

## **E-GOVERNANCE AND CALL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN NIGER STATE**

**MOHAMMED UMAR KITABU**

Department of Public Administration  
Fati Lami Abubakar, Institute For Legal and Administrative Studies  
[umarkitabu@yahoo.com](mailto:umarkitabu@yahoo.com) 08032402824

**ISYAKU SHUAIBU SHITTU**

Department of Political Science  
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai  
[sslapai@gmail.com](mailto:sslapai@gmail.com) +2348065754652

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the role of e-governance in achieving organizational efficiency in Niger State. The objective is to show the relevance of e-governance to the realization of organizational efficiency. The paper is anchored on technological determinism theory by Thorsten Veblen (2016) as a framework for analysis. The documentary approach is used by researchers through the use of related literatures on E-governance and organizational efficiency in order to enhance effective service delivery in public organizations. Thus, E-governance is all about ensuring transparency, accountability, minimize cost, reduce bureaucratic tendencies, and reduce corruption in a bit to establish sanity in the system of governance, however, organizational efficiency entails using little resources as an input in achieving maximum output. Hence, this study looks at E-governance and organizational efficiency through the instrumentality of ensuring transparent operational activities, accountability, effective and efficient service delivery, reduction of corruption, and deploying electronically gadget in curbing the menace of sharp practices in organization. The paper concludes and recommends the following as impetus for effective and efficient service delivery through the use of ICT, by providing adequate fund to facilitate the operation of public offices, organizing of capacity building to boost the competencies of personnel in an organization, constant enlightenment by the government on the importance of e-governance to the general public in order for citizens to key in the governance.

**Key words:** E-governance, organizational efficiency ICT, service delivery, transparency

### **Introduction**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought tremendous change to different aspects of human life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Agwu, et al 2014). Therefore, ICT has become the most strategic resource that is increasingly transforming the world economy. For instance, internet has become important in online transaction with hundreds of users engaging in online shopping and e-banking services on a daily basis. People book for flight tickets and make payment online, check the weather, engage in research and connect with the entire world on a daily basis.

The increase in globalization and information and communication technology has made government to adopt e-governance as an initiative to ensure effective and efficient service delivery, increase citizens participation in decision making process, promote democracy, ensure accountability and transparency. Government of modern day cannot achieve its goals in this present time without effective use of ICT for service delivery. There is increasing evidence through

public policy formulation and implementation that e-governance played an important role in advancing national development (United Nations e-governance Survey, 2014).

In Nigeria, the application of e-governance initiatives can be traced to the formulation of Nigeria National Policy for Information Technology in 2001 (Oni et al 2016), Abassilin Gbereubie et al (2017). This policy has cardinal objectives to, ensure that the information (IT) resource are readily available for promotion of efficient national development, empowerment of Nigeria citizens in participating in software and IT development, improve accessibility to public administration to citizens, ensuring transparency of all government process, develop IT into the mainstream of education and training, enhance national security and law enforcement, develop human capital etc.

### **Statement of Problem**

Niger State government has made a lot of efforts in the application of ICT in most organizations to ensure efficient service delivery. Yet, the application seemed not to have yielded the desired results in terms of effective and efficient service delivery. But is still need to be done to improve e-governance development initiatives. This often has a devised effect on good administration. Nigeria as a country had suffered ICT initiatives as this, has shown in the current ranking where Nigeria is ranked 143 position in e-governance readiness at middle of e-governance survey (United Nation Government 2016), since 2001, United Nations e-government survey, Nigeria has been unable to move to the high level of e-governance development (Oloto, 2017). Nigeria as a country is faced with the challenges of achieving good governance, which has undermined sustainable development. This is shown on the increase in corruption, low accountability and transparency, low level of citizen's participation, poor service delivery etc.

Several scholars (Abasilim 2017, Ibrahim 2016; and Oni 2016) have linked the poor adoption of e-governance in Nigeria to corruption and low literacy level in public service as well as lack of commitment on the part of government and citizen resistance to changes among others. These factors have become major challenges to the application of ICT in Nigerian's public administration. Looking at above reasons and in the light of limited scope of empirical studies, the needed empirical impetus to move from traditional system of administration to modern system through use of ICT has not been extensively research on and this form the basis of this research.

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Concept of e-governance**

Abdiullahi (2017) observes that e-governance is the used of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and it application by relevant government bodies for the provision of information and public services to the people. In simple terms e-governance is the use of technology to enhance the assess and delivery of government service.

