

Analysing Digital Technologies (e-Governance Initiative) as A Tool for Promoting Transparent Governance in Nigeria

¹Ashiru Olayemi Aliyu, ²Lawal Yusuf Birisan & ³Adamu Rasheedat Oyoru

¹Department of Politics & Governance, Kwara State University, Melete.

¹ashiru.aliyu@kwasu.edu.ng, ²birisan.lawal@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract

The primary responsibility of every government either in developing or developed countries entails the delivery of essential services to the citizenry efficiently and transparently. This is no doubt aligned with the democratic ideals of every modern State. Conversely, the advent of e-governance, driven by rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), has emerged to transform traditional governance practices, promoting transparency and accountability. However, despite the benefits inherent in e-governance initiatives in Nigeria, a gap persists between their potential benefits and actual outcomes. There is a low level of adoption and effectiveness of these initiatives due to challenges such as low digital literacy among government officials and citizens. The main thrust of this study centres around the assessment of the role of internal e-governance initiatives in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria. Moreso, the article examined the relevance of external e-governance initiatives in fostering transparency. The study's propositions are formulated thus: internal e-governance initiatives have not effectively promoted transparency; and - external e-governance initiatives have similarly fallen short. Using a qualitative research design, including the use of both face-to-face interviews and online interview – web-based interviews and document analysis, to assess the effectiveness of e-governance in Nigeria. The study found that internal e-governance initiatives, such as e-finance and eprocurement, have enhanced transparency and efficiency in Nigeria's public service, particularly in financial management and procurement systems. Similarly, external initiatives like eparticipation have promoted transparency through improved public information sharing and online collaboration, though traditional paper-based communication remains prevalent in some government sectors. Evidence from the study revealed that while e-governance has a high potential to improve transparency, issues such as insufficient digital infrastructure and inadequate training have hindered its full implementation. The study recommends investing in digital literacy, enhancing ICT infrastructure, and fostering public awareness to maximize the benefits of egovernance and achieve transparent governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: e-Governance, internal and external, Nigeria, public service and transparency.

Introduction

In the world over, there has been an increasing demand for transparency and accountability in governance. Conversely,

this has prompted many nations, including Nigeria, to adopt digital technologies through e-governance initiatives. This is because the crucial goal of public service

today is to deliver services to citizens of every nation in line with the democratic ideals of most democratic nations. Public service has to ensure that services are provided in an equitable and transparent manner to redress the service delivery laxity in the public sector. This informs the promotion of the grab of digital technology for transparent governance in public service in a bid to cope with organizational changes and new skills required to improve public service delivery (Sardana and Sharma, 2017). As such we could say that the effect/impact of e-governance on transparent governance cannot be overemphasized globally; this is because of advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which have widened the scope of daily activities of the people by moving governance from traditional model to a digitalized one. We could then state that the rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed governance practices and public administration worldwide. As observed by Garuba (2014), e-governance is a modern means of advancing the integration of ICT in all the processes of governance. It aims to enhance the government's ability to address the needs of the people and promote transparency & accountability accordingly. Because he felt that "e-governance is a way of exchanging information and integration of various stand-alone systems between government and citizen".

In the same vein, Rabaiah and Vandijet (2011) note that in public administration, e-governance assists the government in making a far-reaching decision on the status of the nation's economy and this is so because all transactions activities of the government are recorded through the ICT and cannot be unofficially deleted in order to meet up with a private gain. He further stated that: the most important anticipated benefits of e-

governance include among others; an increase in transparency and accountability of government functions, convenient and faster access to government services and improved democracy. Garuba (2014) opines that e-governance is useful in the promotion and restoration of democratic activities in the state with the help of improvisation of the participation of the people in government by giving adequate feedback on the activities of political elites and technically influences government decision-making in order to suit the interest of the people.

