



Electronic Governance in Nigeria, Citizen Participation and Leadership Responsibility in a Digitalized World: Challenges and Public Reaction

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Abstract Since the industrial revolution, the world has not witnessed at a grand scale and at such a speed a revolution such as the digitalization of virtually every facet of human Endeavour. Through electronic governance, business with government is exceedingly facilitated rapidly and probably with less stress. Like globalization which affects countries and regions differently, so is electronic governance. As a mechanism of governance, its positive impact is enormous when viewed in relation to time, volume of materials transmitted, speed, accuracy etc. in fact, its unfolding transformation of the world is unspeakable. In this study positioned to explore the impact of e-governance in Nigeria vis-à-vis citizen participation and political leadership responsibility; primary data were used through structured Likert Scale Questionnaire. The survey research design covered different segment of society such as the civil servant, trader, teacher/lecturer, civil society, lawyer and students. The non-probability sampling method as well as the systematic random sampling method was used. Finally, the hypothesis was tested using non-parametric test, (Chi-Square) while the data was analyzed with the aid of statistical package for Social Sciences, 20.0 SPSS. From the Chi-Square, $\chi^2 = 21.34$ $P > 0.05$. It can be concluded that there exist an association between the citizen educations and application of e-governance; suggesting that e-governance will thrive better where citizens are educated. Furtherance in Nigerian type of society, from the Chi-Square Value ($\chi^2 = 212.209$ $P > 0.05$, $DF = 4$). It was well appreciated that money spent on e-governance was not in any way a waste of resources.

Keywords electronic governance, citizen participation, political leadership, digitalized world, primary school enrolment

Introduction

The dawn of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has completely revolutionized the world in every facet and with a speed never imagined. This has continued to affect the ways things are done at the micro and the macro levels, be it local, national and international. Things that are usually done offline are now carried out online. The entire process has changed the way states are managed and the relationship between a state and its citizens are consummated such that systemically, governments of today have gone digitalized transforming into electronic-government or (e-government). In reality, the entire world has gone digitalized and what we see or read now is electronic world (e-world) or e-governance with its prospects, weaknesses, illusions and even problems [1].

As a system of governance, it portends great advantage just like globalization favours some countries and do not favour others, so is e-governance. As a system of governance, e-governance can impact positively on the way and manner citizen interact with government when they can satisfy the basic requirement which is education. The developed world can be proud of 100 per cent literate population. In the developing countries, there exist



great number of illiterate; in this situation, e-government cannot function smoothly as this set of people would be marginalized or disenfranchised.

But e-government's core objective is the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services for the benefit of citizens, communities, businesses and organizations [(Deloitte, 2000 quoted by Bart: 2012). In other words, information and communication are the stock in trade for e-government; critical as they are, they may mean little to those who cannot benefit for lack of education.

It is therefore, unfortunate at this time in the history of a nation where the government is simply following or applying international standard of e-government modalities in its operations without taking into cognizance the vast illiterate folks as well as the dearth of the much needed infrastructure, with particular reference to energy and internet facilities. In a situation where a good number of the citizens are marginalized, how can the government successfully pursued its public policy via e-governance?

It is in recognition of the lacuna inherent in government approach to societal goods which from time to time condemn a number of citizens to apathy or marginalization from benefitting from the dividends of such project couple with the poverty of leadership that this paper wants to explore. Thus in the process, an appraisal of the citizens, perception of e-governance and the overall challenges and prospects for the nation's development as well as political stability and technological advancement was covered.

This introduction is critically followed by Statement of Problems, Theoretical Exploration, Objectives, Methodology, Research Hypothesis, Result & Discussions, Public Reaction and e-governance, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations in that order.

Statement of the Problem

The primary function of e-government is online information dissemination to its citizens. It is the use of information and telecommunication technology (ICT) to enable government deliver its programme and services more effectively, efficiently and broadly [2-3] which means that the citizens are knowledgeable enough to know the importance of website or government website as a resource centre for information or hub of information. Accessible and trustworthy information are important source of information and government are becoming aware of the importance of information for good governance and the ability to manage and use information effectively for the implementation of public policy [2].

