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The Role of E-Management in Combating Corruption in Yemen: An Analysis of Political, Economic, and Sociocultural Factors

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the prevalence and causes of corruption in Yemen, focusing on the political, economic, and sociocultural factors that sustain it, and assesses the potential of e-management and information and communication technology (ICT) as instruments for reducing it. Corruption remains a significant barrier to Yemen's development, undermining governance, public service delivery, and economic growth, and is reinforced by weak institutional accountability, political instability, and entrenched patronage networks. Drawing on the theoretical literature and comparative experience, the study argues that e-management can enhance transparency, streamline service delivery, and reduce opportunities for corrupt practices by automating processes and creating auditable records. It further identifies the political, economic, infrastructural, and sociocultural barriers, including low digital literacy and limited connectivity, that constrain the adoption of e-government in a conflict-affected setting. The study concludes by proposing strategies for integrating ICT solutions into Yemen's governance framework to combat corruption and promote good governance.

Keywords: *Corruption, Yemen, e-management, information and communication technology (ICT), transparency, governance, political factors, economic factors, sociocultural factors, public service delivery, anti-corruption strategies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption in Yemen remains a pervasive problem that severely affects governance, development, and public trust, undermining the country's ability to achieve sustainable economic growth and equitable access to services. Despite repeated attempts to address it, weak governance, political instability, and patronage systems have allowed corruption to persist,

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particularly within public administration (Hill, Salisbury, Northedge, & Kinninmont, 2013). Yemen consistently ranks among the most corruption-affected states in the world; in the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index it scored 16 out of 100 and ranked 176th of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2023). Traditional anti-corruption strategies, such as law enforcement actions and prosecutions, have proven largely ineffective because of bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays in fund disbursement, and limited awareness among citizens. This study explores the potential of e-management and ICT solutions, such as e-government platforms and automated decision-making tools, to reduce corruption, enhance transparency, and improve public service delivery in Yemen. By focusing on the integration of digital technologies into governance, the research aims to offer insights into how Yemen can use ICT to address systemic corruption and promote good governance.

A. Background of the study

Corruption in Yemen undermines socio-economic and political structures, with weak governance, patronage systems, and political instability fuelling its persistence. The lack of institutional accountability and transparency has allowed corruption to flourish at all levels of government, hindering development, economic growth, and public service delivery. In response, the adoption of e-management, through the integration of information and communication technologies, is regarded as a potential means of enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in governance. E-management can automate processes, reduce human intervention, and create data-driven systems that make corruption more difficult to sustain (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022). By digitising public services and improving access to information, ICT tools such as e-government platforms and digital procurement systems can reduce opportunities for bribery and strengthen accountability (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010). This study explores how the adoption of ICT-based e-management systems can transform Yemen's governance, promote public sector efficiency, and offer a practical response to the country's corruption problem.

B. Statement of the problem

Corruption in Yemen is a deeply entrenched issue that significantly hinders governance, economic development, and public trust in institutions, with weak governance, political instability, and patronage systems compounding the problem. Traditional anti-corruption measures have proven ineffective, while bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays in fund disbursement, and insufficient citizen awareness further complicate efforts to combat corruption. The adoption of e-management and ICT solutions, such as e-government platforms

and automated decision-making tools, presents a potential response by enhancing transparency, accountability, and service delivery. Drawing on the experience of countries that have made progress through digital public services, and on cross-national evidence that e-government is associated with lower corruption (Andersen, 2009; Park & Kim, 2020), this study examines how integrating digital tools into Yemen's governance framework can improve anti-corruption strategies, reduce corruption, and support socio-economic development, thereby addressing the limitations of current governance systems.

C. Objectives of the study

The study pursues three objectives. First, to identify how widespread corruption is in Yemen. Second, to establish the principal causes and forms of corruption in Yemen, including political and administrative, economic, and sociocultural factors. Third, to assess the significance of e-management and the use of information and communication technology in reducing corruption.

D. Significance of the study

This study holds academic and practical value, particularly in the fields of corruption studies and e-governance, by examining the role of ICT solutions in combating corruption within Yemen's public administration. Academically, it expands knowledge on corruption in fragile states, contributes to the e-governance literature, contextualises ICT in conflict-affected regions, and links technology with anti-corruption strategies. In practical terms, the research offers policy insights for Yemen's government and civil society, highlighting how e-management systems can improve governance, service delivery, and anti-corruption measures. It also offers lessons for other conflict-affected regions and may inform the adoption of digital governance solutions in comparable settings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines existing research on corruption and e-governance, with a focus on their operation in fragile and conflict-affected states such as Yemen. By synthesising key theories, empirical studies, and comparative examples, this section highlights the role of information and communication technology in improving governance and combating corruption. The review is organised around several themes: the relationship between corruption and governance in Yemen, the role of ICT solutions in tackling corruption, and the challenges and opportunities for e-governance adoption in developing countries. It sets the stage for exploring how e-management can serve as a tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in Yemen's public administration.

A. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study draws on several theories to explain corruption in Yemen and the role of e-governance in mitigating it. Public Choice Theory highlights how rational, self-interested actors within weak institutional frameworks contribute to corruption and rent-seeking (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962), while Principal-Agent Theory explains the misalignment of interests between government officials and the public, framing corruption as a function of monopoly and discretion minus accountability (Klitgaard, 1988). Institutional Theory emphasises the importance of strengthening formal institutions to combat corruption (North, 1990; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and the transparency and accountability model underscores the role of transparency in reducing corrupt practices (Bertot et al., 2010). Finally, the e-governance and anti-corruption perspective advocates the use of ICT solutions, such as e-government systems, to improve transparency, reduce discretionary powers, and enhance accountability in governance (Andersen, 2009). By integrating these perspectives, the study explores how e-management systems can transform Yemen's governance, reduce corruption, and support socio-economic development.

B. Review of empirical studies

Empirical research on corruption in Yemen and other states in the Middle East and North Africa highlights the systemic nature of corruption, driven in particular by weak governance, political instability, and patronage networks. In Yemen, informal elite networks have historically been more influential than formal state institutions, allowing political elites to exploit their positions for personal gain and perpetuating bureaucratic inefficiency and resource misallocation (Phillips, 2011; Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 2020). The widespread patronage system, coupled with a lack of accountability, entrenches corruption at various levels of government (Hill et al., 2013). Comparative studies in the region show similar patterns, though post-transition reforms in some states have yielded modest reductions in corruption, illustrating that political transitions and institutional reforms can produce positive outcomes. Nonetheless, regional disparities in service delivery and limited access to basic services remain significant issues in Yemen.

The effectiveness of e-government initiatives in reducing corruption is documented in a growing body of research. Cross-national and systematic reviews find that e-government can curb corruption by increasing transparency and accountability, but that its impact depends heavily on institutional strength and implementation capacity (Adam & Fazekas, 2021; Andersen, 2009; Park & Kim, 2020). Comparative experience shows that digital tools such as

online procurement systems and automated public service portals have improved transparency and accountability where institutions are robust. In conflict-affected settings such as Yemen, however, unique barriers, including limited internet access, low digital literacy, and institutional resistance, constrain the effectiveness of these systems. The literature therefore emphasises the need for strong institutional frameworks, capacity building, and digital literacy programmes to ensure that e-government systems can successfully reduce corruption, a challenge that remains particularly acute for Yemen.

III. THE ROLE OF E-MANAGEMENT IN COMBATING CORRUPTION: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIOCULTURAL CHALLENGES IN YEMEN

Corruption in Yemen is an entrenched problem that severely impedes the country's development, affecting governance, the provision of public services, and overall socio-economic growth, and stands among the most critical barriers to Yemen's progress. The political landscape, characterised by instability, weak governance, and the dominance of patronage systems, fosters a climate in which corruption flourishes unchecked (Phillips, 2011). The persistent lack of accountability and transparency within governmental institutions allows corrupt practices to thrive, particularly within public administration. A political system heavily influenced by clientelism and loyalty to political elites compounds the problem by ensuring that public resources and positions are allocated on the basis of personal relationships rather than merit (Hill et al., 2013).

The integration of e-management and ICT systems is often presented as a means of mitigating these challenges. E-management refers to the use of digital tools and automated processes to enhance governance, improve transparency, and reduce corruption. By using e-government platforms, Yemen can automate many public administration functions, thereby limiting human discretion and reducing opportunities for bribery or favouritism; consistent with the principal-agent view, reducing discretion while raising accountability lowers the scope for corruption (Klitgaard, 1988). Digital platforms can enable citizens to access public services without intermediaries, removing the face-to-face interactions that are often conducive to corrupt practices. E-management systems can also create digital audit trails, allowing for greater oversight and accountability, which in turn can deter public officials from engaging in corrupt activities (Bertot et al., 2010).

