model—the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [24] have consistently demonstrated that behavioral intention serves as a strong predictor of an individual's actual user behavior.

Another key dimension influencing e-government adoption is trust. Trust plays a critical role in shaping citizens' willingness to adopt e-government services, as it reflects the relationship between citizens and governing institutions in the context of technology-mediated public service delivery [25].

Contrary to this background, this study proposes a comprehensive conceptual framework for examining e-government adoption in the Sri Lankan context. The framework integrates key factors such as Perceived Behavioral Control (encompassing Self-Efficacy and Facilitating Conditions), Attitude, Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, and Trust in Government, and examines their effects on Behavioral Intention and Actual User Behavior. By systematically reviewing recent empirical and theoretical literature, this study seeks to develop an integrated model that produces multiple perspectives on e-government adoption.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. E-Government and its Adoption

E-government, also known as electronic government, encompasses the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and systems to enhance government accountability, transparency, and efficiency in public administration and management [26].

E-government introduces a new paradigm of service delivery, offering innovative services and capabilities beyond conformist administrative systems. These include enhanced citizen engagement, a reduction in the need for physical interactions, and decreased bureaucratic inefficiencies [27]. Moreover, e-government contributes to service quality improvement through organizational transformation, thereby playing a vibrant role in achieving efficient and citizen-driven public service delivery [28].

E-government systems characteristically function through several key interaction models, including Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Employee (G2E), and Government-to-Government (G2G) relationships.

Previous studies have specified a growing research interest in the adoption of innovative e-government initiatives [29]. However, studying e-government adoption is not exclusively concerned with governmental implementation, but also highlights the citizens' role as end-users of e-government services [30].

B. E-Government Adoption in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the concept of e-government was officially accepted under the *e-Sri Lanka Project* in 2002 [3]. On 20 November 2002, the *e-Sri Lanka: A Roadmap for ICT Development* identified e-government as a key strategic priority. Since then, succeeding governments in Sri Lanka have allocated funds through the national budget and undertaken various measures to reinforce e-government implementation [32].

The Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA), established in 2003, has played a leading role in developing and encouraging e-government initiatives in Sri Lanka. Under the supervision of ICTA, several key e-government platforms and applications have been implemented, including the Government Payment Platform (*GovPay*), the Electronic Revenue License System (*eRL*), the Lanka Government Cloud (*LGC*), the Lanka Government Network (*LGN*), and the Electronic Land Registry System (*eLR*) [33]. Furthermore, a wide range of electronic services have been introduced through ICTA and other government institutions at both national and local levels. These services include online tax filing, online payments and billing for utilities and license fees, educational services (such as applications, transcript requests, and certificate issuance), business registration, land and property services (including land registry searches and title deeds), licenses and permits (building, trade, and vehicle revenue licenses), as well as online passport processing, banking services, civil registration, national identity card services, and population information management. In addition, online travel bookings, e-ticketing, agricultural information, and other government-related services are accessible through official government web portals [34].

Although e-government initiatives have been introduced since 2000, Sri Lanka continues to strive toward transforming the public sector through the integration of information and communication technology (ICT). Several recent policy measures exemplify this ongoing effort. For instance, the *National Digital Policy 2020–2025* was articulated by the government to realize its *Vision 2025* and advance towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Additionally, the *2024 National Budget* recognized

the digital economy as a strategic priority, including specific provisions for the implementation of digital government initiatives. The *2025 Budget* also allocated substantial funding to strengthen the digital economy [35]. In addition, a dedicated *Ministry of Digital Economy* was established in 2025 to spearhead technology-driven transformation across government sectors [36].

However, despite the numerous measures undertaken by the government, the utilization rate of e-government services in Sri Lanka remains at an unsatisfactory level. According to the *E-Government Assessment Report* published by the Information and Communication Technology Agency (2021) [37], Specifically, among the limited number of e-government projects implemented to date, only 2.14% of users obtain revenue licenses online, 1% use online platforms for tax payments, and another 1% utilize online systems to obtain police clearance certificates. Moreover, only about 2% of citizens engage with widely promoted e-service platforms such as the Electronic Revenue License System (*eRL*), the Lanka Government Cloud (*LGC*), and the Government Information Centre (*GIC*). The World Bank (2024) has also observed that digitalization within Sri Lanka's public sector is still at an early stage and remains highly fragmented. This situation is further reflected in the country's failure in both the *E-Government Development Index (EGDI)* and the *E-Participation Index (EPI)* rankings between 2020 and 2024 [38].

