

## Evaluating E-Government Initiatives in Turkey From the Perspective of Public Employees: A Case Study and Preliminary Findings

**Elif Esin Gökçeo lu**

*Assistant Expert*

*General Directorate for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance,*

*Ministry of Customs and Trade, Ankara, Turkey*

*esin.gundogan@metu.edu.tr*

**Nilay Yavuz**

*Assistant Professor*

*Political Science and Public Administration Department*

*Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey*

*nyavuz@metu.edu.tr*

### **Abstract :**

*Along with e-government applications increasingly becoming prevalent around the world, evaluation of their potential to improve governmental efficiency and operational effectiveness, policy outcomes, and communication with citizens, and increase citizen satisfaction and engagement has been a trending research topic both in academia and practice. While the main actor of interest in these evaluation studies tend to be public organizations and end users of the services, a few studies have explored the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of public employees in relation to e-government projects. This paper is a preliminary attempt to shed more light on understanding the implementation and consequences of e-government initiatives, by focusing on the perspective of public employees in Turkey. A case study is conducted to describe how public employees view e-government initiatives and to what extent they use it in the General Directorate for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance under the Ministry of Customs and Trade in Turkey. A survey was administered to 56 public employees in the organization including superior and subordinate positions. The paper reports preliminary findings from the data and conclusions discuss policy and research implications of the findings in relation to e-government implementation.*

**Keywords:** *E-government evaluation, ICT use in public organizations, Technology adoption, Public employees attitudes and perceptions, Survey study*

### **Introduction**

In the recent years, individuals have confronted with information and communication technologies (ICT) in almost every aspect of their daily lives. In fact, ICT not only affects individuals but also pushes states to make structural transformation. In this transformation process, traditional, awkward, bureaucratic state structure has left leaves its place to faster, modern, participative, customer-centered, low-cost and transparent state model in many places. Technological reforms in the end of 1990s led to the fast and big transformation of state functions with the possibility of providing information and services over the Internet and enabling online public participation. In that context, e-government emerged as a tool “to support and improve public policies and government operations, engage citizens, and provide comprehensive and timely government services.” [1]

Similarly, e-government applications have been rapidly developing in Turkey in the last 10 years and they have gained even more importance. In order to keep pace with the changing and developing world, many e-government projects have been implemented by public institutions and organizations, which can provide information and services 24 hours 7 days. However, there is limited research on the evaluation of the usage of e-government tools, especially by public employees. In other words, whether the purposes of e-government projects are realized or not is ambiguous. Moreover, the views of public servants who have to use such projects and the internet as parts of their jobs should be taken into consideration, because their attitudes and perceptions on online applications are worth to analyze so as to understand the efficiency and effectiveness of e-government projects and identify problematic areas. Hence, this paper is a preliminary attempt to shed more light on understanding the implementation and consequences of e-government initiatives, by focusing on the perspective of public employees in Turkey. A case study is conducted to describe how public employees view e-government initiatives and to what extent they use it in the General Directorate for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance under the Ministry of Customs and Trade in Turkey, using a survey that was administered in 2013 to 56 public employees in the organization including superior and subordinate positions. The paper reports preliminary findings from the data and discuss policy and research implications of the findings in relation to e-government implementation.

The paper is organized as follows. It first reviews the development of e-government practices in Turkey. The next part looks at the e-government applications of the Ministry of Customs and Trade. Then, more specifically e-consumer portal as the e-government project of the General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Public Surveillance will be evaluated. At this point, consumer information system will be examined from public employees' perspective and whether the targets of e-government have been realized or not will be analyzed. Lastly, conclusion part discusses research and policy implications of the findings from the preliminary survey analysis.

an overview of the development of e-government in Turkey

If we look at the stages of e-government development in Turkey, the period between years 1996 and 2002 was the beginning stage. First e-government initiative was made by Ministry of Finance in 1998, named as "Internet Tax Project". All of the tax transactions were automatized via information technology. Decreasing workload, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, and creating management information system were all aimed under this project [2]. This project was put into practice in 22 city centers, 155 tax departments and 5 revenue offices. Then, because of instability of the economy and politics, there had been no long-term e-projects during 1998-2002.

