

On the Construction of a Government's Core Competitiveness in the Network Environment----A Case Study of a Provincial Government

Yongzhong Li

College of Economics and Management,
Fuzhou University
3550116, Fuzhou, China
Lyz2015fzu@aliyun.com

Abstract — The core competitiveness of a country or a regional government compared to the competitors, such as international organizations, other governments, non-governmental organizations or enterprise organization, has an advantage and competence differences. The Internet has made governments at all levels face great pressures to reshape their own core competitiveness. In this paper, the construction of core competences of governments in the network age is studied by comparison and a case study. We analyze the competition environment and the problems facing an example provincial government, and argue that in the network age core competitiveness has to cover the government's information ability, decision-making ability, executive ability and regulation ability. We then proposes some countermeasures for the construction of core competitiveness for the chosen provincial government.

Keywords - *E-government; the Government's Core Competitiveness; Network Environment; Case Study; Fujian Provincial Government*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the world today, the process of economic globalization and information development has been accelerating greatly. The world is changing every day, and the uncertainty of economic and political surroundings of social is increasing, and it also means the increase of competition. This kind of competition not only reflects in the economic competition among countries, but also reflects in the competition among governments of various countries. Under the action of the competitive rules, as an entity, the government also must participate in the competition to find a better way to survive and develop. What's more, after the appearing of e-government, the mode and the content of the competition among governments have changed, so the governments should seek to develop new core competitiveness which adapts to the needs of the times.

II. THE GOVERNMENT'S CORE COMPETITIVENESS IN THE NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

A. The Connotation of the Government's Core Competitiveness

There is a dearth of research results on "the government's core competitiveness" among the existing literatures, more literatures are discussed about "the core competitiveness of the enterprises". Compared with "the core competitiveness of the enterprises", "the core competitiveness of the government" is not simply the replacement of the word "government" in the definition. Unlike the purpose of the enterprise's core competence is to seek "profit maximization", the purpose of the government core

competitiveness is to find a better way to service for the overall social and national interests, and be able to win in the competition to master more resources and get better survival and development. Therefore, I think that the government's core competitiveness is the essential ability of survival for the government in the competition or the ability which can make themselves gain advantages and grasp more initiative in the competition to ensure the better development [1].

B. The Influence of the Internet for Government's Competitiveness

From the view of the macroscopic theoretical level, the proposition of the concept of government's competitiveness is mainly based on the major changes of the government's living environment. Along with the advancement of electronic government, the government's external environment of living and developing has already changed, which has caused an impact for the government's behavior.

The ability of information has become most the core competitiveness

The government's information, which is a reflection of the work of the government and is the essential information for government leaders to make decisions and command, including the internal information which is produced by the government itself and the information which is obtained from the external of the government and related to the government management activities, and it is the basis of all government work. So, the government's information ability is the basis of the government's core competitiveness [2]. By means of electronic government, the government not only

can timely, rapidly acquire government's first-hand internal information, but also can rapidly and conveniently obtain a variety of exogenous information produced outside the government.

The ability of macroscopic decision also depends on the ability of information

The standard to judge government's decision is whether the policy is scientific, democratic and the information feedback in the process of policy implementing. In traditional era, the acquisition models of decision support information is passive, and relying on artificial methods to collect, process and distribute the information. So it is inevitable that there are many drawbacks such as the narrow surface of the information gathering, the high cost used to obtain information, the long cycle, the slow speed of the information feedback and the lack of objectivity, which have affected the effects of government decisions in different degree. However firstly e-government is able to change this kind of condition fundamentally, and can effectively overcome the shortage of the information ability caused by the geography span, and it also can transform a large amount of quantitative, fuzzy and random data into useful information for decision-makers through some certain technical means, which has greatly improved the scientific approach of the government decision. Secondly, e-government has created a platform for the public, so the public can participate indirectly the decision-making discussion of public policy issue during the period of policy-making by means of some online tools such as "BBS", and they also can make feedbacks on policy advice to the government timely during the period of policy implementation. Therefore, under the electronic environment if the government wants to make a policy which is beneficial to the nation and the people, it should pay attention to the collection, analysis and processing of the information, that is to emphasize the ability of government's information.