C. Factors for E-Government Adoption

A review of the existing literature reveals that numerous studies have noted several influencing factors the adoption and acceptance of e-government services. According to the theoretical review, well-established technology adoption models have recognized the key factors influencing the use, acceptance, and implementation of technology in practice. Among these, the *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)* developed by Davis (1989) [39] was one of the earliest frameworks, which was later extended through the development of TAM2 and TAM3 to incorporate additional influencing variables. Similarly, the *Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)* proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) was then refined into UTAUT1, UTAUT2, and the *Unified Model for e-Government Adoption (UMEGA)*. The *Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)* introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) [40] also evolved into the *Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)* (Ajzen, 1991), which was further decomposed into the *Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB)* by Taylor and Todd (1995) [41]. Empirical studies employing these theoretical models have demonstrated their applicability and effectiveness across diverse contexts. However, despite the extensive global research, studies focusing on e-government adoption within the Sri Lankan context remain limited. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by addressing this research gap and advancing understanding of e-government adoption in developing country contexts.

III. METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework proposed in this study is particularly relevant given the obstinately low level of e-government adoption among citizens in developing countries. Accordingly, the framework developed to reflect the contextual characteristics of Sri Lanka may also be applicable to other developing countries with similar socio-economic and technological conditions. This study is based primarily on secondary data derived from peer-reviewed journal articles, while relevant government and institutional reports were also referred to describe and analyze the development of e-government in Sri Lanka during the period 2001–2025. Specifically, the variables included in the conceptual framework, as well as the relationships among them, were identified and evaluated through a comprehensive review of peer-reviewed literature. To construct the conceptual framework, previous studies published between 2001 and 2025 were systematically identified, analyzed, and synthesized. A systematic literature review approach was adopted to identify relevant constructs and theoretical models associated with e-government adoption. Academic databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, and Google Scholar were searched using keywords including “e-government adoption,” “e-government acceptance,” and “digital government acceptance.” Recent studies published within the 2001–2025 period were selected and critically reviewed to identify the key variables and interrelationships that reinforce the proposed conceptual framework.

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION IN SRI LANKA

Based on a widespread review of previous research, this study proposes a comprehensive framework to examine e-government adoption within the Sri Lankan context. The proposed framework is grounded in the theoretical foundations of the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB), the *Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior* (DTPB), the *Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology* (UTAUT), and the concept of trust. The model integrates key constructs derived from existing literature and adapts them to the socio-cultural and institutional characteristics of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, each relationship among the principal constructs is supported by empirically validated studies.

The conceptual framework identifies several factors that show both direct and indirect relationships influencing e-government adoption. Specifically, certain factors indirectly affect adoption through their impact on *behavioral intention* toward the use of e-government services.

➤ Performance Expectancy (PE)

According to Haridy et al. (2025) [42], *Performance Expectancy (PE)* states to the degree to which an individual believes that using e-government services will enhance their performance or efficiency in performing tasks. Zorali and Kanipek (2023) [43] identified PE as one of the most significant factors influencing citizens' adoption of e-government services. Furthermore, PE has been found to

have a substantial impact on individuals' *behavioral intention* to use e-government systems. Several previous studies have empirically established that performance expectancy is positively related with behavioral intention toward e-government adoption [44].

➤ Effort Expectancy (EE)

Effort Expectancy (EE) mentions to the degree to which individuals believe that using e-services is easy. Venkatesh et al. (2003) [45] identified users' skillfulness in operating e-services as a key aspect of EE. E-government adoption studies have empirically confirmed that EE has a significant influence on behavioral intention [46][47].

It is evident that, only a limited number of studies have studied the effects of PE and EE on e-government adoption within the Sri Lankan context.

➤ Attitude (AT)

Attitude is defined as a psychological evaluation that indicates an individual's positive or negative feelings when assessing a particular object, behavior, or situation [48]. Attitude is a vital factor in understanding citizens' adoption of e-government services.

Empirical studies conducted in countries such as Saudi Arabia have examined attitude as a key determinant and found a strong relationship between attitude and e-government adoption. Several researchers have also confirmed that attitude has a significant positive relationship with behavioral intention [49]. However, within the Sri Lankan context, limited research has been conducted to examine the influence of attitude on e-government adoption.

➤ Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) refers to an individual's perceived ease or assurance in performing a particular task [50]. Previous e-government studies have provided evidence supporting the direct relationship between PBC and behavioral intention [51]. Subsequently, the TPB was extended by Taylor and Todd (1995) through the development of the *Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior* (DTPB), which identified specific components for each of the main constructs of the TPB. Within this framework, PBC is decomposed into two specific dimensions: *Facilitating Conditions* and *Self-Efficacy*.