As a significant development, Turkey accepted eEurope+ initiatives in 2001. At this point, Turkey adopted common goals and priorities of eEurope+ Action Plan. With 2002 elections, Justice and Development Party in power started e-government reforms. They also aimed to fulfill reforms on e-Europe enterprise in order to be a member country. Urgent Action Plan was introduced to develop economic and social welfare in Turkey so as to transform into information society. The plan included targets such as providing cheaper, faster and secure Internet access, investing in well-developed human resources and skills so to promote the use of Internet. As a result of Urgent Action Plan of 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> governments, "eTransformation Turkey Project" was created in 2003 as a huge step for e-government in Turkey. In other words, it gathered all other efforts under a big umbrella. This project coordinated by State Planning Organization aimed at transformation into information society. Objectives and principles of the project was explained

as: “Policies, laws, and regulations regarding ICT will be re-examined and changed if necessary, with respect to the EU acquires; e-Europe+ Action Plan, initiated for the candidate countries, will be adapted to Turkey, mechanisms that facilitate participation of citizens to decision-making process in the public domain via usage of ICT will be developed, transparency and accountability for public management will be enhanced, through increased usage of ICT, good governance principles will be put in place in government services, widespread usage of ICT will be enhanced, public IT projects will be coordinated, monitored, evaluated and consolidated if necessary, in order to avoid duplicating or overlapping investments, private sector will be guided according to the above-mentioned principles” [3]. Shortly, there were 3 main goals: to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in e-government projects, coordination with other information activities, and alignment with EU on ICT.

As Çayhan argues (2008), there has been a strong intention to implement e-government in Turkey at EU standards [4]. Information Society Strategy and Action Plan was made for 2006-2010 to identify middle and long term strategies. According to this strategy, there has been 7 strategic priority areas under 111 actions, which were social transformation, ICT adoption by businesses, citizen oriented public service, modernization of public management, globally competitive ICT sector, competitive, widespread and affordable telecom infrastructure and services, R&D and innovation in ICT [5]. If we look at major e-government applications realized under this strategy, we see e-government gateway, central census management system (MERSIS), identity sharing system, address record system, national judiciary informatics system (UYAP), internet tax offices, police network and information system (POLNET), accounting office automation project (2000i), e-budget, customs modernization project, e-document in foreign trade, social security e-declaration project, Turkish foreign investment portal, KOB net for SMEs, tourism portal, electronic signature and certification authority, mobile electronic signature [6]. As a result of this strategy, one of the most targeted e-government applications was the “e-government gateway”. Under the responsibility of State Planning Organization, “e-government portal” project was implemented in 18 December 2008 with the corporation of TURKSAT-international cable and satellite operator. The establishment, operating and managing of this portal has been conducted by Ministry of Transportation, Maritime Affairs and Communication on behalf of prime ministry. It has been a platform which government services were provided electronically to citizens, business organizations and all other governmental organizations from one single website-[www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr). From this website, citizens are provided main services such as birth issues, educational issues, military obligation issues, social security issues, health issues, job and career issues, traffic issues, tourism and travel issues, obstacle citizen issues, culture art and sport issues, foreign citizen issues, law and regulation and protection of right issues. All these issues are carried by related ministry.

If we look at the statistical data about e-government since 2008, we see huge developments in this area. In 2009, it was started with 22 e-services and in year 2010, there were 139 e-services provided to citizens, business groups and non-governmental organizations. Year 2011 brought 246 e-services to people and the year 2012, there were 514 services that can be used electronically from the website of [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr). Similarly, number of registered users increased year by year. When it just implemented at the end of 2008, approximately ten thousand people registered to the system. In 2009, nearly five hundred seventy thousand people, in 2010, nearly two million users (1,95 million), in 2011, with the big attack, approximately 7 million users (7,14 million) and today nearly 14 million people (13,85 million) got the password and used the portal in kind of a way. Lastly, number of institutions has been also increasing. When in 2011,

there were 26 institutions registered in the system, this year we see more than double institutions as 54. Moreover, we analyze online list of e-services, we see that all ministries as main institutions have e-services and many other institutions/ organizations are actively involved in the system. This paper focuses on the e-government initiatives that are implemented in the Ministry of Customs and Trade, which is dealt in the next section.