Yemen nonetheless faces several obstacles in adopting e-management systems. Politically, a lack of will among leaders to implement such reforms remains a significant barrier. In a setting where political elites are embedded in corrupt practices, e-government may be perceived as a

threat to their power, and those who benefit from corruption are unlikely to support transparency initiatives that might expose their conduct (Phillips, 2011). Political instability and ongoing conflict make it difficult to implement large-scale reforms; resources are stretched thin, and efforts to improve governance through digital platforms face substantial obstacles in an unstable environment.

Economically, Yemen's dependence on oil revenues and the fragility of its economy further complicate the implementation of e-government solutions. Ongoing conflict and economic contraction have depleted the country's financial resources, making it difficult for the government to invest in the necessary ICT infrastructure. These financial constraints limit the scope for developing robust digital governance systems, which require substantial investment in technology, training, and infrastructure.

Socioculturally, Yemen faces significant barriers to the adoption of e-management systems. Low levels of digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, present a major challenge, and many citizens, especially older residents and those in remote areas, lack the skills necessary to navigate online government services. This digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities, since urban residents with better internet access would benefit from e-government platforms while rural citizens remain excluded. Overall internet penetration in Yemen remains low, with fixed broadband subscriptions reaching only a small fraction of the population, and connectivity concentrated in urban centres (DataReportal, 2023). In addition, deep-rooted cultural norms, including patronage and nepotism, are not easily displaced by digital solutions, and overcoming these ingrained practices will require a fundamental shift in societal attitudes toward governance.

IV. E-GOVERNMENT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES IN YEMEN: ADDRESSING GOVERNANCE BARRIERS THROUGH ICT SOLUTIONS

The implementation of e-government systems in Yemen holds considerable promise for reducing corruption and enhancing the transparency and efficiency of public administration. E-government encompasses the use of ICT to deliver government services, strengthen citizen engagement, and streamline administrative processes. When implemented effectively, such systems can reduce corruption by making government actions more transparent, holding public officials accountable, and reducing opportunities for corrupt practices (Andersen, 2009). Yemen's weak governance structures, coupled with socio-economic challenges, nonetheless present significant obstacles to the successful adoption of these digital solutions.

Corruption in Yemen is not merely a by-product of individual misconduct; it is embedded in the country's governance system. Patronage networks play a central role in perpetuating corruption by allocating resources and government positions on the basis of personal loyalty rather than merit (Phillips, 2011). This culture of patronage and favouritism has led to a misallocation of public resources, poor public service delivery, and a lack of institutional accountability (Hill et al., 2013). Traditional anti-corruption measures, such as law enforcement actions and prosecution, have largely failed because of bureaucratic inefficiencies and weak oversight. Public servants, especially in regions dominated by patronage systems, often feel little pressure to act ethically when they anticipate that their actions will go unchecked.

E-government initiatives have the potential to disrupt this system by automating administrative processes and introducing transparency into government operations. Digital procurement systems, for example, can reduce opportunities for bribery by automating the tendering process and ensuring that contracts are awarded on merit rather than political connection. In several jurisdictions, the introduction of digital procurement platforms has reduced corruption by providing a clear audit trail of transactions, and comparative reviews confirm that e-procurement can strengthen competition, transparency, and accountability where institutions are sound (Adam & Fazekas, 2021). Yemen could benefit from similar initiatives that use ICT to reduce human intervention and make government services more transparent. E-government platforms could also enable real-time monitoring of public funds, allowing citizens and regulatory bodies to track how government money is spent and thereby strengthening accountability (Bertot et al., 2010).

Despite these benefits, Yemen faces several challenges in implementing e-government. The most pressing is a lack of political will, as elites who benefit from the current system may resist digital reforms that could expose their conduct. Political instability and ongoing conflict create an environment in which governance reforms are difficult to implement, and the absence of a unified political vision for digital governance further complicates efforts to adopt e-government solutions. Economic constraints, including limited funding for ICT infrastructure and the need for significant investment in digital literacy programmes, make widespread adoption a difficult task.

Culturally, Yemen also faces challenges in building trust in digital systems. Many citizens, particularly in rural areas, have little experience with digital technologies and may be sceptical of online government platforms. Extensive public education campaigns are needed to build digital literacy and foster trust in e-government systems. Without such efforts, citizens may

remain reluctant to engage with digital platforms, reducing the effectiveness of e-government initiatives.

