

## Nexus between e-governance and service delivery in Nigeria: (Assessing the role of stakeholders)

### 1. Kabiru Dahiru

Department of Public Administration, Gombe State University, Gombe Nigeria.

### 2. Yusuf Abdu Yusuf

Department of Public Administration, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Bauchi Nigeria.

### 3. Hindatu Maigari. Yerima

Department of Public Administration, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Bauchi Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to examine the linkage between e-governance and service delivery in Nigeria by assessing the role of stakeholders on the implementation of e-governance for better public service delivery in Nigeria, the study use new public management theory to explain the effect of paradigm shift from traditional administrative approach of governance to a modern approach (e-governance). The study also uses a quantitative method to capture data and analysed same using a stratified random sampling. While the tool used in statistical analysis are cronch bach Alpha and content validity index. However, the research findings indicate that, e-governance is effective in providing better services with the help of stakeholders. The study also reveal that the success of e-governance implementation in Nigeria is centred on effective communication and organisational skills in order to maintain the vision, values and aspirations of all of the parties involved couple with a robust ICT infrastructures in placed.

**Keywords:** E-governance, Stakeholders, Information Communication Technology, Public Service Delivery.

### Introduction

As the name implies electronic governance or e-governance is a strategy employed in improving public service, it has become a glob al shift for better public service. Its idea was emanated to automated public services by using information and communication technology (ICT), it brings better access to information and public services through electronic means for efficient and smooth running of government activities.

Governance is an organised way of managing and improving the wellbeing of citizens, thereby making lives desirous and accessible. It is also seen a responsibility of those in the position of authority to effectively the development reaches every individual citizens. In broader perspectives, many scholars and researchers posit governance in different views. However, Governance include two specific aspects: (1) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources (integrity efficient management), and (2) the capacity of a government to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge its functions (Qureshi 1999).

Fundamentally, Good governance is essential for sustaining economic transformation in developing countries. However, many developing countries currently lack the capacity, as opposed to the will, to achieve and then sustain a climate of good governance (Hope 2009). Good governance encapsulates values such as enhanced participation, transparency, accountability, and public access to information. It also helps to combat and secure both basic human rights and the rule of law. Such values are often associated with Western liberal democratic political institutions, but are now increasingly sought within existing national institutions in diverse political contexts (Overseas Development Institute 2013).

Consequently, Good governance is the existence within states of political accountability, bureaucratic transparency, the exercise of legitimate power, freedom of association and participation, freedom of information and expression, sound fiscal management and public financial accountability, respect for the rule of law, a predictable legal framework encompassing an interdependent and credible justice system, respect for human rights, an active legislature, enhanced opportunities for the development of pluralistic forces including civil society, and capacity development (Hope 2009).

On the hand, electronic governance is the use of information communication technology to provide seamless governance process. The use of ICT related gadget will provide a shift in governance from the ancient method for public service delivery to a more robust and easier way of managing public services. New ICT make significant contributions towards achieving governance desired objectives.

Globally, e-governance or e-government services began in in United State of America in 1998, when government came up with the idea of eliminating paper work by the then US president Clinton in 1997. They therefore, started developing a system that will eliminate the use of paperwork by the year 2000. Currently, the government is entering a new phase of implementing web 2.0, which is beyond the concept of e-governance. Even among countries which are doing well on e-governance there are different countries which lead on different parameters. When we compare Taiwan and USA on e-governance front US leads in online citizen participation while Taiwan score better in bridging the digital divide and utilizing mobile networks (Chen, Hsieh, 2009).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, E-governance is the foundation for the much needed accelerated development these economies so desperately need by way of Foreign Direct Investment. These benefits include improved efficiency, increase in transparency and accountability of government functions, convenient and faster access to government services, improved democracy and lower costs of administrative services. (Kamar and Ongo'ndo, 2007).

In Nigeria, e-governance policy came into the Nigerian administrative lexicon in the year 2000 when the then President Olusegun Obasanjo administration announced the National Policy on Information Technology. This move was to set the stage for the public sector to plan, develop and promote the use of information technology in the endless quest of trying to improve on their problematic service delivery (Olatokun & Adebayo, 2012).