## **E-government projects in the ministry of customs and trade**

### **Objectives and Structure of the Ministry**

The ministry performs several duties such as to assist in the preparation of customs policies and to implement, to check and ensure the customs services in fast, effective, efficient manner and in accordance with determined standards, to help to identify the major goals and policies on domestic trade services, to implement the trade policies and the other duties stated in the decree law. Central organization of the ministry has 9 general directorates which are General Directorate of Customs, of Customs Enforcement, of Domestic Trade, Risk Management and Audit, of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance, of Merchants and Craftsmen, of Cooperative, of EU affairs and Foreign Relations, of Liquidation Services. In addition, there are also Department of Internal Audit, Department of Strategy Development, Department of Guidance and Inspection, Legal Consultancy Department, Department of Personnel, Department of Training, Department of Support Services, Department of Data Processing, Consultancy of Press and Public Relations, Private Secretary and Ethical Commission. On the other hand, in its provincial organization, there are 16 customs and trade district offices.

### **E-Government Initiatives in the Ministry**

Like the other ministerial organizations, Ministry of Customs and Trade has also adopted the phenomenon of e-government. It implements various e-government projects. Online transactions can be made through its website-[www.gumruk.gov.tr](http://www.gumruk.gov.tr). Firstly, under the general directorate of customs, there have been online electronic custom applications. In addition, there is also department for electronic custom transactions. System was established for the exporters to make new transit pass. They prepare declaration, show some assurance for the property subjected to transit transactions and they can also inquire any declarations online. Moreover, there is an opportunity for online petition. These are technical issues because they only concern business groups who deal with customs. For example, they can make a petition for the demand of additional time on regime declaration. There is a need for approval for properties by custom offices in certain days.(45 days for the goods by sea, 20 days for the goods coming by other ways) If the process passes 30 days, an obligator has to apply for additional time. This process can be made through online transactions. Additionally, there is an “advisory unit of large firms” under this directorate.

Another e-government application of the ministry involve every citizen because every human being, at the same time, has the common identity as the consumer. Every individual consumes many things and this consumption process may bring some problems. As one of the universal rights, people have consumer rights. Therefore, General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance serves approximately 75 million citizens. This GD and relevant legislation protect the consumer who is the weak side of the business/trade relationship. No: 4077 Law on Consumer Protection brings many consumer rights which are not even in European countries. However, citizens are not aware of or use those rights. For this reason, this general directorate aims to provide awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities. The most important project at this area is the Consumer Information System, called TUB S in

Turkish. It has been executed through the website- [www.tuketici.gov.tr](http://www.tuketici.gov.tr). This is a website that serves to increase consciousness of consumers and getting them informed as citizens. In other words, e-Consumer Portal is designed to serve all consumers, so all citizens. In fact, it not only shows direction to the citizens, but also all side-producers, industrialists, merchants and tradesmen. This system adopts a friendly approach to the citizen and desires to have a fast-acting public image. Therefore, while designing the website, the main target was to be the “smiley face of the state”. Additionally, participative and citizen-focused service understanding is another main base for the information system. This system in general aims to enable citizens to make complaints online and follow the results, to make the transactions of arbitration committee for consumer problems online and so to increase the traceability of their procedures, to provide integration with National Judicial Network Project (UYAP) so that shortening the operations between the arbitration committee for consumer problems and consumer courts, to integrate with e-government gateway so that reaching services through e-government portal and with the integration of citizen authentication system, ensuring the security of personal data. In addition, via the e-consumer portal, informing consumers in efficient, effective, rapid and accurate way and developing consumer policies with the analysis of the data collected on TUB S are the other targets of the system.

This system was put into practice in 2010 but this general directorate was established in 1994. Before this online system, applications were made in traditional bureaucratic ways. People were making their complaints only through mail and fax. Yet, complaints through postal services still reached out to the directorate. On the other hand, first online applications were made through Prime Ministry Communication Center (B MER), so since 2006 there have been both online and traditional methods. Now, complaints can be made through mail, fax, AK M (Justice and Development Party Communication Center), B MER( Prime Ministry Communication Center) and online applications from [www.tuketici.gov.tr](http://www.tuketici.gov.tr) and [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr). For the application considered to be valid, ID number of the citizen is the necessary requirement. Formerly, applications could be made with no name, address or any credentials. Therefore, after these online initiatives, the number of applications was decreased because many of them declared invalid. These new online applications make personal information like id number, address, telephone and e-mail obligatory.

