

Mobile Government Applications Adoption and Usage in Qatar

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The global adoption of mobile technology has skyrocketed, driven by improved connectivity and greater affordability. In alignment with these advancements, the Government of Qatar has embraced mobile technology as a key enabler for nation's digital transformation. By developing numerous mobile applications, the government aims to enhance and promote public service delivery, foster greater transparency, improve public communications, and broadly disseminate government information. This policy brief examines public attitudes toward mobile government applications, identifies the primary factors influencing their adoption and analyzes their features to inform future policy interventions aimed at maximizing the adoption and utilization across Qatar.

Impact of Mobile Technology on Society

Mobile technology has fundamental aspects of society from reorganized social relations and education systems to governmental processes and business operations. The proliferation of Internet access on mobile phones has significantly increased the use and functions of this technology. Mobile online communication involves web browsing and using specific mobile applications to access content. Aligning with these advancements, governments have developed mobile applications to maximize the efficiency of their interactions and transactions with citizens and other entities¹. In our research, a mobile Government application is defined as all applications provided by government bodies and ministries (such as the Ministry of Interior [MOI] and Ministry of Municipality) to serve the general public.

Prior empirical research on the adoption and utilization of mobile government applications in Qatar is limited. Therefore, this study explores the key factors influencing user's adoption and utilization of these services in the country.

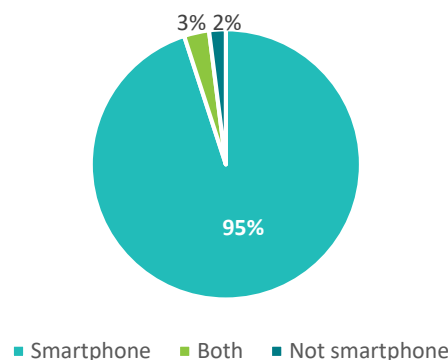
To this end, a survey on Mobile Government was conducted in May and June 2024 using a nationally representative wireless telephone sample using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing system (CATI).

The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) surveyed 1872 adults aged 18 or older, comprising 1,025 Qatari nationals and 847 higher-income expatriates.

Usage of Mobile Devices

In Qatar, 95% of respondents use smartphones, with just 3% using both smartphones and traditional phones, and 2% using only traditional phones (see Figure 1).

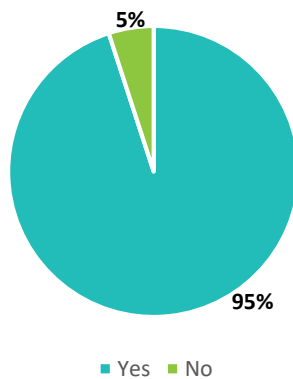
Figure 1. Types of Mobile Phones Used



M-Government Applications: Availability, User Awareness, and Usage in Qatar

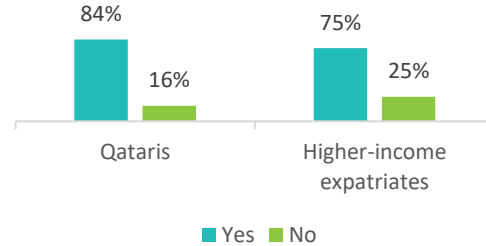
Aligning with digital transformation goals, Qatar's government entities offer mobile applications to streamline interactions with citizens and residents, enabling faster communication. To determine the opinion of the general population, the survey respondents were asked if mobile government applications were compatible with their devices. Ninety-five percent of participants confirmed device compatibility, while 5% did not (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Availability of Government Applications for Mobile Devices



When exploring the awareness of the general population, 77% of respondents were familiar with the term "mobile government" prior to the survey, while the remaining 23% were not. Awareness was higher among Qatari citizens (84%) than among higher-income expatriates (75%) (see Figure 3).

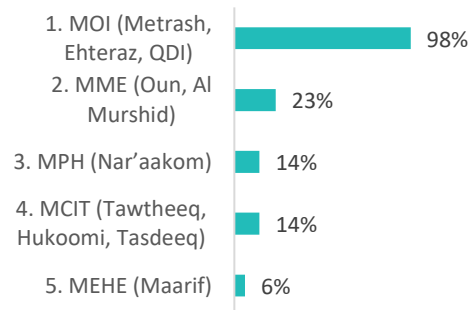
Figure 3. Awareness of M-Government Applications by Respondent Type



For the sake of identifying the top five most-accessed ministries through mobile applications, the respondents were asked to list their five most-used government mobile applications.

Figure 4 shows that the vast majority of the population (98%) utilized mobile government applications provided by the Ministry of Interior (MOI), followed by those from the Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME) (23%), Ministry of Public Health (MPH) (14%), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) (14%), and Ministry of Education and lastly Higher Education (MEHE) (6%).

Figure 4. Most Used Government mobile Applications in Qatar



Conclusion

Qatar is well equipped for digital public services; almost all adults use smartphones, with most confirming high compatibility with government mobile applications. Awareness of “mobile government” is high, particularly among Qatari citizens, signaling strong adoption of these services. However, the actual usage remains concentrated within specific ministries, such as in the Ministry of the Interior. Other public services see limited engagement despite having dedicated apps. This gap suggests that the primary barriers are not access related, but rather a lack of awareness, inconsistent user experiences, and a fragmented delivery system spread across too many separate government applications.

References:

1. Al Najjar, M. A., Alabdelqader, A., & Abu-Shanab, E. A. (2019). Mobile Government Services and Resident Satisfaction: Evaluation of Kahramaa Mobile Services. *International Journal of Electronic Government Research (IJEGR)*, 15(2), 39-57. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJEGR.2019040103>

Policy Recommendations

1. Launch multilingual social media and SMS campaigns to raise public awareness of mobile government applications and educate Qatari citizens and residents on how to access them.
2. Establish unified design and service protocols across all for government applications to ensure consistent layouts, terminology, and integrated user experience.
3. Implement standardized performance monitoring metrics to track service adoption, user satisfaction, and completion rates across all government entities.