V. TRANSFORMING GOVERNANCE IN YEMEN: THE POTENTIAL OF E-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO REDUCE CORRUPTION AND ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY

The adoption of e-management systems in Yemen represents an important step in addressing the persistent corruption that undermines the country's governance and development. Corruption in Yemen is deeply rooted in weak governance structures, political instability, and entrenched patronage networks that hinder effective governance and equitable resource distribution (Phillips, 2011). Political elites often exploit their positions for personal gain, exacerbating bureaucratic inefficiency and perpetuating corruption at various levels of government. Traditional anti-corruption measures have been largely ineffective because they fail to address the systemic nature of corruption and the underlying political and administrative factors that sustain it. In this context, e-management systems, powered by ICT, offer a promising alternative for reducing corruption and transforming Yemen's governance (Andersen, 2009; Park & Kim, 2020).

E-management systems can improve transparency and accountability by automating government processes, thereby reducing human discretion and minimising opportunities for bribery, favouritism, and the misallocation of public resources (Klitgaard, 1988). By digitising public services, Yemen can streamline administrative procedures, enhance public service delivery, and create an environment in which government actions are more easily monitored and audited. The introduction of digital procurement systems, for example, could reduce opportunities for corrupt practice in public contracting by automating the tendering process and making it more transparent (Adam & Fazekas, 2021). ICT solutions can also provide real-time data on government activities, enabling citizens and regulatory bodies to track expenditure, monitor public service performance, and demand accountability from public officials (Bertot et al., 2010).

Yemen nonetheless faces significant challenges in implementing e-management systems because of its weak governance framework, political instability, and infrastructural limitations. Political elites who benefit from corruption may resist efforts to introduce digital governance systems that reduce their ability to engage in corrupt practices. Yemen's fragile economy and limited resources make it difficult for the government to invest in the infrastructure required to

support e-management systems, including reliable internet access, modern data centres, and secure servers, and the ongoing conflict compounds these constraints.

Sociocultural factors also pose challenges to the implementation of e-management systems in Yemen. A large share of the population, particularly in rural areas, has limited access to digital technologies and lacks the skills to navigate online platforms (DataReportal, 2023). Low digital literacy is a major barrier to the successful adoption of e-government systems, as many citizens are unfamiliar with ICT tools. Overcoming this barrier requires extensive public education campaigns that promote digital literacy and build trust in e-government systems.

VI. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

The successful implementation of e-management systems in Yemen faces several substantial barriers arising from political, social, economic, and infrastructural conditions. A lack of political will is among the most significant obstacles, as political instability and corruption within governmental ranks hinder the adoption of digital governance solutions. Political elites often resist reforms that could diminish opportunities for personal gain, and the absence of a unified vision for digital governance further complicates efforts to digitise government services (Phillips, 2011). There is also resistance from key stakeholders, including government employees, private sector actors, and citizens, who may be reluctant to embrace digital systems because of fear of job displacement, unfamiliarity, or limited digital literacy. These challenges are compounded by entrenched patronage networks, in which loyalty to political figures rather than merit determines access to public services (Hill et al., 2013).

Infrastructural limitations also pose a significant barrier to the effective deployment of e-management systems. Rural areas, where internet connectivity is often poor, lack the digital infrastructure required to support widespread e-government initiatives, and frequent power outages further hinder digital services. Overall connectivity remains low, with only a small proportion of the population holding a fixed broadband subscription and access concentrated in urban centres (DataReportal, 2023). The country also lacks modern data centres and secure servers, increasing the risk of data breaches and cybersecurity threats. Cultural barriers, such as low digital literacy and mistrust of government institutions, further complicate implementation, especially in rural areas. In addition, Yemen's fragile economy and financial constraints make it difficult to allocate the resources needed to develop ICT infrastructure, train government employees, and procure the required technology. These socio-economic factors limit the country's ability to realise the full potential of e-government in reducing corruption and improving governance.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the potential role of e-management systems and ICT solutions in addressing the entrenched problem of corruption in Yemen. Despite persistent political instability and weak governance structures, the adoption of digital governance offers a promising pathway to enhance transparency, accountability, and public service delivery. By automating government processes and enabling real-time monitoring, e-government systems can reduce opportunities for bribery and nepotism and foster a more efficient and accountable public sector (Andersen, 2009). The successful implementation of such systems in Yemen nonetheless faces significant barriers, including political resistance, infrastructural limitations, and cultural challenges.

To overcome these obstacles, Yemen must invest in digital infrastructure, improve public education and awareness regarding ICT tools, and secure strong political will for reform. The findings suggest that e-government can play a transformative role in reducing corruption, but its success will depend on a comprehensive strategy that integrates political commitment, institutional support, and capacity building (Adam & Fazekas, 2021; Park & Kim, 2020). If these challenges are addressed, e-management systems could contribute to better governance and the long-term development of Yemen.

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