Its full integration with e-government portal [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr) is an important step that enables citizens to reach it from any web page. There is an also integration process between TUB S and the project of Ministry of Justice that is National Judicial Network Project (UYAP). With full integration of two projects, transferring the file from arbitrary committee to consumer courts can be made online so there will be direct online interaction between them and so there will be no more loss of time and resources.

After this review of the e-government initiatives and their implementation in the Ministry of Customs and Trade, it is also important to look at the perspective of public employees, and understand how they view the initiatives. Although the main users of e-government services are citizens, the implementers are public servants. What they think about e-government, their adaptation to the new technology are significant indicators in order to analyze the development and effectiveness of e-government projects. In other words, the engagement of public servants is vital to the success of e-government [7]. Indeed, public employees have two identities: as a public employee and as a citizen. As citizens they have a significant role in increasing awareness about e-government initiatives, because they

can affect people near them in their daily lives. In addition, they provide public services to citizens on behalf of the State so they tell people how the process is working. Because they mostly communicate with citizens, they are in a very effective position: citizens can get information from them. The next section describes the survey that was administered to 56 employees in the General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance and presents preliminary findings from the study. e-government and public employees: A Survey study in the General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance under ministry of trade

### **Survey on Public Employees about Internet and E-Government Use**

In order to better evaluate how public employees perceive e-government initiatives in general both as an employee and as a citizen, and understand how they utilize the internet, we conducted a case study in the General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance using survey methodology in July 2013. For a period of 5 consecutive days, we visited all the employees' offices in the general directorate to invite them to participate in the survey study. Of the 98 employees that work for the general directorate, we administered the survey to a total number of 56 employees who were readily available in their offices at the time of the survey implementation and agreed to participate. The surveys were distributed to the participants and collected by the researchers on the same day. The purpose of the survey was to learn public servants' views and behaviors about the usage of Internet, e-government, and visiting governmental websites. The questions were mostly designed in Likert scale of 1-5.

### **Preliminary Findings from the Analysis of the Survey Data**

*1) Respondent demographics and other characteristics:* 27 survey respondents are women and 29 of them are men. The respondents are mostly young people: 18 of them are between the range of 18-29 and 27 of them are between the range of 30-39. It may be especially important to see young public employees' views about e-government, because general perception in the society is that young people tend to use the Internet and new technologies in their daily lives more whereas older people prefer using the Internet less or even do not know how to use such technologies. 48% of the participants are women and 48% of women are at the ages of between 30-39, whereas 40% of women are at the ages of between 18 and 29. If we look at the educational features of respondents, %80 of them were graduated from university, %14 of them continued to their education with master and doctor's degree. 3 people answered as "lycee" and stated their job titles are "employee". There are 7 different job titles which are general director/ vice general director, head of department, department chief, expert, assistant expert, employee and others. Distribution is as follows: 2 vice general directors, 3 heads of departments, 2 department chiefs, 17 experts, 19 assistant experts, 7 employee and 6 others. In terms of work experience, 19 respondents have been working for between 1-5 years. 21 of them are working for years between 6 and 10. That is to say, %70 of participants have been working for less than 10 years. Indeed, mostly respondents in superior positions are normally working for more than 10 years. Specifically, job tenure at the General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance are also asked. This is also remarkable because in addition to having young staff, there are also many new staff in the directorate. %48 of respondents has been working at this general directorate for less than 5 years. Last demographic question is about whether public servants had worked at the private sector before and the results are interesting: %48 of them did work for private companies and then preferred working for public sector. That is to say, they have had a chance to compare public and private organizations.