The ability of the government to continually collate reliable information and disseminate same is predicated on some fundamental democratic ethos and values as articulated by [2]. They include:

- The protection of human rights and rule of law.
- Accountable and transparent government processes and leadership.
- Wide public participation in public policies
- Feedback system and meta policy

According to (Caldow, 2004) access to information should be a right; in fact, democracy is all about informed and engaged citizenry [4]. However, in a developing country such as Nigeria where corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the society and issues of human rights and rule of law have been completely trampled upon, and where those who are supposed to be the keeper of information or records have been compromised, citizens are skeptical in feeding the authorities with genuine information. The reason problems arise often in the implementation of e-governance is where citizen secrets are leaked since there are no legislation regulating it. Information believed to have been protected under the law is leaked. Examples abound of leaked secret Bank pin number and other strategic and confidential codes are tampered with which in developed countries are not common. In Nigeria, it is a daily occurrence which points accusing finger to the authorities, agents or officials responsible to ensure the protection of such information.

There is also the very common case of illiterate folks or ICT illiterates who get to Automated Teller Machine (ATM), but could not operate it. If he/she is lucky, he gets the assistance of the security agents, if not, he relies on any "good Samaritan" to help him/her out. In the process, many have been defrauded. This is a great lacuna on the part of the system which does not take into cognizance, citizens who are not literate enough to operate electronic devices. It is a consequence of an unresponsive leadership as well as a fall out of the forceful integration of Nigeria into the world system.

Much as globalization which has affected Nigeria negatively as a result of low level of industrialization and technological development which has made Nigeria a dwarf, unable to compete in the international market; a likely scenario is what Nigeria is experiencing with electronic-governance.

As noted by Ochara-Mugarda who sees e-government as a tool to build social, human, digital and physical resources in order to empower individuals communities and whole society. This presupposes that such a society be totally literate, paradoxically, Nigeria in 2015 as a result of the poverty of leadership has forced a large number of her citizens to be disenfranchised and like globalization, the illiterate Nigerians are overtaken by e-



governance and so cannot benefit from its application of e-governance in their social, business or political undertaken.

This situation hinders a broad participation of the population in exercising their civic duties and contributing meaningfully their quota to the development of the society. The set of marginalized people are further disallowed to air their views or raise their voices on issues that affect them and on which they would like to make contributions.

Other problems besetting the nation which are all intertwined with the inability to fully apply ICT in governance includes mass unemployment, poverty, and thievery of the nation's resources, deplorable infrastructure, unresponsive government and increased illiteracy among others. The process of e-governance or its application in Nigeria is deemed hampered by lack of adequate planning and like many other projects undertaken in this country are implemented sporadically and in a piecemeal manner. This is to give room for corruption which at the end makes a mockery of such project for inability to deliver nor proffer superior alternative for implementing it. In Nigeria, with respect to e-government, and like other public projects, one of the basic steps that could be adopted in implementing it, is the development of long-term plan that would take into consideration the wants, needs, characteristics/peculiarities of the local communities, villages and involve the citizens as stakeholders in the project.

As a result, the application of e-government or its deepening is a function of the development of ICT in all sectors of the economy so that citizens can communicate with the government via electronic technology, but the citizen needs to be fully informed on the technicalities and processes involved in the ICT in this way, the disenfranchised would be empowered in a globalized world.

The Concepts of Electronic Governance

The concept of e-governance and e-government as well as various electronic terminologies that have become common place without public understanding, needs to be clarified.

In this article, the concept of e-governance and e-government shall be used synonymously, yet, their meaning slightly differ or the former much deeper in meaning than the latter. E-government is the use of information and communication technology to improve access to and delivery of government services for the benefit of the citizens [5], it is a platform for sharing information, providing services and dealing with citizens businesses and other departments of government [5]. E-governance on the other hand encompasses a wider version of the application of ICT to enhance good governance and to encourage the citizens to be proactive at the opportunity provided by unhindered information [6-7]. In other words, e-governance encompasses all the activities of the state as remarked by Mathias and Gaulle (2003) that the cardinal benefits of e-government can only be meaningful when e-governance has been achieved. E-governance is made up of three key elements which are: e-government, e-regulation and e-democracy. More than the addition of these three elements, e-governance, is concerned with how the state employs ICT to provide better services, often in cooperation with the private sector to the citizens including better regulation and provision of public services, as well as rule – making, involving various societal actors in its decision-making process [8].