As asserted by Abasilim and Edet (2015), the adoption of e-governance in governance in Nigeria has become one of the contemporary reforms put in place by the government. It is a policy initiative established towards promoting transparency and accountability in the bid to have a sustainable digital governance agenda. According to Ojo (2014), Nigerian National Information Technology [NNIT] (established in 2000) is meant for the promotion digital economy through the e-governance model; NNIT has been helpful towards expanding the digitalization of Nigerian governance. However, the sustainability of the little success recorded in the nation's economy through egovernance has become a major concern to scholars. It is as a result of this concern that the paper seeks to broaden our understanding by assessing the effects of digital technologies (e-governance initiative i.e. both internal and external initiatives) in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of e-governance initiatives in Nigeria aimed at improving transparency and accountability, there remains a significant gap between the expected benefits and actual outcomes. The Nigerian government, through the

establishment of the National Information Technology (NIT) and various ICT frameworks, sought to digitalize public administrative activities and promote socio-political and economic transformation. However, low digital literacy among government officials and citizens, along with inadequate infrastructure, has hindered the effective implementation of these initiatives. As a result, the adoption of e-governance platforms remains limited, reducing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government service delivery. This study seeks to assess the effects of digital technologies, specifically internal and external e-governance initiatives, on promoting transparent governance in Nigeria.

Nwogu (2017) noted that the Nigerian National Information Technology (NIT) was mandated to develop a sustainable ICT policy to support socio-political and economic transformation, marking a significant step towards digitalization in Nigeria's governance. This was accompanied by the liberalization policy of the federal government in the Telecommunication industry which allowed for GSM operations and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) services in the country. According to scholars like Abasilim and Edet (2015) and Awosanya (2019), e-governance in Nigeria was introduced to enhance transparency and accountability in public service, driven by government initiatives to digitalize administrative processes. Digitalization was regarded as a major foundation for e-governance and digital economic processes in Nigeria.

Awosanya (2019) claims that the essence of the policy was to make Nigeria an Information Technology (IT) capable country in Africa and a key player in ICT globally; ... and to ensure that both internal

and external e-governance initiatives have a significant effect on effective and transparent governance in Nigeria (in essence, reduced corruption). Put in his words: ... egovernance is a Nigerian government policy initiative designed purportedly for sending and receiving information conveniently in the government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in order to promote transparency in government establishments.

Despite the introduction of e-governance initiatives (both internal and external e-governance initiatives) in Nigeria, there remains a significant gap between the potential benefits of digital technologies and their actual implementation. Low levels of digital literacy among government officials and the general population, for example, have impeded the effective rollout and utilization of e-governance platforms. This has resulted in limited adoption of e-governance initiatives, leading to reduced transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the provision of government services (Report of Nigerian Information Technology Development Agency [NITDA], 2020). It is against this stated problem that the study assessed the effects of digital technologies (e-governance initiative i.e. both internal and external initiatives) in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria. Research Objectives The purpose of the study is to assess the effects of digital technologies (e-governance initiative i.e. both internal and external initiatives) in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study include the following:

- i. To assess the role of internal e-governance initiatives in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the relevance of external e-governance initiatives in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria.

Research Propositions

Po1 Internal e-governance initiatives have not promoted transparent governance in Nigeria's public service delivery.

Po2 External e-governance initiatives have not promoted transparent governance in Nigeria's public service delivery.

Conceptual Review

E-Governance

The term e-governance has been described in the literature as a means of making use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to carry out public service activities in the country. It is the use of the internet and other electronic devices to ensure that public services are delivered in a more convenient and less cost-effective way to the people. According to Budhiraja (2023), e-governance involves the use of electronic devices in the process of government activities towards promoting transparency, accountability and acceptable public service delivery. Ojo (2014) notes that e-governance as a new trend in the administration of the state involves the actual incorporation of ICT into governmental activities in order to promote efficiency, accountability and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. In the same vein, Abasilim and Edet (2015) were of the opinion that the application of e-governance by the government is useful in providing information on how to provide public services to the people. It is also useful in streamlining and integrating workflows in the public establishment. This is in a bid to effectively manage data and information, enhance public service delivery, as well as expand communication channels for the engagement and empowerment of the people.