**2) Computer and internet usages:** Second part of the survey is composed of questions about computer and Internet usages. On average, general computer knowledge of the respondents are 3.75 over 5. “How often your job requires you to use the Internet?” question was averagely answered as “quite often”. They averagely use the Internet for 4-6 hours. Another question aims to find out the purposes of using Internet in their daily lives. They are asked 13 different items and expected to answer whether they use the internet for that purpose very often (rated as 5), quite often (rated as 4), sometimes (rated as 3), rarely (rated as 2), and never (rated as 1). Job-purpose communication with public or private organizations, communication with citizens for job purposes, private communication and social networking, searching information, online payment/banking transactions, online shopping, using e-government applications for job-purpose, using e-government applications as a citizen, communication with public organizations as a citizen (asking question, expressing opinion, problem, job application), communication with private organizations as a citizen, entertainment, education, health and other items were ranked according to most commonly given response. According to the respondents, the highest ranked item with an average frequency of 4.17 over 5 is using Internet for searching information. Then, online payment is ranked as average 3.67 among respondents which means that people mostly trust banking system so that they can make payments online. However, it is not the same case for online shopping. It is ranked under average with 2.89. In fact, %12 of the respondents answered as “never” for online shopping. The finding may imply that while many people trust online banking systems, they mostly do not trust private companies. The third mostly ranked item is job-purpose communication with public or private organizations with 3.55 and after that, as not surprised, private communication and social networking comes with 3.51. On the other hand, unfortunately, the lowest ranked item is using e-government applications as citizens which is 2.32. They also “rarely” prefer communicating with public institutions as a citizen with the average 2.32. Actually, respondents of the survey answered “using e-government applications for job-purpose” more frequently than as a citizen (2, 51). However, it is still below the average. If we look at the average point of the 13 items, it is 3.06. In the final analysis, online shopping, using e-government applications for both job purpose and as a citizen, communication with public and private organizations as a citizen, and using the internet for health purposes are under the average.

**3. Methods used in government operations:** The respondents are also asked mostly preferred methods to conduct their operations in the workplaces and as citizens for their relationships with some other government offices. Answer choices were e-mail, website, face-to-face, telephone and mail. As a public employee in their workplaces, they mostly preferred to do their jobs with e-mail at the rate of %34. Then, with the ratio of %30, they use telephones for communicating with citizens. %46 of respondents ranked the website option as the least preferred method in their workplaces. On the other hand, as a citizen, with %32 ratio, they mostly preferred “telephone” method to communicate with other government offices. Then with the same percentage-%21, face-to-face communication and e-mail methods are chosen by respondents. The least preferred method of respondents as being a citizen is the mail option with %34. As a result, what they do as a job in workplaces and what they prefer to do as a citizen in other offices show some variation. It seems that they do not opt for the same methods in their work and daily lives.

**4. Use of e-government:** Forth part of the survey is about the use of e-government. %52 of respondents use the e-government gateway which is [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr). Likewise, %48 of them do not use e-government which is a big rate. This is surprising because based on the general demographic composition of the respondents, it might be

expected that the usage rate would be higher. However, it is almost half-and-half. Additionally, the users of e-government are asked the methods they use to access to the e-government portal. 80% of public employees who use e-government enters to the system with “e-government password”. 2 people use both password and identity card. 3 of them use e-signature for the entrance to the system and only 1 of them has a mobile signature. Then, they are asked “how often do you visit websites of public organizations?” Average of the total respondents is 2.76 which means between sometimes and rarely. The other question asks the respondents about the types of e-government applications they use as citizens and it allows multiple choices to be picked. 16 e-government applications are listed and mostly frequently selected one is the inquiry of personal information (citizen ID number, criminal record, retirement number etc.) with 37 votes. Interestingly, even 13 people who responded “no” to the question “do you use e-government gateway?” chose this option which means that even if they do not use [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr), they get online services from other public websites. Second mostly selected e-government application among options is searching information about government operations like official statistics, reports, announcements, news with 24 votes. Right after, online applications to governmental agencies come with 23 votes. Social security transactions are marked by 21 times. Then online payment to governmental agencies had 18 votes, address record system, tax operations, traffic operations got same 17 votes from respondents. The least selected option is sending e-mail to politicians/public officials. It shows that even if they are public officials, they do not prefer to communicate with other public officials and politicians. Actually, options which are mostly selected are now that compulsory to check from Internet. For example, you have to control your id number from the website of [www.tckimlik.nvi.gov.tr](http://www.tckimlik.nvi.gov.tr). Similarly, from [www.adres.nvi.gov.tr](http://www.adres.nvi.gov.tr) provides the investigation of address record system. Online applications to government agencies, tax operations, traffic operations provide 7/24 online services to citizens so instead of going to the bureau within the working hours, now that they began to opt for completing process online. Moreover, the survey also inquires about the purposes of visiting of public websites in the workplace so this question is answered under the task identity. Acquisition of knowledge about legislation, searching/downloading information, benefit from online services, learning address-telephone-e-mail addresses, communication/asking a question/ expression of opinion, reporting a problem/complaint are listed to rank from very often to never. Among these options, respondents mostly ranked searching/downloading information with the average 3.91. Then, acquisition of knowledge about legislation comes with the average of 3.82. On the other hand, they apply to public websites for reporting a problem/complaint at least average of 2.52. Total frequency of all these purposes is 3.38.