The importance of an effective taxation system in a country cannot be overstated. Virtually, every government of the world has tax receipts representing the lion share of their generated revenues. Problems of tax administration such as tax evasion and tax avoidance which seems to have defied solution have continued to pose a nagging problem to the tax system in Nigeria. While some authors have blamed the situation on tax authorities for not living up to expectation with regards to utilizing tax returns to better the lives of the masses, others attribute it to the non-chalant and unpatriotic attitude of tax payers (Adebisi & Gbegi, 2013).

E-governance implementation in Nigeria can only be effective if the effort made by the stakeholders' right from initiation stage, monitoring, evaluation, recommendation, regulation to the successful utilisation is acknowledged. Therefore, the stakeholders' willingness, effort and ability to actualise the impact of e-governance had significantly, improved public service delivery in Nigeria. For the purpose of this research, the extant literature related to stakeholders in the e-governance and public services topics ranging from the importance of their involvement in service delivery (Balta, Greger, Wolf & Kremer, 2015). And policy and decision making processes (Balta et al., 2015).

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Technology revolution had brought sanity in to the system of governance not only in Nigeria but globally, the automation of public service via electronic channels is seen as an avenue for better public service in Nigeria. Consequently, the non-usage of ICT facilities in public service which has a direct linkage with non-availability of some infrastructural facilities like non-access to internet services, power generation failure, technological know-how etc affected the level of implementation and compliance with e-governance principle. These and many more had negatively slow down the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria.

Scholarly gap identified from relevant literatures are; (Bill, 2004; Chatterjee, 2010; Goel et al., 2012) in their studies of stakeholder theory in India identified four main stakeholders: Government leadership (senior managers and Stockholders); Employees of the department (Change Management; Process Reengineering); IT service provider (Skills availability; Project management); and Internal IT department (Knowledge Management; Infrastructure Availability). (Bill, 2004; Chatterjee, 2010; Flak & Rose, 2005; Glaser, 2005; Goel et al., 2012).

Therefore, the study tends to address issues on non-utilisation of e-governance facilities by the users of e-services and the inability of the e-governance regulatory bodies to impose mandatory usage of e-platforms in Nigeria.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to access the role of stakeholders in the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria while the specific objectives are;

1. To establish the linkage between e-governance and public service in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the courses of non-utilisation of e-governance services in Nigeria.
3. To proffer solutions to the non-utilisation of e-governance service in Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Electronic governance is the process of improving government process through the use of technology for automation and harmonisation of government activities. It's also seen as a digitalisation of governance for better public services. Scholars had various conception on the term depending on its relative usage and applicability.

E-government according to World Bank refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management.

The World Bank defines governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank 1992). Governance has increasingly become a major instrument for the successful growth performance and development purposes in the world.

In view of the foregoing, there is basically no precise definition of e-governance. Perhaps, many scholars had different connotation on the concept of e-governance although, they all refers to a modern way of managing public life. However, in improving the public service process, various terms such as e-administration, e-service, e-feedback, e-business, e-citizens, e-connections, e-learning, e-recording etc are applied for better public service delivery.

E-governance is the ICT-enabled route to achieving good governance. it integrates both the processing and the communication technologies, Visa viz the people, processes, information, and technology in the service of achieving governance objectives.

Heeks (2001) opines that e-governance goes beyond the mere automation of the internal processes and processing of data within a government. E-Governance includes the various processes public agencies must adapt to develop and deploy successful e-government services. E-governance, therefore, integrates a broad spectrum of complex ICT networks into a unified system to make the governance process better and less balkanized for government and end users.

Nkwe (2012) posit that e-governance is a shift from the traditional model of public administration to a modern day public administration. The shift is in terms of the delivery of government services to the citizens through the use of ICT facilities. While Ayo (2014) described e-governance as the governance of a nation through the use of Information Communication Technology.

## ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS ON E-GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

Globally, e-governance became an inevitable tool for improved public service, it couldn't just happen. Whereas, it started somewhere, so also in Nigeria the stakeholders had work tirelessly in ensuring its success. Thereby, making both individual and collective contribution for the realisation of successful e-governance implementation in Nigeria. Notable among the key stakeholders is the information technology IT service providers, such as national information technology development agency. NITDA, leadership of the country, which comprises of both executives, legislatives and judicial arms of government, e-governance compliant institutions in Nigeria which include ministries departments and agencies of government (MDAs) and their respective employees. Others include the users of e-services in Nigeria.