Abasilim and Edet (2015) argue that e-governance is a progressive movement from

the traditional method of carrying out government businesses which is mainly a hierarchical, linear, and one-way model. But for e-governance, the use of the internet enables the public to seek information at their own convenience and not really have to visit the office in person or when the government office is open. Summarily, it is a political strategy adopted by the government through which possible feedback can be promptly given to the public about the activities of the government in an efficient way. As a new discovery in governance, e-governance is a means of using Internet technology as a platform for exchanging information, providing services, and transacting with citizens and business investors. It is part of administrative reform tools geared towards effective public service delivery, which is premised on the assumption that the appreciable use of the ICT method in the day-to-day activities of the government could promote effective public service delivery. Ignou People University, (2019) sees e-governance as:

Governance is more than just a government website on the Internet. The strategic objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties; government, citizens and businesses. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities. In other words, in e-governance, electronic means support and stimulate good governance.

Forms of E-Governance Initiatives

E-governance initiative is broadly portioned into two (2) categories: internal and external E-governance initiatives.

- Internal E-Governance Initiatives: This involves the use of digital technologies within government organizations to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Examples include e-procurement:

Electronic procurement systems that automate the tendering and contracting process; e-payments: Electronic payment systems that facilitate financial transactions between government agencies and citizens or even e-finance. This aims to leverage ICT to reduce costs and improve the quality of administration and management within government organizations.

- External E-Governance Initiatives: This focuses on improving interactions and services between government agencies and citizens. Examples include e-participations (digital platforms that enable citizens to engage with government agencies, express their opinions, and participate in the decision-making process. Examples include online public consultations, citizen feedback portals, in Nigeria – Public Information Sharing System (PISS) etc.) (Nigeria e-Government Masterplan, 2019).

The Case for E-Government in the Local Councils of Nigeria

The World Summit on the Information Society declared in the Geneva 2003 Plan of Action that all countries should aim "to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses" (WSIS, 2005). E-Government is more than just putting in new computer systems. Rather, e-government also involves complementary changes to administrative practices and business processes (National Research Council, 2002).

Cost Reduction and Efficiency Gains: agree that ICT has considerable potential to contribute to efficiency gains and cost reductions for private organizations. Furthermore, these benefits constitute a

major aspect of e-government initiatives. Putting services online substantially decreases the processing costs of many activities compared with the manual way of handling operations. The appropriate application of ICT may possibly reduce the number of inefficiencies in processes by allowing file and data sharing across government departments, thereby contributing to the elimination of mistakes from manual procedures, and reducing the required time for transactions. Efficiency is also attained by streamlining internal processes, enabling faster and more informed decision-making, and by speeding up transaction processing. The issue of ghost workers will be eliminated (UNESCAP, 2016).

E-government acts as a driver in speeding organizational change, including facilitating greater teamwork, flexible working arrangements and remuneration, and enhanced knowledge management practices. E-government can also help build trust between government and citizens, by enabling citizen engagement in the policy process, promoting open and accountable government, and helping to prevent corruption (Tapscott and Caston, 2023).

E-Government helps to increase the transparency of decision-making processes. In many cases, eGovernment offers opportunities for citizens to directly participate in decision-making, by allowing them to provide their ideas and suggestions in forums and online communities. If websites are designed carefully and openly, they will serve as valuable resources for transparency as citizens, businesses and other stakeholders should be able to see political and governmental information, rules and policies. Previously it was often necessary to go directly to governmental offices to obtain information, but now this

information should be available on the web. The availability of a diversity of publications regarding the activities of the public administration, as well as economic and legislative aspects, increases the transparency too (UNESCAP, 2016).

E-government will help to improve the quality of decision-making. Community creation, forums, continuous interaction and communication between government and its citizens contribute further to the decision-making process. By means of active participation in political and government discussions, citizens can contribute their own ideas, and share their knowledge and information. This will in turn lead to building trust in government and improving the relationships between the government and the governed. The OECD argues that the strengthening relationship between government and citizens could improve the quality of services by allowing the government to tap wider sources of information, perspectives and solutions to meet the challenges of policymaking under conditions of increased complexity (Tapscott and Caston, 2023).

ICT can strengthen the role of each governance pillar in rural development and poverty reduction. It can facilitate speedy, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective interaction between the public, citizens, businesses and other agencies. This not only promotes better administration and a better business environment but also saves time and money in transaction costs of government operations (Tapscott and Caston, 2023).