**5. Evaluation of e-government:** After the questions on the use of e-government, questions about evaluation of e-government took place under the question of 25. It involved 25 items implying positive and negative views on e-government. The response options are listed as totally disagree to totally agree (1 to 5). The highest ranked one with 4,48 over 5 is that “e-government is useful for citizens.” which means that almost all respondents think that it is indeed useful. Moreover, %52 of respondents who even do not use e-government gateway replied to this question as “totally agree”. This may imply that even if they do not use e-government gateway, they believe that it is useful, or they are aware of its usefulness. They also see e-government useful for public employees but with a little bit less votes; 4,39 over 5. 82% of participants does not agree to the statement that “E-government may give harm to democratic processes”, voting 1 and 2. Similarly for questions that represent a negative view about e-government,



including “E-government reduces citizens’ access to government services”, “e-government makes difficult the communication of citizens with government.”, “e-government increases workload of public servants” and “e-government increases bureaucratic transactions”, the respondents disagreed with an average of 1.8 over 5, which means that they voted mostly either “totally disagree” or “disagree.”

Another question in the survey aimed to compare public employees’ confidence for public and private organizations’ websites and sharing information. The results indicate that they do not trust both organizations websites but public organizations have a bit more trust in the eye of public employees with 2.71 rating over 5 on average while trust on private organizations websites took 2.35. It is surprising because although they work at public organizations, they do not trust sharing information online with public authorities. Those respondents who worked at private sector before seems to have more trust on public websites than private websites with the average of 2.48 and 2.22.

**6. General evaluation of governmental websites and TUBIS:** The last part of the survey is composed of questions about general evaluation of public websites and the website of their public organization- [www.tuketici.gov.tr](http://www.tuketici.gov.tr). From the points of ease of use, effectiveness, currency, reliability, fastness, design, they evaluated the public websites at the question 21. From the perspectives of respondents, the case of websites is sadly unpleasant. General evaluation of websites in terms of 6 points is 2,9 over 5. They found weak the design of websites with the average of 2,58. They also do not think that public websites are current because they voted 2,78 which means between weak and medium. Mostly voted issues among 6 items is websites’ effectiveness and their reliability. Compared to others, to a certain extent, they find public websites effective and reliable, respectively voted 3, 13 and 3, 09 which is not enough for to say that websites are really effective and reliable. On the other hand, “provision of current information is required for the usage of e-government services.” is voted 4, 39 over 5 which means they value current information on public websites for effective e-government implementation. Similarly, the security and speed of websites are evaluated by respondents with the average 4, 25 over 5 which can be said that they also put importance on these features of websites.