➤ Facilitating Conditions (FC)

Venkatesh et al. (2003) [52] defined *Facilitating Conditions (FC)* as the availability of resources and support essential for using digital technologies. FC can be identified as a critical component influencing the acceptance of e-government services. Therefore, governments should give priority to facilitating conditions when implementing e-government initiatives [53].

➤ *Self-Efficacy (SE)*

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task successfully and effectively [54]. According to Mushi (2024) [55], self-efficacy is a significant determinant of technology adoption, particularly in developing countries. Although it has been extensively examined in various technology adoption studies, limited research has explored self-efficacy as a factor influencing e-government adoption.

➤ *Trust in Government (TG)*

Trust is vital when performing any type of transaction; therefore, it represents a key factor in e-government adoption. Trust in government refers citizens' perception of online government service platforms' ability to provide secure, accurate and reliable information and transactions.

[56]. Accordingly, this construct has been widely tested in e-government adoption research. Furthermore, it has been found to exert a strong influence on citizens' behavioral intention to use e-government services. Barbosa and Mota (2022) [57] confirmed that trust in government has a positive relationship with behavioral intention to adopt e-government services.

Secondly, Behavioral Intention has a direct relationship with actual behavior, meaning that citizens' intention to use e-government services significantly influences their actual adoption behavior.

➤ *Behavioral Intention (BI)*

Behavioral Intention refers to an individual's intention to perform or refrain from performing a certain future action [58]. Several studies in the field of technology adoption have empirically demonstrated that behavioral intention is a strong predictor of actual technology usage [59]. Therefore, behavioral intention ultimately leads to actual behavior or adoption behavior.

Furthermore, numerous technology adoption theories recognize the vital role of behavioral intention in influencing technology acceptance and usage. Prominent models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) consistently highlight behavioral intention as a mediating variable linking motivational factors to actual user behavior. Thus, behavioral intention serves as a bridge between antecedent factors and user adoption.

Empirical findings from previous research also support this relationship. Moreover, many scholars have used behavioral intention as a mediating construct and confirmed the relationship between behavioral intention and actual behavior [60].

V. DISCUSSION

The present study suggests a conceptual framework to examine the factors influencing e-government adoption, with a particular focus on the Sri Lankan context. The proposed model identifies performance expectancy, effort expectancy, trust, attitude, and perceived behavioral control as key determinants, as supported by previous research. These factors were selected in consideration of Sri Lanka's status as a developing country and the relatively low level of e-service utilization among citizens.

The literature shows that performance expectancy refers to individuals' belief that e-government services are useful and can enhance their performance. In Sri Lanka, however, limited access to e-services and insufficient knowledge about navigating online platforms remain significant barriers. Consequently, many citizens continue to prefer face-to-face interactions over digital service channels. Similarly, effort expectancy is an important factor to examine in the Sri Lankan context. Although the country's digital and computer literacy rates are relatively high, the actual use of major online government platforms remains limited.

Although the government has introduced various online services, citizens must have the necessary skills to effectively use these e-services. At the same time, these platforms should be designed to ensure ease of use for all citizens. Attitude is another crucial factor that reflects citizens' perceptions toward e-services. Individuals may hold either positive or negative perceptions, and such perceptions meaningfully influence their willingness to use e-government services.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) includes two main constructs: facilitating conditions and self-efficacy. While some previous studies have examined these two constructs separately, recent research on artificial intelligence (AI) adoption and other emerging technologies has increasingly emphasized PBC as a key determinant of technology adoption. In the context of a developing country like Sri Lanka, where infrastructural and resource limitations persist, facilitating conditions play a particularly vital role. Furthermore, citizens' self-efficacy—referring to their confidence and ability to use e-services—has not yet been empirically tested in the Sri Lankan e-government context. Therefore, considering both theoretical justification and practical relevance, perceived behavioral control—including facilitating conditions and self-efficacy—has been incorporated as a significant factor in the proposed model. According to the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB), this factor is both theoretically and empirically supported.

Trust is another factor that has earlier been examined in e-government research within the Sri Lankan context; however, recent studies have not specifically investigated trust in government as a determinant. Trust in government is particularly important because governments frequently enact new laws, introduce regulatory changes, and launch new e-government platforms. In developing countries, citizens often perceive government initiatives differently due to unstable

political conditions, which can lead to a lack of trust in governmental institutions and political systems. Therefore, examining trust in government is highly relevant in the Sri Lankan context.