Noteworthy is that ICT embraces both online and offline technologies. It is the convergence of information (IT) and telecommunication (CT), a multichannel process that embodies digital technology and all its uses and variants namely: the computer, the internet, mobile telephony, digital media, broadband technology and the different electronic applications (e-banking, e-commerce etc) [5].

In discussing e-governance therefore, it goes beyond the internet, it includes mobile cell phone, and otherwise, a country like Nigeria may remain underdeveloped in e-governance. A propos to e-government and government services, there are four well-known tracks through which government services are carried out; they are: Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Employee (G2E) and Government-to-Government (G2G). However, our focus in this article is centered on Government-to-Citizen and the responsibility of the leadership in ensuring accessibility of e-governance to the people and thus bridge the digital divide. In other words, it boils down to electronic governance and citizen participation or democratic participation and (marginalization or apathy).

According to Webster's democracy is a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation.

If we put an "e" in front of democracy [4] it amounts to using information technology tools to facilitate, improve and expand the exercise of democracy.

The core principle of democracy is an informed and engaged citizenry, the question is how can a government use digital media to both actively engage citizens and advance its public policies? [4]

To this end, this study attempted to provide answers to the following questions;

- i. How do Nigerian citizens perceive the current e-governance exercise?
- ii. What is the level of preparedness of the Nigerian government for e-governance?



iii. How effective is the e-governance exercised compared with analogue/pervious era? The major objective of the study is to investigate electronic governance in Nigeria; citizen participation and leadership responsibility. To achieve this objective, the study focused on the following specific objectives; to (i) investigate how citizens perceive e-governance in Nigeria, (ii) to examine the level of preparation by the government, and (iii) to access the effectiveness of e-governance in Nigeria. To advance the course of this study, a null hypothesis was proposed and tested.

(i). H1: There is no significance relationship between e-governance and the level of education of the citizen.

(ii). H1: The cost of e-governance is not a share way of wasting nation's resources.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study is the survey research design. The scope of the study covered different segment of the society. The justification for this selection is as a result of the convenience associated with gathering of information, and the fact that it will help in collecting relevant information for the study. The various segments of the society where the society includes: civil servant, trader, teacher/lecturer, civil society, lawyers and students. The non probability sampling method (purposive or judgmental sampling method), as well as the systematic random sampling method were used in the study. The purposive sampling technique was used as a result of the researcher's opinion that it will yield appropriate information, and every subject in the sample has a uniform chance of being selected. Primary data were extracted using structured likert scale questionnaire as the research instrument. Finally, the hypotheses were tested using non-parametric test (chi-square), while the data was analyzed with the aid of statistical package for social sciences, 20.0 SPSS.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

S. No.	variables	Items	Cronbach alpha
1.	Citizen's perception	7	0.690
2.	Leadership responsibility	4	0.82
3.	e-governance	4	0.73

Result and Discussion

Table 2 below shows 53.5% of the respondents were male while 44.2% were female. This shows that there were more male in the study. Meanwhile 2.3% of the sample did not report their gender. The respondents' distribution on age shows that 8.1% of the survey was less than 20 years. 11.6% of the sample reported age between 20-30 years while more 33% (33.7%) aged between 31 and 40years. Meanwhile, those that were aged 41 and above were 45.3%. These represent the largest age group in the study. On educational attainment, 16.35% were BSC, HND holders, 24.47% hold NCE/OND, and 45.3% were WASC/SSCE holders. Meanwhile 11.6% of the respondents reported that they hold Master Degree. In all, nearly 50% of the respondents hold ordinary level certificate.