The appropriate use of ICT to achieve the goals of the governments of nations to reformed public sector and ultimately for improved economic development is what makes up e-government. The focus of government is therefore on provision of governmental services via the use of information technology with the aim of enhancing the service level relationship, between government and various stakeholder groups, such as the citizen, businesses tourists and other governmental agencies (UN 2008). Drucker (Cited in Visser and Twinomumzi 2007) defines e-governance as the use of emerging information and communication technology to facilitate the processes of government and public administration.

UNESCO (Cited in Okwueze 2010), sees e-governance is the use of information and

communication technology by public sector with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in decision making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. World Bank (2001) defines e-governance as the government owned or operated systems of information and communication technologies that transform relations with citizens, the private sectors and for other government agencies so as to promote citizens empowerment, improve service delivery, strengthen accountability, increase transparency and to improve government efficiency (Ndou 2004).

According to Silcock (2001) e-governance is the use of technology to enhance the access to and service delivery of government service to benefit citizens business partners and employees.

Therefore e-governance can be seen as the use of information, communication and technology (ICT) by government offices in service delivery to ensure.

### **Models of e-governance**

We can refer to e-governance as the use of ICT to exercise political, economic and administrative authority towards managing the affairs of the state, which involves citizen rights and interest and participation. E-governance involves four models namely:

1. **G2C** - Government to citizens: This means offering a variety of ICT service to the citizens efficiently and effectively and to strengthen the relationship between government and citizens using technology.
- ii. **G2B** – Government to Business: This is the interaction between the government and business with the use of ICT.
- iii. **G2G** – Government to Government: This is the use of ICT in communicating and interacting with one level of government to another or government at the same level and its agencies.
- iv. **G2E** – Government to Employees: This is the interaction between government or its agencies and its employees and among employees in government with the use of ICT.

1. Effective and Efficient

### **E-governance as a tool for achieving organizational efficiency**

To justify e-governance as an effective tool for achieving organizational efficiency, it is better to come up with the benefits of e-governance which is associated to the achievement of organizational efficiency.

(Siahaan 2016) outlines some benefits of e-governance to the achievement of organizational efficiency

1. Effective and Efficient Service delivery: Studies have shown that e-governance can promote effective and efficient service delivery (Gurung e'atal 2015; Mutgonibi, 2013 and Makene, 2009). This is because with the application of ICT, service delivery of public service will be carried out appropriately and on a quicker time with minimum use of resources.
2. Reduction of corruption: E-governance service serves as a tool for fighting corruption. E-governance can reduce corruption through accountability and transparency by reducing interactions with officials, speeding up decision and reducing human errors (Misty etal 2012).
3. Effective financial management: Effective e-governance implementation is necessary to save high amount of resources thereby, reducing waste of resources. The adoption e-

governance initiatives have saved a huge amount of money for Niger State government. For example, the introduction of single treasury account (TSA) has helped to saved billion, of naira which would have being stolen and recent cashless policy of Federal government to be embark on by public offices will reduce the corruption to certain extent (Unuba 2016).

5. Citizen participation in governance: With the implementation of e-governance, citizen participation in decision making is very easy. E-governance does not only allow citizens to access to the government, but it also encourages citizen participation in decision making (Ogeka etal 2017).
6. Promotion of National security: The fight against crimes like cybercrimes, militancy terrorism, armed robbery, cross border crime etc required adequate ICT on ground. Studies have shown that, one major problem of government in fighting, banditry, Boko and militancy is poor utilization of ICT gadget (Uwueze 2016).

### **Concept of Organizational Efficiency**

Organizational efficiency is often equated with success and work. It can be defined as the extent to which an organization can attain its goals (Oghojafor 2012).

An organization is a complex entity with many dynamics that contribute to making it efficient and sustainable. These dynamics can run an organizational smoothly even during the challenging times of various transitions like recession and pandemics etc.

Sheffield (2012) organizational efficiency examine how the output of an organization can be achieved using specific resources, the more output delivered using those same resources, the more efficient organization is. And therefore, it is the process of using fewer resources, as well as less time and less money to achieve the same goals.

Hussy (2001) propose that efficiency of an organization is a combination of the perspective, output and input of an organization.

Kalirajan and Shand (1999) also suggest that efficiency of an organization is made up of two components; technical and allocative efficiency. Technical efficiency is defined as the capacity and willingness of an economic unit to produce the maximum possible output from a given bundle of inputs and technology. While the latter concept is defined as the ability and wiliness of an economic unit to equate its specific marginal value produce with its marginal cost.