The public-oriented government processes

In the traditional environment, government always has been as the centre of the government's working process, and this working process is an e-government mode which emphasizes on increasing the internal work efficiency of the government. With the arrival of the era of e-government, the government's administrative structure has been reshaped. The traditional pyramid structure which is top-down and with clearly demarcated grade has been replaced by the flat type structure whose departments cooperate closely and coordinate mutually with each other. In order to adapt to these changes, the government has proposed an e-government mode which sets the public as the centre, emphasizes that to redesign the government business processes according to the customers' demand and provides high quality service to the society.

III. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CORE COMPETENCE OF FUJIAN PROVINCE IN THE NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

A. The Competitors and Competitive Content of Fujian Provincial Government

Judging from the geographical position, firstly Fujian province is located between Yangtze River delta and Pearl River delta and is next door to two most developed economical belts. Secondly Fujian province is also located along the coast of southeast China and facing Taiwan across the straights. Therefore, as a provincial government, the competitors of Fujian province include: one is other coastal provinces and cities such as Zhejiang, Guangdong, Shanghai, and Jiangsu, the other is Taiwan Island which faces Fujian across the sea and is connected with Fujian by blood. As a coastal and big province, Fujian Provincial government's ability of providing ideas, seeking resources, creating conditions and avoiding defects for the development strategy in Fujian province has played a large role in the competing with other competitors. Therefore, how to enhance the core competitiveness of Fujian province, strengthen the positive role of government behaviour in the provincial competitiveness of Fujian and win the competition against other coastal provinces and cities and Taiwan province are important parts of improving Fujian provincial government's core competence. Especially in the network environment, the reflection on competitiveness of a province no longer limited to some traditional geographic location, natural resources and some other factors, but more to consider information resources etc. Therefore, the government's information ability, decision-making ability, the policy implementation ability and the monitoring ability have become the government's core competence to seek survival and development.

B. The Current Situation of Fujian Provincial Government's Competitiveness

China's research centre of economic comprehensive competitiveness released the latest evaluation results of economic comprehensive competitiveness which includes 31 provincial administrative regions of the whole country from 2006 to 2007 [3]. In the rankings of nationwide provincial government's competitiveness, Fujian provincial government ranked both 8, which was middle level in the nation. However compared with some of the neighbouring provinces, Fujian province obviously fell behind in its competitors such as Zhejiang and Guangdong which are all in the top four. The evaluation indexes of provincial government's competitiveness include three indexes which are: the government's competitiveness of economic development, the government's competitiveness of economic control and the government's competitiveness of economic guarantee. These all have explained that the competitiveness of Fujian provincial government was in the middle level, and Fujian provincial government has obtained some advantages in the provincial competition, however there is still some

space for Fujian provincial government to continually improve its competitiveness.

TABLE 1: THE QUALIFYING TABLE OF NATIONAL PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S COMPETITIVENESS WHICH INCLUDES FUJIAN AND ITS COMPETITORS

Fujian and its competitors	Jiangsu	Shang hai	Zhe jiang	Fu jian	Guang dong
ranking	3	1	2	8	4