In the proposed model, behavioral intention plays a pivotal role, consistent with findings from previous studies [61]. Although the government has presented and recognized multiple e-government services, citizens must still possess the intention to use them.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

This conceptual framework is particularly appropriate for policymakers in Sri Lanka and other developing countries where the level of e-government adoption remains low. It is evident that government investment in infrastructure alone is insufficient; the psychological, institutional, and individual competences required for citizens to effectively use e-government services must also be recognized and strengthened. The proposed research framework emphasizes that e-government adoption can be enhanced through citizens' trust, attitude, and perceived behavioral control, which collectively influence individuals' behavioral intention to use e-government services.

Consequently, policymakers can use this framework to identify the practical barriers that hinder e-government adoption. By examining this conceptual model, they will be better situated to determine the critical measures necessary to increase citizen adoption, improve information and communication technology infrastructure, and strengthen public trust in government institutions.

Through this study, a conceptual framework has been established to explain citizens' adoption of e-government

services, thereby contributing new insights to the existing body of knowledge on e-government adoption. Moreover, this study provides a theoretical foundation for future research on e-government adoption in developing countries. The integration of theoretical models such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) provides an opportunity to examine e-government adoption through a robust theoretical lens. Thus, the proposed conceptual framework for e-government adoption in Sri Lanka makes several important theoretical contributions to the field and enables a more holistic understanding of citizens' adoption behavior.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive conceptual framework for e-government adoption. The framework explains how Perceived Behavioral Control including Self-Efficacy and Facilitating Conditions along with Attitude, Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, and Trust in Government, influence Behavioral Intention to use e-government services, which in turn affects the actual adoption of e-government. Hence, this framework is particularly suitable for identifying the underlying issues that hinder e-government adoption in developing countries, including Sri Lanka. It also helps to address the existing research gap by examining the combined effects of psychological, technical, and institutional factors on e-government adoption. Therefore, this framework serves as a valuable foundation for future researchers to conduct empirical studies, for governments to design effective policy interventions, and for the public to better understand the determinants of e-government adoption.

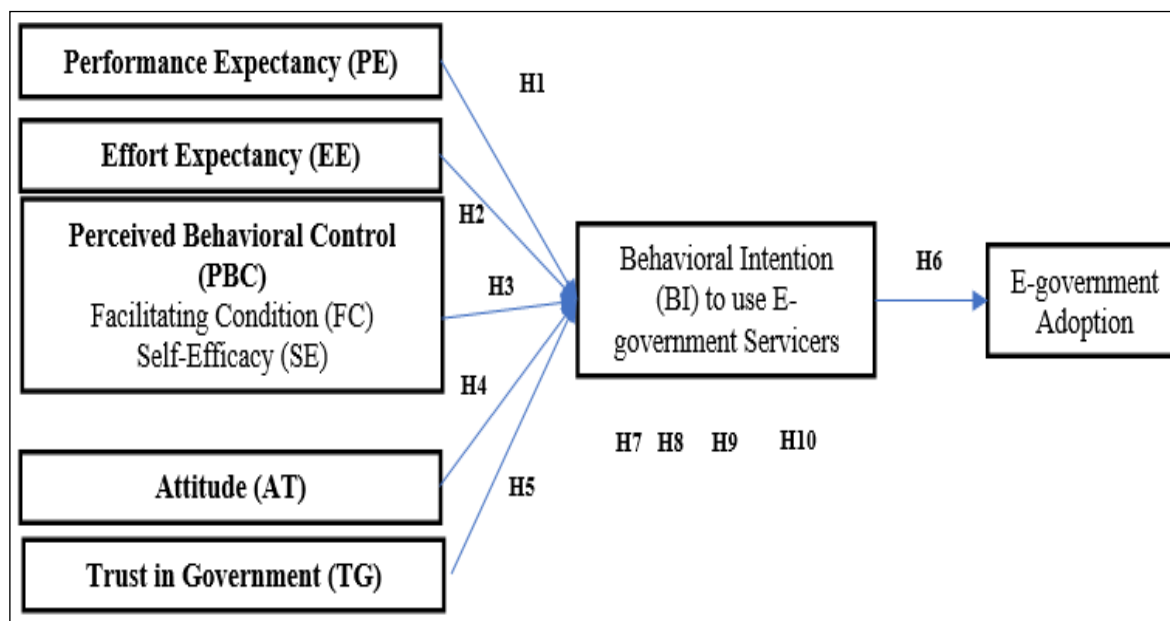


Fig 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

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