Various other examples show the great potential of e-government in developing countries to help people develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accordance with their needs and

interests. E-Government is being used to make it easier for people to lead healthy lives, experience lifelong learning, and access resources to sustain a reasonable standard of living. EGovernment also facilitates the ability for individuals to participate in the life of their society, government and community (UNESCAP, 2016).

Good Governance Principles

This is a relatively new concept, having entered the political lexicon in the 1970s and 1980s as a large number of underdeveloped countries were struggling to deal with the political and economic problems which poor political leadership had generated for their countries. Good governance is derived from the concept of governance. According to Adeosun (2017), good governance entails the capacity to manage a country's resources in a transparent, accountable, and equitable manner, in response to the needs of the people. A good aspect of this view is the need to recognize and respond adequately to the aspirations of the citizens.

According to the United Nations Development Programme report (2017), good governance encompasses the exercise of political, economic, legal, judicial, social, and administrative authority in a manner that meets the aspirations and needs of the citizens which includes; the government, the private sector and the civil society. It also includes the formulation of policy initiatives that would strengthen institutions and civil society organizations with the main objective of making government responsible more democratic, responsive and accountable. Furthermore, Olowu and Akinola (1995), provide some parameters for measuring good governance. These, as Adeyemi (2020) suggested, include “managerial and organizational efficiency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness to the public,

transparency in decision-making and pluralism in policy options and choices”. This includes issues such as the rule of law, equity, etc. The concept of good governance according to Adeyemi (2020) encompasses general values and basic freedoms, which include accountability, competence, the reign of the rule of law and the absence of human rights abuse. In the view of Smith (2019), the concept refers to issues such as the rule of law, equity, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, participation, consensus-oriented, transparency, and accountability. Adeyemi (2020) in his part asserted that;

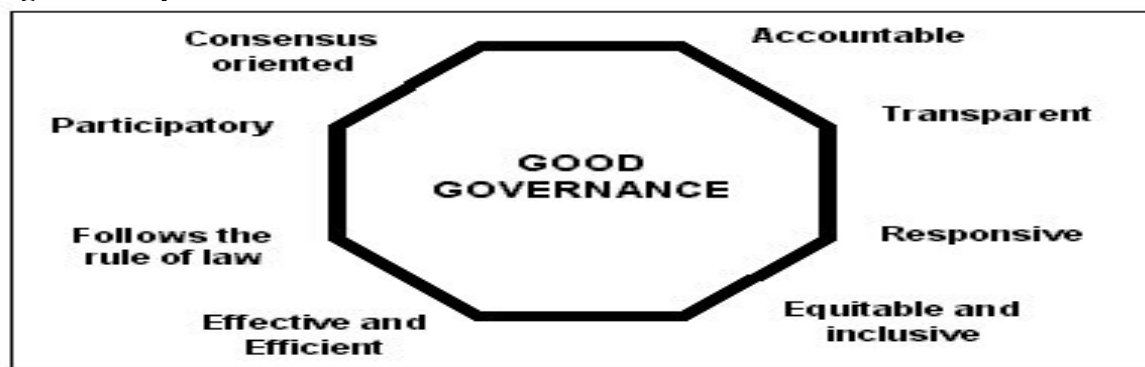
Good governance implies a high level of organizational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability, and public welfare. Other factors in this regard are given as participation, transparency, and accountability, which are similar to the context of the UNDP report.

Potter (2000) calls good governance “sound development management” – referring to the total sum of public management; accountability; legal framework for development (reforms); information and

technology; the acceptance of government by the people; the capacity of governments to initiate appropriate policies, make a far-reaching decision; implement them effectively for service delivery. Good governance as a concept can also be linked to the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, the leadership commitment to improve the welfare and meet the needs of its citizens (Holmes, 2012). It refers to the use of legitimate authority in the management of public affairs. The whole essence of Good governance is the supremacy of the rule of law, freedom, accountability, transparency, fulfilment of election promises, and the achievement of the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. On the part of Ali (2018), the following parameters of good governance were identified. They are:

Participatory governance is consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient; as well as equitable and inclusive while following the rule of law. In addition to that, the government should give priority to the views of minorities and listen to the voices of the most vulnerable group of people in society when it comes to decision-making. See the fig 1 below:

Fig. 1 Principles or Parameters of Good Governance



Source: Adopted from Ali (2018).