Table 2: Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage %
Age of Respondent		
Less than 20years	29	33.7
20-30years	39	45.3
31-40yrs	7	8.1
50yr and above	10	11.6
Gender		
Male	38	45.2
Female	46	54.8
Educational		
Secondary	49	56.9
OND/NCE	21	24.4
Degrees	13	15.1
Master Degree	3	3.5

Source: field survey, 2016

Citizens' perception of e-governance

The analysis in the table 3 below shows opinions of the respondents about e –governance. The responses from the first question shows that 3(3.5%) of the respondents strongly agree, 2(2.3%) agree, 7(8.1%) were undecided, 31(36.0%) disagree, while 41(47.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree that there are adequate infrastructure for smooth operation of e-governance in the country. Thus it is important to note that most of the respondents



disagree to the readiness of the government for e-governance in term of availability of infrastructure for the exercise. The table also revealed that majority of the respondent reported in agreement that e-governance is an important innovation in public administration. More than 30% reported strongly agree, 54.7% agree, 9.3% were undecided, 1.2% of the respondent disagree while 2.3% of the sample reported strongly disagree. The implication is that the citizens embrace the e-governance project as a good innovation for modern governance business. The response from question three shows that 43.0% of the respondents strongly agree, 46.5% respondents agree, 5.8% of the respondents were undecided, 2.3% disagree, while 2.3% of the respondents strongly disagree that education of citizen is important for e-governance. Thus, most of the respondents were of the opinions that e-governance require a requisite educational attainment. The responses from question four shows that 41.9% of the respondents strongly agree, 47.7% respondent agree, 7.0% of the respondents were undecided, while only 3.5% strongly disagree that e-governance is efficient in term of time saving. Thus it is important to note that most of the respondents agree to the fact that e-governance saves time. The responses from question five shows that 40.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 36% were also in agreement, 2.4% of the respondents disagree, while 18.6% of the respondents strongly disagree that payment process through e-governance is cumbersome and stressful. This means that most of the respondents were in agreement that the present e-governance service is yet to be stress free. Responses from question six also shows that 10.5% of the respondents strongly agree, 11.6% agree, 7.0% were undecided, 34.9% of the respondents disagree while 36% strongly disagree that the cost of e-governance is outrageous and share wasting of the nation's resources. It is important to note that most of the respondents were in disagreement to the fact that resources expended on e-governance are a share wasting of the nation's wealth. The table also shows that 18.6% of the respondents very effective, while 50% is that the e-governance services/processes is below public expectation in terms of standard in operation elsewhere.

Level of preparedness of government for e-government

The responses from question eight shows that 14% of the respondents strongly agree, 17.4% reported in agreement, 2.3% of the respondents were undecided, 31.4% reported in disagreement, while 34.5% of the respondents strongly disagree that government has put in place adequate planning for e-governance. Thus, the implication is that the opinions of the respondents on this question skewed toward inadequate planning on the part of government for e-government. The question nine also shows that 47.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 40.7% of the respondents agree, 7% were undecided while only 4.7% were in disagreement that government has carried out adequate publicity on e-governance. This means that government needs to carry out massive awareness campaign on e-governance to educate the citizen. It was also gathered from question ten that 41.9% of the respondents strongly agree, 43% of the respondents agree, 14% were undecided while only 1.2% reported in disagreement that government agencies assigned to man e-governance apparatus are not-competence. Question eleven shows that 33.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 48.8% of the respondents agree, 9.35 were undecided, 3.5% disagree while 4.7% of the respondents strongly disagree that there is still some loopholes on part the of civil servants to make e-governance work. This responses show that majority of the respondents reported in agreement on this question. Thus on the part of the government all the loopholes have to be blocked so that the advantage of e-government can be fully maximized.