C. The Problems Faced by Fujian Provincial Government when it Constructs its Competitiveness

C1. The Level of the Information Infrastructure is not High

In the past 50 years, considering the situation in Taiwan Straits, basically the state has invested little in the infrastructure and the key industrial projects in Fujian province, so that the level of infrastructure in Fujian province is in the downstream level of the whole country [4]. Since the implementation of "Digital Fujian", the provincial finance has invested the capital over 2 million yuan to open the government information network project of Fujian province. At present the transverse provincial broadband network has linked 180 provincial units together, the portrait network has linked 9 cities divided into districts and 84 counties (cities, districts), and the information development is gradually changing the production and living of urban and rural residents, so we can say that the investment of Fujian government for information infrastructure construction has got some achievements. By contrast, Shanghai, as the competitor of Fujian, has basically realized broadband network, digitization and wider coverage in the basic information communication network, and basically solve the bottleneck problem of information transmission. In addition, Shanghai also has built the largest supercomputing centre in domestic, whose operation ability has enhanced to 11 trillion times/sec, which makes the exchange capacity of Shanghai information communication network enhance considerably. Therefore, the construction of information infrastructure of Shanghai is in the national advanced level [5]. As another typical competitor, Taiwan's infrastructure has already broken through the level of amount, and turned to the promotion of the quality. The construction of Taiwan's information infrastructure began to turn the pure network construction to the main attack directions as follows: accelerating the broadband network construction and providing the network services which are quick and with reasonable price and high quality; promoting various application services such as e-commerce actively, and providing diversified, rich and useful information content of network; developing the basic education of the information, improving people's information literacy and promoting the effective utilization of various networks resources [6].

After the comparisons, we should admit that the standards, sharing, service system of the information

technology in Fujian are still relatively backward. The overall level of digitization in Fujian is only around 30% and the information technology construction has scattered, uneconomical and inefficient, low-level repeating phenomena, so that the information achievements and data which are invested and developed by government annually still can't be deep processed and shared; the wasting and lack of information technology basic investment and information technology talent are coexist, and the problems of information and network security are gradually outstanding. Compared with other provinces, the infrastructure is the shortcoming of Fujian. If the infrastructure construction can be improved in recent years, the overall competitiveness of Fujian province should be improved.

C2. The Integration Degree of Government Information Resources is Low

The abilities of information sharing and utilizing are important capacities in government's information resource. In order to reduce the cost of government's information sharing and improve the efficiency of government's resources sharing, Fujian provincial government promoted the initial establishment of the information resource directory and the exchange system [7]. They are as follows: building the overall catalogue of Fujian provincial government information and the information directory of departments' government, constructing the information sharing business model which is throughout the links such as "information catalogue, information registration, information release, information retrieval and information locator, information acquisition, information use, information management etc", developing Fujian provincial government information directory management service system to realize the organization classification of the government information according to industry, departments and theme, and opening up preliminary the whole process including the information exchange management service system; formulating "the management measures of the Fujian government information sharing" and "the directories management measures of the Fujian province government information resources", "the implementation measures of the Fujian government information sharing exchange", which have provided guarantee for cataloguing registration, acquisition management and sharing application of information resources regulating. By contrast, the integration methods and ideas of the information resources of other provinces are consistent. The main work is to form the cooperation mechanism of joint in provincial departments at first, to integrate the existing resources of various departments, as well as to develop and apply, expand the basics and share the resources systematically and designedly according to the needs of various departments. In this way we not only can save the investment, but also can ensure that the information is complete, comprehensive and timely updated.

We should see the efforts in the aspect of information integration which are made by Fujian provincial government. But after all it is not a long time of the implementation of e-government in Fujian province, what's more, many

infrastructures have just been built and some big projects of resource integration are still in the stage of operation, so the effect of information integration hasn't revealed. We believe that through a period of hard work, Fujian will catch up with the other competitors in the ability of information resources integration.

C3. The Construction Performance of G2G is Inefficient

Especially that it does not play a significant role in the supporting effect for public service. "Digital Fujian" are more staying on the level of office automation and external information release, and the effect that e-government promotes the service level of government has not displayed. Fujian provincial government has basically realized its office automation, and the crystallization of modern information technology such as various application systems have released the information resources which are bounded in civil servants' notebook, various statements and the computers on the desks in the past, so the civil servants of the government can use e-government to improve their efficiency of dealing with their affairs. Fujian Provincial government has basically completed its office automation. However, the performances of the government's functions are still staying in the traditional way. This is related with the order of priority of the projects which we have planned in the e-government affairs. That is to say, since the projects which we preferentially supported are not the ones with truly high social attention as well as obviously economic and social benefits, and e-government emphasizes on some surface statistical data excessively. For example, we only care about the quantity of the information database rather than the utilization rate of the database when we construct the database. According to the statistics, the application system in Fujian province plays has not played its full role. At this time, the catalogue of information resources of the provincial government has calculated out 299 business databases and 324 business application systems. However, the databases which can be as real shared resources in the scope of the province are scarce, and the databases which contributed to the function of the government just have been changed from the government's traditional handwork into electronic work.