Overall, we can agree that good governance refers to a system of government based on

good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due processes, the accountability of the political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government.

Transparency

Transparency is the openness and accessibility of information held by public institutions, allowing citizens to scrutinize government actions (Darch and Underwood, 2010). Transparent governance involves clear communication, disclosure of decision-making processes, and accessibility to information, fostering trust and reducing the potential for corruption (Fox and Brown, 2017). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a crucial role in enhancing transparency, facilitating the dissemination of real-time data and increasing public awareness (Heald and Hood, 2016). However, the effectiveness of transparency initiatives depends on factors such as the quality of information provided and the existence of mechanisms for public engagement (Dye, 2013).

Therefore, transparency is an essential element of the primary approaches that governments have employed to promote openness and reduce corruption by promoting good governance, strengthening reform-oriented initiatives, and enhancing relationships between government employees and members of the public. A lack of transparency can:

- Make corruption less risky and more attractive;
- Prevent the use of public incentives to make public officials act responsibly and in the public interest;
- Create informational advantages for privileged groups;
- Instil and perpetuate control over resources;
- Incentivize opportunism and undermine cooperation;
- Limit the ability to select for honesty and efficiency in public sector positions and contract partners; and

- Hinder social trust, and therefore development of awareness (Heald and Hood, 2016).

In view of the foregoing, we can define transparency as the condition of clarity and absence of doubts in the conduct of an account of activities. Generally speaking, the term transparency could be broken into four segments: Integrity; Rectitudeness; Decorum and Leadership by example.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories are considered important to give credence to the study. Namely; Social Capital Theory and Information-Centric Theory. These theories are two important perspectives in the realm of governance, transparency, and citizen engagement, particularly in the context of digital technologies. Let's delve deeper into each theory to understand its implications and significance.

Social Capital Theory: The major proponent of Social Capital Theory was Robert D. Putnam in 2000. Social Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships, trust, and networks in promoting good governance and transparency. According to this theory, societies with high levels of social capital, characterized by strong social ties, shared norms, and trust among individuals, are more likely to have effective governance structures and transparent decisionmaking processes. Social capital enables cooperation and collective action, which can lead to better outcomes for society as a whole. In the context of digital technologies, social capital theory suggests that these tools can play a crucial role in facilitating the creation and maintenance of social networks and relationships. Online platforms and social media can provide spaces for citizens to connect, collaborate, and build trust with each other and with government institutions. Through these digital channels, citizens can engage in dialogue, share information, and work together to address common challenges and hold authorities accountable. By leveraging digital technologies to enhance social capital,

governments and organizations can foster a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and civic participation. Citizens who feel connected to their communities and empowered to contribute to decision-making processes are more likely to support initiatives that promote good governance and accountability (Putnam, 2000).