Abdullahi etal (2006) in their studies contend that efficiency refers to the comparison between the outputs and inputs used in the process of producing a product or service. The researchers further proposed that, the concept of organizational efficiency is either technical efficiency or a locative efficiency. Technical efficiency is the firm's ability to obtain maximal output from a given set of inputs. While, a locative efficiency means the firm's ability to use inputs in optimal proportions, given their respective prices and production technology. Therefore, to this end, organizational efficiency should be seen as a process was organizations uses small resources as an input to achieve maximum output.

### **Indicators of organizational efficiency**

(Oglojafor 2012) identified some indicators of organizational efficiency, and these are follows:

1. **Employee retention:** Retention of employees in an organization is one of the most imperative components that drive the organization towards its vision and mission (Sandhya etal 2011).

2. **Competitive Advantage:** Organizational efficiency can be majorly understood with the help of its competitive position in the market (Twin 2021). This refers to the performance in the external environment where other competitors are also operating. The competitive advantage of an organization over its competitors reflects in the profit earned the stock price of their organization, customer attractiveness and many other parameters the actual position of the organization (Abston and Stout 2006).
3. **Adaptability and Technological advancement:** one of the critical indicators of organizational efficiency is the adaptability of the organization to the dynamism in the society or environment where it is operating. In an intensely competitive market strategic management, technological advancement and change management lead to organizational success (Willburn 2018).
4. **Financial gains return on investment and turnover:** With time various parameters that are used in measuring organizational efficiency has changed and evolved but there are some core components that radically indicate the efficiency of an organization. The financial returns of an organization are very important to fulfill other parameters like employee satisfaction, customer's satisfaction, use of technology. Return on the investment done is very important for an organization to fulfill its role in the market. Turnover indicates the wellbeing and development (Sheffied 2021).
5. **Employees and Technology as instrument for longevity:** An organization can be considered as developing efficiently growing when employees act in accordance with organizational goals: When employees are satisfied, retained and associated for the long term, it provides a strong performance boost as major hurdles like absenteeism, favoritisms, groups complaints etc can be avoided.

Apart from this, technological advancement has also been considered as an important parameter for understanding organizational efficiency because the market is evolving and to cope up with the transition of external environment, technological advancement and adaptability is very important (Tahsildarim, 2015).

### **Empirical Review**

Mistry and Jalal (2012) carried out an empirical study of the relationship between e-governance and corruption in developed and developing countries: they argued that the impact of e-governance is higher in developing countries than in developed countries and as the use of ICT increase, corruption decrease. They observed that (based on their model) that 1% increases in e-governance index may have resulted in 1.7% decrease in corruption.

Lup and Lazar (2015) studied the influence of e-governance on the level of corruption in some EU and non-EU states, and discovered that the increasing use of e-governance will reduce corruption because 1% increase in the index of e-governance can result in a decrease in corruption by 6.7% for countries entering the EU and 6.3% for non-EU members. This means that, the more a country adopts e-governance, the higher tendency of reducing corruption in the system.

Enofe et al (2015) appraised e-governance and corruption in Nigeria, they revealed that "the integrated payroll and personal information system (IPPS) has significant effect in reducing the incidence of ghost workers in the public sector and e-payment have significant effect in scaling down level of corruption practice in public sector. Moreso, the new policy on cashless transaction by public office introduced by President Muhammad Buhari will in a long run reduces the level of corruption

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on technological determinism theory propounded by Mashal McLuhan. McLuhan, an American sociologist and economist argues that technology would come to take over all facets of human life, determining what is done and how it is done. Many proponents of McLuhan's proposition have explained that new technologies have already saturated how human societies behave. This theory posits that the level of technology of any society affects how the society operates. The theorist sees technological advancement as a factor that determines human activity and societal progress. Therefore, social progress is determined by level of technological innovation. He sees the media technology as a force that shapes how individuals in the society think, feel, and act and how society operates. Therefore, the level of a country's technological developments determines the level of improvement of that society or state.

According to Chandler (2014), Technological determinists interpret technology in general and communication technologies in particular as the basis of society in the past, present and in the future. Technologies such as writing or printing, television or computer changed society. New technologies, transforms society at every level, including institutions, social interaction and individual. This implies that, any institution that fails to properly adopt the current communication technologies cannot function effectively and efficiently, thus shortchange the citizens in the delivery of public good that would likely make life better for them. This means their hopes and aspirations might not be achieved in the nearest future.

### **Methodology**

The result of this study is based upon documentary approach through secondary source of gathering data, which include review of relevant literatures such as journals, textbooks, thesis, seminar papers, published and unpublished articles relevant to the variables of the research topic.