E-governance

The responses from question twelve also shows that 29.1% of the respondents strongly agree, 36% agree, 11.6% were undecided, 19.8% reported in disagreement, while 3.5% strongly disagree that recent drop in the school enrolment to 80% compared with 100% in the 70s can impair e-governance. It is important to note that most of the responses on this question opined that the recent decline in school enrolment will affect 100% usage of e-governance. Responses in question thirteen shows that 43% of the respondents strongly agree, 40.7% agree, 8.1% were undecided while 8.1% reported in disagreement on whether imperfection in civil service/ defect of e-governance can aid corruption in civil service. This responses implied that many of the respondent opined that The defects of e-governance can aid corruption in civil service. This responses implied that many of the respondent the respondents strongly agree, 40% of respondents agree, 8.2% were undecided, 5.9% disagree, while only 3.5% strongly disagree that many citizens have been defrauded through the use of e-governance. Responses on this question show that the general opinion of the respondents is that citizens can be defrauded with the e-governance. Finally question fifteen shows that 33.7% of the respondents strongly agree, 41.9% of the respondents agree, 9.4% were undecided, 4.7% of the respondents disagree, while 9.4% strongly disagree that the benefit of e-governance is far greater than its cost. It is important to note that the implication of the response, is that e-governance has more merit than the cost the government put to it



Table 3

Construct	5	4	3	2	1
Citizens perception of governance					
1 Infrastructures necessary to make e-governance work are in place	3	2	7	31	41
2 e-governance is a great innovation in public administration	26	47	8	1	2
3 Education of citizen is important for e-governance	37	40	2	5	2
4 e-governance saves a lot of time when attending to government mater	36	31	-	3	6
5 Payment processes through e-governance is cumbersome and stressful	37	35	-	7	7
6 The current cost of e-governance is outrageous and share wasting of nations resources	6	19	-	30	31
7 How effective is the present e-governance	16	26	44		
Leadership Responsibility					
8 Nigerian government has adequately planned for e-governance	1	3	37	-	45
9 Nigerian government has embarked on adequate publicity to educate the citizen	41	35	6	4	-
10 Government agencies assigned to man e-governance apparatus are not competent	36	37	10	4	8
11 There are still loopholes/weakness on part of civil servant to make e-governance work	29	42	8	4	3
E-governance					
12 Current drop in the school enrolment to 80% compared with 100% in the 70s can impair e-governance	31	25	10	17	3
13 Imperfection/defect of e-governance aid corruption in civil service	37	35	7	7	-
14 Many citizens have been defrauded through the use of e-governance	16	34	1	10	5
15 The benefit of e-governance is far greater than its cost	29	36	8	8	4

Hypotheses testing I

Ho: There is no significance relationship between e-governance and education of the citizens.

H1: There exist a significance relationship between e-governance and education of the citizens.

Chi-square Test

	VALUE	DF	ASYMP.SIG. (2-SIDED)
Pearson chi square	21.341	15	1.26
Likelihood Ratio	20.053	15	170
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.106	1	0.043

No of valid class 86

Sources: field survey 2015.

From the Chi-square above, $X^2=21.34$ $P<0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, concluding that there exist an association before the citizen education and application of e-governance. This means that e-governance will thrive better where citizens are educated.

Hypothesis II

Ho: The cost of e-governance is not a total way of wasting the Nation's resources.

H1: The cost of e-governance is a share way of wasting the Nation's resources.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.209 ^a	4	.016
Likelihood Ratio	12.590	4	.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	.088	1	.767

N of Valid Cases

84

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.71.

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.71.

From the Chi-square value ($X^2= 12.209$ $P<0.05$, $DF=4$, the null hypothesis was accepted and will conclude that money spent on e-government wasn't a sheer way of wasting resources.