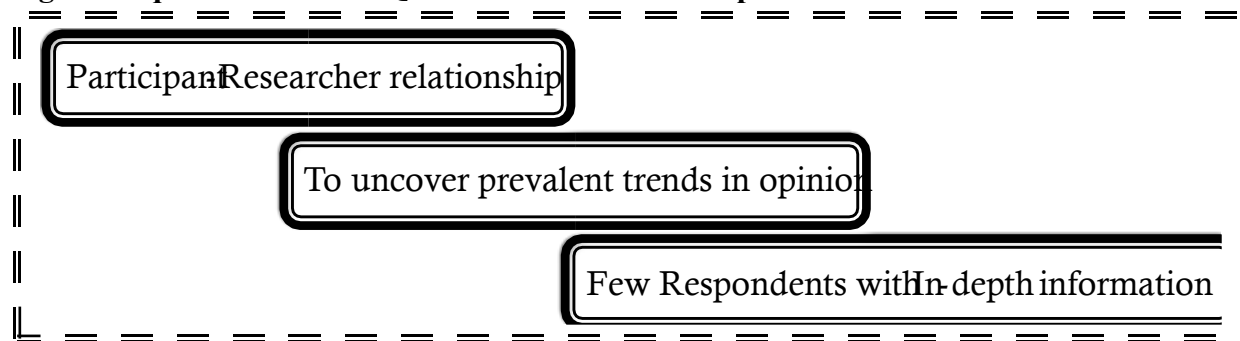
Information-Centric Theory: The major proponent of Information-Centric Theory is Norris, Pippa in 2001. Information-centric theory focuses on the role of information in promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in governance. This theory posits that increased access to information can empower citizens to make informed decisions, hold public officials accountable, and participate more actively in the democratic process. By democratizing access to information, digital technologies can help bridge the information gap between authorities and the public, leading to more transparent and responsive governance. In the digital age, information-centric theory highlights the transformative potential of technologies such as the internet, open data platforms, and social media in providing citizens with easy access to a wealth of information on government

activities, policies, and performance. Through online channels, citizens can access real-time data, government reports, and public records, enabling them to monitor government actions, evaluate public services, and advocate for policy changes. Moreover, digital technologies can facilitate two-way communication between government agencies and citizens, allowing for greater transparency and dialogue. Platforms for e-governance, online consultations, and participatory budgeting can enable citizens to provide feedback, voice their concerns, and collaborate with authorities in decision-making processes (Norris, 2001).

Research Methodology Research Design

This study was entirely qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is worked out under the use of observations, interviews, and document reviews or a combination of all. The main focus of qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people (Kumar, 2005). This definition implies that data and meaning emerge "organically" from the research context. The importance of qualitative research design is pictured in Figure 3.1:

Fig. 1 Unique Attributes of Qualitative Research Adoption



Source: deMarraise, 2016.

Population and Sampling of the Study

The target population for this study includes the principal staff of the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovations and Digital Economy. They include among others the Ag. Director,

ICT, Head of ICT Department, Head of Data Centre/Network Management Branch, Head of eGovernment Solution Branch, and two (2) other staff from the Database Management Unit (<https://fmcide.gov.ng>). Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used in the

course of this study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select principal staff. The rationale for the use of purposive sampling lies in the need to recruit or determine beneficiaries or participants who provide additional in-depth and in-house information about the phenomenon under investigation. The snowball sampling technique played a second-fiddle role in getting more information from important respondents that were hitherto left out.

It is argued by Kumar (2011), that: the sample size in qualitative research does not play any substantial role as the purpose is to explore and describe in order to identify the spread of diversity and not its magnitude (Kumar, 2011). In another view, he proclaimed that – the sample is inextricably related to the survey, that, for the hardness of a researcher to reach out to a diverse population. Hence, the a need for a sample. The study sample size, therefore, was six (6) respondents. The sample size was determined during the data collection phase at a time when we realized we had reached a point of data saturation.

Method of Data Collection

Interview: The main source of data is interviews (both face-to-face interviews and

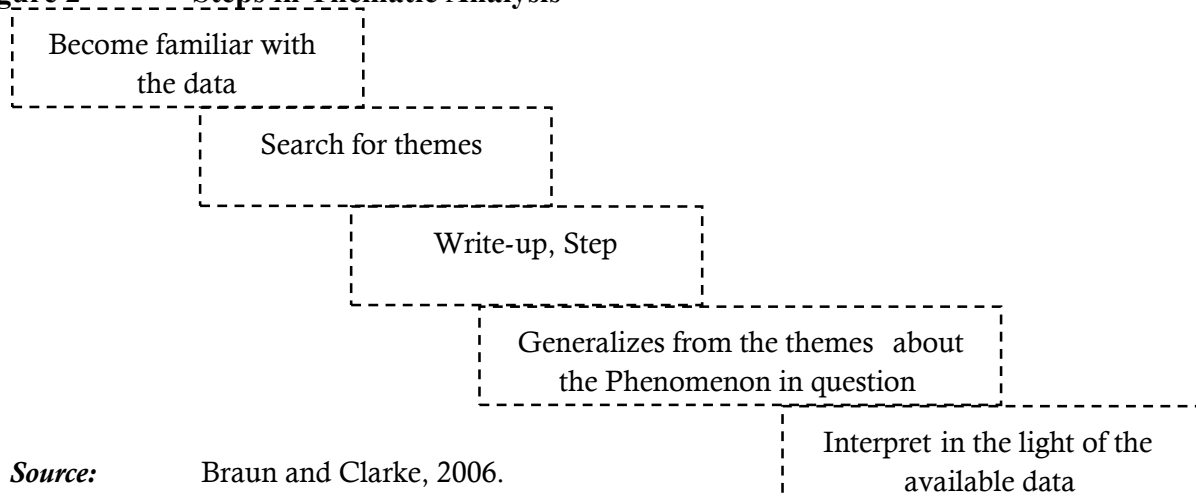
online interview – web-based interviews which were conducted using online platforms like Google Meet and Zoom). The web-based allowed us to conduct our study with ease.