The province who does the best in the functions of government is Taiwan. [8]We can see the electronic level of the government functions from the satisfaction degree of its public. When the public interviewees in Taiwan were consulted about the satisfaction degree of the government's computer and internet service, there were half of the public who expressed affirmation (very satisfied 4.8%, satisfied 45.2 %), only sixteen percent said that they were not satisfied, the ones with no opinion accounted for 31.2 percent. However, the public of the Fujian province do not well understand the basic situation of e-government construction in Fujian, not to mention the satisfaction degree of service level of e-government.

D. The Construction of Core Competence of Fujian Provincial Government

D1. Overall Planning and Basis of Competence

The geographic location of Fujian province is special. In the network environment, the government's information ability, decision-making ability, policy executive ability and supervision ability have become the core abilities of our provincial government to seek survival and development. The construction of these abilities which relates to the overall development of our provincial government is an extremely extensive work and need to make overall planning and advance gradually. On the one hand, in considering of the overall situation of the economic and social development of Fujian province, we should construct the integration of urban and rural, and continuously perfect urban, rural and regional information infrastructure and services system construction, and we also should continue to deepen the development, application and promotion of various industries in our province, and comprehensively collect the information of some fields such as economic, political, social and culture, to construct our province's core competitiveness in a unified way. On the other hand, our government should keep close contact with related departments of state, and pay attention to the relevant actions of the competitive provinces. It also need to fully debrief the opinions about government work opinions from all circles, to fully understand the trend of national economic and social development, thus we can consider the key infrastructure construction of our province as a whole, then to avoid the phenomenon that each does things in his own way and the problem of the repetitive construction, and pay attention to save and keep down waste, thereupon reduce economic costs.

In addition to perfecting the construction of the hardware infrastructure in this province, we should also strengthen vigorously the construction of the unified e-government basic network in whole province, which not only connect with the nation's e-government network, but also integrate the website resources of various counties and cities in the province, and establish the unified public service system.

D2. Careful Construction and Resources Integration

Public policy is a method which is established through the political process by public authorities and whose purpose is to solve public problems, achieve the public target and realize the public interests. With the increasing diversification and complication of social development, the government needs to face more and more decision-making problems, one decision error may cause a series of adverse reaction and cause the disorder of whole society, thus damages the competitiveness of government. In the process of the construction of the core competitiveness, our province shouldn't satisfy the pursuit of the short-term external advantages in the west side of Taiwan Strait. But on the basis of constantly learning and accumulating the knowledge and

ability, our government should strengthen the development of basic information resources, establish the unified system of information collection and analysis, and carefully construct the integrating abilities of resource elements, then to solve the problems of the shortage and the low utilization ratio of the government's information resources from the source, and to support the decision-making of government and enhance the government's ability of decision-making. In the network environment, we should take the provincial cities divided into districts as the units to collect the related information of geography, resource, population and enterprise etc to construct the complete and accurate information database. And based on this, we could use the existing information technology to realize the integration and sharing of the resource, then to make full use of the resources.