### **Importance of E-governance in Niger State**

Since the coming of twenty-first century, a lot of importance has been attached to the use of internet in societal practices. This recognition cuts across various spheres of societal operations including the politics and administrations dissemination of information and messages among organisations. The internet has today become the bridge of interaction between organizations and their key publics or stakeholders (Ivanov, 2012). Niger State has been involved in the use of e-payment systems in school and in all major source of revenue that accrue to the state.

Consequently, the shifts in governance landscape have been a serious theme for discussion in achieving effective administration and socio-economic advancement in societies for the past several decades. As the new landscape evolves, e-governance practice is witnessing a hasty and important revolution. The government of Niger State has been involved in the use of social meeting for meetings and announcements of government policies, projects and programmes through the ministry of information and political aids/advisers that are bestowed with the responsibilities of disseminating information to the citizens.

The advances of technology have been reasoned by those in the industry to have strengthened the core roles and functions of societal practices, but as the paradigm shift in internet communication changes from a traditional model of an authoritative, top-down, centralized, one-way communication to an interconnected, democratized, two-way symmetric discussion, some evidence suggests that leaders in Niger State are reluctant or slow to adapt their traditional methods to digital strategies.

Laughey (2009) observes that through internet, people are no longer defined by physical

boundaries or places (where we are) by networks of information and knowledge facilitated by new media technologies that have no sense of place. Internet has brought public and organizations into a shared domain where shared meaning is faster and instantaneous. This practice also prevails among political office holders and other government functionaries but not well strengthened because of lack of codified policy on this practice.

Consequently, the emergence of Web 2.0, has brought with it an overall change in the political sphere, with high hopes for democratic renewal and improvement. In the current governance ecology, researchers like Scolari (2012), have come to term with reality that the Internet has become the cornerstone of political and administrative communication strategies. As political parties increasingly adopt new communication technology, they are also gradually providing opportunities for citizen participation and engagement online. The idea of political engagement on line is personal to the owners of social media handles. However, there are groups chart boards that serve as platform for engagements. They are yet to be vibrant like the platforms in traditional media like the radio where there are programmes that monitors the government ant their policies.

Davis (2009) highlights the increase of information circulating in digital networks, resulting in organizations having to struggle to get their stakeholders' attention in an environment cluttered with messages and stimuli. This phenomenon is yet to be experienced in Niger State because of the low level of internet penetration. Majority of the citizens are in the rural areas and the level of literacy is low as such contents are not generated to the level that they could overwhelm governmental institutions providing services for them and incase of absence of living up to the expectation of citizens, the citizens would not be able to hold the government accountable as a multitude.

For the purpose of impacting on the welfare of citizens, leaders in Nigers State need to adapt technological practices and outreach strategies alongside complementary new and information and communication technologies. The shift to digital communication has changed the way that people expect to find, share, and discuss information, and has opened whole new models for engagement and participation. People now expect to be able to receive and discover up-to-date information instantly online, and expect information to be live and fresh. People also expect to be able to share, rate and discuss content, as opposed to simply consuming it. Static websites with information that rarely changes are rapidly being replaced by dynamic blogging platforms where new and interesting content is added daily, and where social sharing and commenting is integral.

Organizational efficiency through the instrumentality of ensuring transparent operational activities, accountability, effective and efficient service delivery, reduction of corruption, and deploying electronically gadget in curbing the menace of sharp practices in organization will go a long way in making life better for citizens dwelling in Niger State.

### **Conclusion**

It is understandable that when Nigerian citizens are well equipped with knowledge and competency of ICT skills capacity, this will open window of opportunities for several activities to strive, because e- governance which is all about effective and efficient service delivery is aimed towards rapid economy growth and development. Therefore, e-governance can promote and encourage the survival and efficiency of public organization across Niger State. The review of relevant literature depicts that effective application of e-governance by public organization is a sine qua non for the actualization of public organizations efficiency.

### Recommendation

For Niger state government to be one of the leading in the use of e-governance to ensure efficiency, the following measures should be taking into consideration.

Adequate finance should be provided that can be used for procurement of ICT facilities for efficient and effective operation of public sector in the state. Government officials should be given adequate training on the use of modern ICT. The government should adopt measure to protect its website from any security threat which can undermine the effective functioning of the website. The government should take adequate steps to enlighten the citizen on the need to embrace e-governance. There should be a strong policy by government to ward e-governance to enable public offices achieve efficiency and effectiveness.

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