Secondary Documents: Secondary data corroborated the data obtained from primary sources. Some of the relevant documents relied on are: the Nigeria e-Government Masterplan, 2019 (D1) and the Report of Nigerian Information Technology Development Agency [NITDA], 2020 (D2)

Method of Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted for the study. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing data by putting similar responses in the same category (Kerlinger, 1986). He added that ... the goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research questions. The rationale behind the choice of thematic analysis was that 'the approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers the research questions'. The study adopted Clarke and Braun's (2006) 5-step framework. This is shown in figure 2:

Figure 2 Steps in Thematic Analysis



Data Analysis

Analysis of Interview Responses Using Thematic Analysis

S/N	Position	Code	Date
1.	Ag. Director, ICT	(R ₁)	24/01/2024
2.	Head of ICT Department	(R ₂)	24/01/2024
3.	Head of Data Centre/Network Management Branch	(R ₃)	23/02/2024
4.	Head of e-Government Solution Branch	(R ₄)	23/02/2024
5.	Staff (2) from the Database Management Unit	(R ₅₋₆)	23/04/2024
6.	Nigeria e-Government Masterplan, 2019	(D ₁)	***
7.	Report of Nigerian Information Technology Development Agency [NITDA]	(D ₂)	

Source: Research Survey, 2024.

Note: R = Respondent; and D = Document
Theme I: Internal e-governance initiatives and promotion of transparent governance in Nigeria.

Sub-Theme Ia: Explain how e-finance as Internal e-governance initiatives has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria According to the respondents, the objective of this initiative is to improve the existing national financial management information system (GIFMIS/SIFMIS) to be more efficient, transparent and better integrated (R1-6). The characteristics of the e-finance system can be described as follows:

- Adoption of new finance management ideas;
- Systematic Sharing of government finance management information;
- Securing accountability, transparency, and real-time operability;
- Efficient finance and national treasury management;
- Clean system which reduces the possibility of corruption (D1).

Sub-Theme Ib: Explain how e-procurement as an Internal e-governance initiative has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria The respondents unanimously itemize the objectives of the e-procurement initiative as follows:

- To improve the efficiency of the procurement administration through the development of a
- high-quality procurement system that supports all procurement procedures;
- To enhance the transparency; and
- To increase the accessibility and easiness of the Government procurement system (R1-6 cited in D1).

Theme II: External e-governance initiatives and promotion of transparent governance.

Sub-Theme II (a): Describe how the Public Information Sharing System (PISS) as means of e-Participation (external e-Governance initiative) has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria.

The respondents without delay stated thus: The objective of the Public Information Sharing System (PISS) as an eParticipation (external e-Governance initiative) is to increase productivity by providing one-stop administrative services; maximizing the official work efficiency and convenience, and providing all MDAs with infra-service for online collaboration (R1-6 cited in D1).

The respondents concluded that though, an enormous amount of paper transactions instead of data transactions is still the main

method of business communication within (or between) MDAs. But Public Information Sharing System (PISS) as eParticipation (external e-Governance initiative) has increased productivity and ensured online collaboration (R1-6).