Adah, B.A, (2015) observed that Nigeria has employed various techniques to boost its ICT sector, thereby making Nigeria's telecommunication and ICT sector the fastest growing market in the African continent. He further opined that the country needs to introduce e-governance in all sphere of the society so as to ensure the efficiency of public services and the free flow of information from one sector to another.

### **The National information technology development agency (NITDA)**

This is a federal government agency created in April 2001 to implement and coordinate ICT development in Nigeria. It was established by law or an act of legislation to create a framework for the planning, research, development, standardization and application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, regulation of information technology practices in Nigeria by developing standards, guidelines and regulations. (National information technology Development Act 2007).

This implementation created an attempt to provide a unified national framework of Information and Communication Technology adoption in governance. The federal government of Nigeria made an announcement on the importance of her ICT policy for the nation in 2001 (Olatokun & Adebayo, 2012). E-governance created an awareness that no country or its government can perform its duties effectively in this era, without the adoption of technology. That is, applying internet services, in the process of service delivery. The Nigerian federal government saw the necessity for the nation to have a national policy on Information and Communication Technology as a result of the importance of ICT in governance.

However, the federal government created the new Ministry of Communication Technology. And later on it was transformed into a ministry of communication and digital economy. As part of the responsibilities conferred on this ministry is to coordinate ICT development and make progress as regard's the country's target on e-governance (Omerie & Omeire, 2014).

The E-Nigeria initiative was an attempt towards the connection of communities, relevant agencies, government organisations including educational institutions at all levels with information and communication technology pursued currently by the government. The ICT implementation project started from the National Rural Telephony programme, and includes the Public Service Network, ICT facilities loan scheme at state and local government levels, internet exchange point initiative and the wire Nigeria idea. These ICT implementation strategies are targeted at enabling accelerated growth of the nation (Ekeh, 2007). The mechanisms and skills required by a country to realize these initiatives is to make computers and other ICT enhancing equipment flexible and cheap for citizens to acquire..

Despite been a policy of national interest in Nigeria, the e-governance process required effort of regulatory bodies such as ICT enabled institutions like NITDA, which in turn will provide requisite support for the actualisation of the e-governance goals and objectives.

Their roles in making it a reality cannot be overemphasized, perhaps, the central role for ICTs: as governance becomes recognised as ever more information intensive, ICTs become an essential part of more and more governance initiatives. ICTs are also recognised as a key lever to change. They are no longer isolated on the side-lines. An integrated role for ICTs: e-governance means using ICTs as servants to the master of good governance. ICTs are no longer seen as an end in themselves and they are seen to work only as part of a wider systemic 'package'.

## The Leaders

Several researchers believe that leadership is a crucial implementation factor to be considered internally in order to promote organisational change and effectiveness. This indicates that top management support and strong governance or management are essential to avoid most challenges. Many e-Government projects fail due to the leaders' lack of understanding about e-Government and their inability to act consistently from the inception to the completion of the project. Leadership and awareness are crucial factors that scholars argue should be considered, especially prior to the implementation of e-Government (Hunter & Jupp, 2001; Jaeger & Thompson, 2003; Leigh Hunt, 2016; Song, 2006; Syafarudin, 2016).

In view of the foregoing, there is need for a political will by the government and behavioural intention to actualise and utilise the benefit of e-governance. At all levels of governance both executive, legislative and judicial arms of government should be technically provide all the necessary supports needed, prioritised and set up a standard, to actualised government effort on e-governance principle. Their resistance to change as innovative ideas that tend to transform the governance process to a more robust and technical is of utmost concerned.

Perhaps, the executive arms of government had provide conducive atmosphere of policy making process through bureaucracy, leadership commitment, reformers' role in helping eGovernment initiatives to sail through, clarity of vision and support, knowledgeable leadership and clear transmission of policy standards and objectives. The pivotal role played by the top management is to provide resources and formulate policies in a way that enhances the adoption of the new innovation and that the degree of resource allocation and effective management control affects the use of e government. Weng and Lin (2011).