Concluding Remarks

The foregoing analysis shows that ICT portends great advantages which meaningfully can have an impact on Nigeria when non-internet, offline technology are considered. In fact, from the field survey, the opinion of majority of Nigerians was that e-governance has more merit than the cost government has put into it. However, if we limit strictly to internet services, then the digital divide will be very wide. In fact, Nigeria's story will resemble the present state of the nation in relation to globalization which is loaded with wonderful advantages but only the industrialized and few other countries are benefitting maximally while the vast majority of developing countries are simply wallowing in abject poverty as a result of technological backwardness and so cannot benefit maximally from the great advantage of globalization. Comparatively, the same phenomenon is replicating itself in the ICT revolution as can be seen in all its applications such as the e-government, e-governance and the various uses as e-governance and citizen participation. While this study clearly demonstrates that Nigeria is not totally uninformed in the introduction or even application of ICT in its governance Endeavour encompassing politics, business, and bureaucracy among others. The country has even gone ahead to propound concrete policies towards enhancing its development. Noteworthy was the establishment of National Information Development Agency (NIDA) in April 2001 in collaboration with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to develop and regulate the information technology sector and to make sure every Nigerian is capable of using ICT [9] and the public-private partnership joint venture company referred to as National e-Government Strategies Limited (NeGST) shared between government (5%), consortium of banks (15%) and ICT partner (80%) with the mandate to create enabling strategy and a single architecture to guide the development of digital government solutions with appropriate standards, operating platforms and applications across agencies and government systems [8]. From the field survey, the opinion of the citizens was that e-governance services/processes is below expectation in terms of standard in operation elsewhere and as such, government need to carry out massive awareness campaign on e-governance to educate the citizens.

The NITDA for instance, has to its credit the operation of mobile internet units (MIUs) otherwise known as buses equipped with computers, printers, scanners, digital cameras and connected to the internet and used as mobile training and cyber school. The MIUs were to serve as a mobile ICT training center and creation of internet awareness in the rural areas throughout the country [10]. A laudable initiative but in reality, its implementation and impact can at best be infinitesimal or simply be at a demonstration stage as such infrastructure is virtually unknown in the rural areas.

There is no gainsaying the fact that ICT has the capacity to empower the disenfranchised, so that they can enjoy e-governance which is fundamentally structured to enhance quality and content of public service and value added information [3], which also corroborate field research (2015), that the present e-governance service is yet to be stress free and more importantly, the situation of digital divide as it looms large over this country, is a serious indictment on the government and its leadership. As a result, for full participation of the citizenry in the ensuing ICT revolution as it translates in e-government and e-governance, the total commitment of the leadership to 100% education of the people cannot be negotiable and must be implemented as a matter of urgency for purpose of equity, fairness and progress of the nation.

Recommendations

In the discussion of our result from the field survey based on quantitative analysis, the leadership was seriously indicted. It is the fundamental problem inhibiting developmental breakthrough of the nation and with respect to this study; it is the cause of the digital divide. For instance, in the 60/70s, Nigeria had above 90% primary school enrolment and since 1990s it has decreased to 80% but today in the age of computer, it has fallen to an ignobly 70% or thereabout.

This presupposes that the primary recommendation is to address this antisocial malaise and to foremost reestablish functional universal free and compulsory primary education at the Federal Government level, though could be managed by the local government for proper accountability and spatial spread to all the nooks and cranny of the country.

Teachers at this level must be paid directly by the Federal government. These primary schools must be equipped with ICT infrastructures and ICT teachers. That is to say that, ICT laboratories fully equipped with computers and connected to internet must be made available. This also means that ICT must be integrated into the primary school curriculum.

Since these facilities demand constant energy supply; in addition to whatever source the government may choose to power them, solar energy as a readily available, cheap and not so complicated source of energy must be developed and made to power these facilities. We must move up from this state of doldrums and stand up as a people technologically speaking.

For the adult or those who can no longer go to regular school, community halls should be used for adult education classes or continuing educational centre for the teaching of ICT. It must be underlined that in this age



of information revolution only a well-informed citizenry can actually participate and contribute to governance electronically and also make the public service responsive and accountable to its needs and demands [11]. Community libraries should also be built in every community and be used as cafe or ICT centers both for classes and services.

Examples of some countries that are successful in this project can be understudied and replicated such as Qatar, Singapore, China etc. and what a coincidence, all of them are developing countries. Our leaders and policy makers must be on their toes in the development of ICT infrastructure in the country and in fact, if there is any country that truly needs a robust and highly developed e-governance, it is Nigeria as it will reduce to the barest minimum corruption, which in the opinion of the people as revealed by the field survey (2015) that defect in e-governance will aid corruption in the civil service and generally in other areas of the economy, over-invoicing, bureaucratic red-tapism, bribery, wastages, foot-dragging, hoarding of information

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