Discussions of Major Findings

The study assessed the effects of digital technologies (e-governance initiative i.e. both internal and external initiatives) in promoting transparent governance in Nigeria. From the presentation and analysis of data, the study arrived at some findings which are summarised below:

- i. The study discovered that Internal e-governance initiatives (e.g. e-finance and e-procurement) have promoted transparent governance in Nigeria's public service delivery. For example, the respondents agreed that the e-Finance initiative improved the existing national financial management information system (GIFMIS/SIFMIS) to be more efficient, transparent and better integrated. In the same vein, e-procurement as Internal e-governance initiatives has enhanced transparency; and increased the accessibility and easiness of the Government procurement system.
- ii. As regards objective II and proposition II, the study found that external e-governance initiatives (like e-participation) have promoted transparent governance in Nigeria's public service delivery. As the respondents concluded that though, an enormous amount of paper transactions instead of data transactions is still the main method of business communication within (or between) MDAs. But Public Information Sharing System (PISS) as e-Participation (external e-

Governance initiative) has increased productivity and ensured online collaboration.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes by reminding us about the Federal Ministry of Communications eGovernment Masterplan developed by Nigeria in the fulfilment of its mandate which is to; "Utilize ICT to drive transparency in governance and improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of public service delivery in Nigeria". Against this backdrop, the overall purpose and rationale of the egovernment Masterplan is to enhance the transparency, efficiency and quality of public service administration. This prompted this study as it's important to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the plan. The study concludes that internal e-governance initiatives (e.g. efinance and e-Procurement) and external e-governance initiatives (like e-participation) have promoted transparent governance in Nigeria's public service delivery. The following recommendations are made among others to improve transparent governance with the implementation of e-governance initiatives:

- i. There is a need for government to focus on strengthening the collaborative structure of eGovernment.
- ii. It is also necessary for the government to establish a well-structured e-Government Infrastructure for smooth and effective public service activities in the country.
- iii. The government should ensure reactivating the stakeholder consensus-building meeting and reinforcing communication channels between FMoC and MDAs; additionally, there is a need for close connections between e-Government

institutions and public sector reform agencies.

References

- Adeosun, O. (2017). Fostering Ethical Conduct in Nigerian Public Institutions: A Key Strategy for Accountability. *International Journal of Public Policy*, 32(3), 123-145.
- Adeyemi, K. (2020). Strengthening Accountability and Transparency: A Comparative Analysis of Strategies in Nigerian Public Sector Entities. *Journal of Governance Studies*, 35(4), 567-583.
- Fox, J. (2019). The uncertain relationship between transparency and accountability. *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), 663-671.
- Heald, D., and Hood G. (2016). Transparency and its discontents: Accounting as an open book. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 31(7), 625-648.
- Islam, M. M. and Ahmed, A. M. (2017). Understanding E-Governance: A Theoretical Approach. *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 4.
- Nigeria e-Government Masterplan, 2019. Federal Ministry of Communications (abridged version).
- Norris, P., (2001). "Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet Worldwide". Cambridge University Press.
- Olowu, D. (2014). Understanding governance: The centrality of the state in modern society. Routledge.
- Putnam, R. D., (2000). "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community". Simon & Schuster.
- Smith, J. (2019). Government Strategies for Enhancing Accountability and Transparency: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Public Administration*, 31(3), 201-218.
- Tapscott, D. and Caston, A. (2023) *Paradigm Shift: The New Promise of Information Technology*, McGraw-Hill: New York.
- UNESCAP (2016). E-Procurement, United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Appendix (A) Interview Schedule for the Respondents
- Section A Bio-Data of the Respondents
- a. Date of Interview
 - b. Position of the Respondent
 - Theme I: Internal e-governance initiatives and promotion transparent governance in Nigeria.
 - i. Explain how e-Finance as Internal e-governance initiatives has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria
 - ii. Explain how e-Procurement as Internal e-governance initiatives has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria
 - Theme II: External e-governance initiatives and promotion transparent governance.

Describe how Public Information Sharing System (PISS) as means of e-Participation (external eGovernance initiative) has promoted transparent governance in Nigeria.