Consequently, the legislator's effort in the implementation of NITDA act 2001 as an enabling law which empower the agency to serve as an apex ICT agency in the country to coordinate and regulate ICT activities. They also provide legal and appropriate legislative or regulative framework to secure the exchange of information within and between the government agencies, citizens and businesses. Governments tend to set up regulatory bodies to formulate policies and monitor and evaluate the ICT implementation, including e-Government and other information systems. These include: security standards; privacy legislation; the legal validity of online transactions; the degree of liberalisation of the telecommunication market, including the internet service providers market; and a positive fiscal environment for acquiring IT equipment (Agunloye, 2007; UN/DESA, 2002; Watts, 2001).

## The Government employees

Public servants need to be trained and retrained on government reforms agenda, the effect of e-governance for better public services, goes in line with transparency, accountability and improved services. Their effort in effecting the changes will make them to be an agent of change. Perhaps, they will be involve in change management and process re-engineering. They are responsible for undertaking eGovernment initiatives and prone to resist change due to a fear of increased workload as well as quality and commitment of local government staff – implementers of any new e-Government programmes or policies. Training can positively affect the attitudes of employees toward adopting and using new technology for service delivery. (Akbar, 2015).

Talukder (2012) agrees with the idea by concluding that positive training creates positive change and transformation towards an innovation which increases adoption. He further explains that, if the right training and awareness are provided, it will reduce some of the obstacles that have the potential to slow down adoption and guarantees the necessary help to employees when they face difficulties in technology innovation use. He therefore concluded that, acceptance of innovation is highly influenced by the amount of training provided to employees since it promotes employees' attitude, awareness, skills and knowledge that increases better work performance (Talukder, 2012).

## The Internet services

Globally, e-governance can only be actualise with the roles played by internet itself, does the internet services safe, secure and reliable for e-governance processing. In accomplishing the role of internet for better public service. (Belanger & Carter, 2008). Lee et al (2011) stated that e-government service adoption depends on business users' trust in internet technology. Suha and Morris (2008) argued that, faith in the internet is more likely to affect the

adoption of e-government. Trust in e-government is defined as the belief that governments will implement an e-government where issues of security and privacy are taken care of (Alomari Sandhu & Woods, 2010). They further argued that assurance of trust positively affects trust of internet and believes in e-government security and privacy which in turn influences intentions to use an e-government service. Some empirical studies have supported that relational characteristics such as trust in the institution who directly or indirectly provides new technology service positively influence users' adoption (Belanger & Carter, 2008; Lee et al 2011).

### **The E-governance compliance institutions in Nigeria**

Be as it may, in Nigeria some ministries and other agencies of government have adopted full while others had partial implementation of e-governance process. The realisation of the prospects of e-governance and its role in enhancing public service delivery in Nigeria make it necessary for almost all public institutions like National Examination Council NECO, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board JAMB, National Youth Service Corp NYSC, Federal Inland Revenue Service FIRS, Nigerian custom service NCS and many more to adopt.

In view of the foregoing, educational related institutions like NECO, JAMB, uses e-governance as an avenue in the reduction of mass cheating, thereby significantly reduces the rate of corrupt practices in examinations. This led to the implementation of e-governance (at least e-application element of e-governance) Gentile et al. 2007; Kahn 1990.

However, the use of technology by JAMB in interacting with other government agencies like National Youth Service Corps, National University Commission, etc. known as government to government (G2G) may therefore improve better public service delivery. Thereby, e-governance is often referred to as an avenue for the presence of government agencies or institutions on a static website online (Gilber et al 2004, Ohiole & Ojo 2015, Garson 2006).

Fervently, the boost in technology application made their services to be more effective, transparent and indeed user friendly by all.

### **The Users of service**

In order to achieve desired goals of better public service delivery in Nigeria, application of internet by the users of service such as citizens is highly imperative. Whereas, different kinds of services are offered conveniently, cost effective and user friendly.

The International Review of Law Computer and Technology (2004) posits public service as the direct and indirect services provided by a government to its nationals or residents within a country. Government provides public service directly by engaging in production, distribution or service and indirectly by financing services rendered to the citizenry by third parties.

Oronsaye (2010), public service delivery can be seen as 'the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. This implies that users of service such as tax payers, student alike, private sector customers, such as mobile communication subscribers, bank customers, other clients etc. do have seamless services and consequently their demand were promptly meet with the aid of e-services. It would also help to build a strong association with the clientele, leading to improved quality and service climate, which would be enhanced through service orientation (Gronroos 2006).