Their opinions about whether public websites are sufficiently used or not are posed and %61 of respondents think that they are not sufficiently used, %27 of them think yes, they are sufficiently used and %12 of them have no idea about this. Because we also think that public websites are not used enough, after this question, general reasons for unuse or little use of public websites are listed to be chosen from respondents. These reasons are users’ being unaware, having no computer or Internet access, instead of transactions, websites’ intended for informative purposes, the difficult use of websites, complex and recondite contents of websites, its remaining slow in solving the problem, the lack of update, its being slow, technical problems, lack of reliability. According to the respondents, most voted reason for disuse or little use of public websites is its remaining slow in solving the problem. %73 of respondents put on this reason. Then, at the second rank, %55 of the participants think that public websites are disused or little used because users are unaware of online services. The least marked reason is, with 6 votes, users’ having no Internet or computer access which means that they do not think the access problem in Turkey anymore. However, according to the report published by Turkish Statistics Institution in August 2013, the rate of using Internet and computer is respectively %48,9 and %49,9. Besides, %49,1 of households in Turkey has an Internet access. That is to say, half of the

population still do not have Internet access. This rate is %57,4 at the urban areas and % 29,1 at the rural areas. That is to say, on the contrary to participants, the access problem is still critical issue in Turkey.

%71,4 of public employees agree with the statement that online applications reduce the time passed with citizens at the workplace. In other words, with the preference of making online applications at anywhere at anytime, going to the public offices within working hours is reduced. However, %74 of the respondents still think that online applications increased the communication with citizens. In other words, it only reduced the time passed at workplaces but the other ways of communication such as e-mail, telephone did not reduce, conversely increased according to the respondents. The last question coming up with objective results give the rates of “giving feed back to citizens is making online” %75 of the respondents give online feedback to citizens. It can be resulted as such that as part of their jobs, they use more online applications when compared to their daily lives as citizens. In the final analysis, the total average of the sub-questions which can show us the general evaluation of their public website is 3,45 over 5.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

As can be understood from the results of the survey, even if people working as public officials generally have positive feelings about e-government, they do not prefer using it much practically. Anyway, if they do not use e-government applications as being at the top of the e-government, we cannot realistically expect high rates of usage of e-government by citizens. Firstly, government officials should use and then lead to the citizens. From the analysis of the survey, it can be easily said that most of them are aware of many opportunities of e-government but they do not find public websites as current, fast, easy to use, in good design which affect people's choices. Besides, they do not trust public websites. Therefore, there is need for regulations at this area so that it will impact citizens. Some applications are made obligatory by the government so citizens have to use them online. At the first phase maybe the number of the obligatory applications may be increased so that people will get used to e-government applications and will go on. Moreover, when they are asked the reasons of disuse of public websites, they mostly chose that its remaining slow in solving the problem so what should be done is to quickly solve the problems and show their activeness to the people. If people see that when they apply public websites and wait for reply, if the government officials quickly give an answer to their problems, this will affect their tendency to use online ways to reach public officials. Thereby, a system should be developed in this regard. Additionally, the recognition of online methods and awareness of citizens are not enough according to the public employees participated in the survey. Therefore, primarily there are needs of policies for those online methods to be introduced to people and their awareness to be increased in a way.

Another point is that, people in relation with governmental works are commonly at their middle or older ages so they more stick to traditional, paper-based practices, however, young population is coming on strong because they are directly related with the Internet and online applications and the future users of these online systems will be such young people. In other words, they are accustomed to using the Internet and in the near future who will increase the online trend in e-government use will be this part of society. Besides, people began to see easiness of ICT. In other words, they increasingly realize that e-government projects can make their life easier without going to bureaus, waiting in queues for a long time. At this point, what is needed to be done is to increase awareness of citizens and their trust on government. When they become aware of these services, if they feel safe on them, they will start to use

such e-services. For example, many people started to pay taxes online, search for social security online because they noticed its convenience and speed. Moreover, government officials' tendencies also affect the citizens' points of view about e-government because if they exactly know and rule over the system, they can easily and positively direct the people. That is why this paper has tried to measure the perspectives of employees. It should also be noted that the study was an initial attempt to understand the public employees' views and behaviors about e-government initiatives, and was designed as a case study, focusing only on the public employees of one of the general directorates in the ministry. Therefore results may not be generalizable. Future studies may shed more light on the perspective of the employees about e-government, by involving large numbers of employees and several organizations.

As a last word, using technology is becoming widespread among our society in the process of time but using technology for governmental purposes need time to catch up other online practices. It can be understood from many surveys that the Internet usage is not problematic issue in Turkey anymore but using Internet for e-government purposes is not at the adequate and expected level so government policies should be designed firstly for increasing the interest and trust of officials, so then citizens.

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