D3. People Oriented and to Deepen the Application

Influenced by the traditional planned economy system, the service function of our government's departments is weak; the emphasis on government work is more government office and its internal management. But with the proposal of the strategic objective of "service-oriented government" in China, the service concept which takes public as the centre has been more and more acceptable to the government. The main responsibility of the government is to serve to the enterprises and the public, which requires that in the process of performing its obligation, the government must set up the concept of taking customers as the centre, optimize its office business process, and adopt a variety of forms to provide services to the enterprises and the populace. With deepening and development of the information technology in all areas of the social life, the integration of the information technology and the government's public service has become an inevitable trend. Therefore, when constructing the core competitiveness, our province should actively use the information technology to deepen the government office business and to innovate the construction of business project and service mode, and then to promote the services which are convenience for the enterprises and the public. Firstly we should continue to integrate the resources of various departments system, expand government's office automation, to promote the deepening application of the functions of the government sector business and to improve the service quality. According to the actual situation of our province, we also should survey the existence necessity of current government management and the rationality of the process design, and reconstruct the inappropriate place according to the construction of e-government, and will never be satisfied with moving the old way of management from paper work to online work. Secondly, we should continue to push forward the construction of the system which is convenience to the populace, and construct the service platform which has close relations with the people's livelihood and fit the need of the mass. The government can start from the government activities which people care about and are simple accurate, for instance some business activities such as medical

treatment, social security, the examination and approval of administrative licensing items, consultations and reflections of the questions etc, then develop it to other senior function till that the conditions are mature. Thirdly, we should continue to promote the application of enterprise's information development to ensure that the enterprise will further drive the development of the whole region economy. The government should also build the provincial unified enterprise operation service platform, innovate the service mode of platform operation, intensify the application efforts of platform promotion and expand the scale of users.

D4. Management Strengths and Whole Course Protection

Government core competence relates highly with the overall development of the province, so it must be reinforced managed and got whole course protection. In the network environment, in order to meet these requirements that: 1) the government's information function works effectively, 2) the decision-making ability is scientific and democratic, 3) the executive ability is accurate and efficient, 4) the supervisory function gets greatly enhanced, the government must make these efforts that: 1) accelerate the formulation of the regulations and standards, 2) strengthen the propaganda and monographic study of the government core competence overall the province, 3) train relevant persons and strengthen the construction of talents to enough the resources of the core competence development in the future. In addition, the government should also strengthen the management of institutional construction itself, break the traditional management system which is restrict and mutual partitioned, indeed strengthen the coordination among the departments of the government, and improve the openness and transparency of government's work, so as to get a strong guarantee for the construction of the core competence of our province.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the process of the government core competence construction, we have, and also will face, many new situations or new questions. Therefore, we must always adhere to rational and free mental processes, derive the truth from facts, and make bold innovation.

REFERENCES

- [1] YangChenghu. "Discuss the Relations between the E-government and the Competitiveness of Government". Beijing Machinery Industry University Journal. vol. 2, No. 03, pp. 54-65, 2006.
- [2] Efraim Turban (USA). Electronic Commerce: "A Managerial Perspective", Beijing: Publishing House of Electronics Industry", January vol. 72, No. 07, pp. 540-650, 2003.
- [3] Dong Jinxiang, , "Customer Relationship Management, Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press", December vol. 42, No. 207, pp. 5-65.2002.
- [4] LiMinRong. Dynamic Comparative "Research on Chinese Provincial Economic Comprehensive Competitiveness: Setting Beijing, Fujian Province, Heilongjiang as an Example". Fuzhou, Fujian Normal University'. vol. 2, No. 107, pp. 162-166., 2006,

- [5] LiZhangcheng. "Comprise the Construction of the E-government of the Yangtze River Delta". Sunan Technology Development. vol. 2, No. 05, pp. 54-65, 2007.
- [6] Liang Baoxue. "Knowledge Government Tacit KnowledgeAcquisition and Sharing Analysis". Shenyang Normal University, vol. 21, No. 207, pp. 54-65,2011.
- [7] Zhou Hongren, and Tang Tichan, "Theory and Practice of E-government" [M]: A Reader of E-government Knowledge, Beijing: National School of Administration Press, vol. 2, No. 07, pp. 54-65,2002
- [8] Wu Xingbing, "360-Degree Customer Relationship Management: Enterprise Profit Engine, Beijing: China Civil Aviation Press", May vol. 2, No. 07, pp. 54-65, 2002.