Excellent services need to be delivered to the client as the private sectors considers their customers as a king, therefore, a king should be a beneficiary of the e-governance process

## **THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

Sequel to the study area, the New Public Management theory (NPM) of Hood and Jackson 1991, who are working in the field of public administration from public-choice theory it's an approach that seeks to build an administration by implementing flexibility, transparency, and minimum government de-bureaucratization process. However, the theory had a strong focus on financial control, greater customer orientation, introduction of new

corporate governance, creating network for organisations, moving away from standardised service forms to more flexible and varied services forms. And above all a shift from ancient mode of organisational management to a new modern organisational management.

In view of the theoretical postulations, it will further improve government effectiveness and efficiencies for better public services. Hence, its applicability in the public service facilitates and encourages the usage of technology or ICT facilities for effective services delivery through e-governance processing. The usage of internet service in public institutions facilities prompt delivery of services, it also encourages transparency and accountability in governance. The new public management promoted the commercialization as far as it is possible to promote the role of governments in providing services to its citizens, and of the state's relationship with its citizens (Kurt, 2003). NPM offers a fundamental set of philosophies on which so many contemporary e-government initiatives are founded (Chadwick & May, 2003). In the opinion of Thompson and Thompson (2001). Aucoin (1990) remarks that NPM-led reforms initiatives were stimulated by a number of partly self-contradictory ideas, reinforced by the private sector market-oriented organizational and operating ideologies. Peters and Pierre (1998) also observe that NPM techniques seem to be found rather broadly, whereas governance is sensitive to political and cultural environment; it is therefore, likely to appear in dissimilar institutional systems in diverse context. Mathiasen (1996) also comments on this theme, and argues that while our inclination may view NPM as simply a laundry collection of tools of best practices, its applicability and effectiveness will vary considerably from one country or jurisdiction to another.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Correlation research design was employed for the study. The study's target population was some selected federal government institutions who are e-governance compliant and 100 members of the general public who using any medium of e-governance for public service in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used to select 56 respondents for the study. Both primary data collected using questionnaires and secondary data collected from statistical abstracts was used for the study. Cronbach's Alpha and Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to establish the reliability and validity of the research instruments respectively. Descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics using Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used to analyse data. The analysed data was presented in tables and figures.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

E-government implementation is thus impacted by socio-cultural, economic, infrastructural and technical factors, in addition to resistance to change amongst public servants. Prior to the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria, public service had significantly improved with much efficiency and transparency. Whereas, the use of technology strengthen governance and connect citizens with government. Such that citizens pays their taxes, school fees, the interactive aspects of e-Government allow both citizens and bureaucrats to send and receive information (West, 2004).

The prospects of e-governance culminated in transparency in governance and reduction in corrupt practices. It has been succinctly established that, with the aid of electronic governance public servant became very cautious in managing public resources for the betterment of their future. Heeks (1998) indicates that the level of corruption in the public sector sharply decreases in countries where e-Government exists.

Similarly, e-governance serves as a catalyst for better and efficient public service in Nigeria. The database of government resources had been efficiently centralised for service delivery. E-governance reduces barriers of coordination and cooperation within the Nigerian public administration (Fatile, 2012).

Consequently, many e-government projects were not successful due to fact that their effectiveness is compromised by issues that evolve during the collaboration between the e-government projects partners, which often involve numerous stakeholders. It is expected that a holistic framework will allow flexibility in terms of its application to all sectors for better service delivery.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study, made the following recommendations;

- A well designed ICT need to be incorporated into all the government agencies
- A harmonised department/unit responsible for managing electronic process need to be co-opted for monitoring and supervision of ICT related infrastructures across government agencies.
- A competency test need to be regularly conducted for civil servant with much emphasis on ICT related know how.
- Government should device a means of providing an alternative source of power energy that is hundred percent efficient like modern solar energy for computer usage.
- A bureaucratic reform is also needed for easy access to government functionaries.
- A sufficient budget on human capacity building is required.
- Government should deploy an automated performance evaluation system of its employees.
- A transparent communication avenue needs to be put in place between government and the users of services.
- Adequate fund should be provided for the procurement of modern ICT gadgets.
- Attitudinal change for public servant on managing government resources with sincerity.
- Strict adherence to corporate governance culture by civil servants.
- The study recommends that, e-government implementation requires effective communication and organisational skills in order to maintain the vision, values and aspirations of all of the parties involved.

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