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Status and Challenges of e-Governance in the Nigerian Public Sector

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Abstract

This study sought to ascertain Nigeria's status on the global ranking and to examine possible challenges impeding the proper implementation of e-governance in the Nigerian public sector. The study was situated within the ambit of the Technological Determinism and Modernisation Theory. This study follows the conceptual and empirical research approach which focuses on examining the secondary data. The study revealed that Nigeria is ranked 5th among countries in West Africa and 141 globally on the UN EDGI 2020. The challenges of e-governance in Nigeria include limited power supply; inadequate Infrastructural facilities; digital divide; corruption in public office; budgeting and financial costs; human expertise. The study concluded through the EGDI that Nigeria is yet to attain its best in the drive for viable, transparent, efficient, and effective e-public services. It was then recommended that the Nigerian government should provide the necessary infrastructure that will aid the successful implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service. Also, Nigeria's public servants must show a high level of e-readiness in their operations.

Keywords: e-Governance, Government, Public service, Nigeria, Technological determinism and modernisation

Introduction

E-Governance is a two-way communication approach to deal with the use of information and communication technology to deliver government services and ensure that such services are available to citizens. E-governance has now become an essential mechanism for increasing citizen participation, monitoring and evaluating government projects, ensuring government accountability and transparency, and transferring information from one sector to another (Palvia & Sharma, 2007). It has become a widely accepted procedure that involves the use of information technology to improve transparency, provide timely information to all citizens, improve administration efficiency, and improve public services such as electricity, health, security, water, transportation, and municipal services.

Technology, in the wider context of knowledge, skills, techniques, and philosophical strategies, as well as devices, hardware, software, and electrical circuits, has always been essential to governance. As governance's reach has expanded into new areas of the world and new aspects of previously personal relationships, it has come to rely on more complex aggregations of technically stored and dispersed knowledge (Coleman, 2008). E-governance

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necessitates new leadership styles; new methods of deliberating and deciding policy and investment; new methods of gaining access to education; new methods of listening to citizens, and new methods of organising and delivering information and services.

With the current trend in governance, the Nigerian public sector has not fared well. Various government information, communication, business, and activities were still carried out on analogue systems in the recent past. The advancement has hampered the efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency, and rapid tracking of governance business (Ndubuisi, 2000). Vital information that would have been made available to citizens via electronic gadgets of E-governance is hampered, resulting in what Obi (2008) refers to as a "total blackout in government activities."

However, in recent years, the Nigerian public has begun to embrace the e-governance strategy as a magic bullet for the sector's backwardness and deterioration. Many programmes and projects sprouted up as a result of the Ministry of Communications' desire to connect all government ministries, organisations, parastatals, and agencies to the World Wide Web (Obodo & Anigbata, 2018).

According to UNESCO (2005), e-governance is concerned with the adoption of new leadership styles, new methods of making policy and investment decisions, new methods of making education available to citizens, new methods of listening to and attending to citizens, and new methods of organising and delivering information and services. Thus, assessing the condition and nature of e-governance in any part of the world necessitates the examination of several parameters and factors.

The international community has used a few indices to assess the status of e-governance in all countries; one of these indices is prescribed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Palvia & Sharma, 2007). The evaluation is based on the progress that member countries of the United Nations have made in supplying and ensuring the provision of e-government services. As a result, the purpose of this study is to carefully examine the prescribed indices to determine the status of e-governance in Nigeria and the potential challenges that the country's position in the global e-governance development ranking may face.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of electronic governance (e-government) is dependent on sound, dependable, and well-articulated electronic governance. (E-governance is a tool for achieving effective e-government) (Duru & Anigbata, 2015). Since its independence, Nigeria has been operating several businesses using manual records, with a large amount of paperwork dominating the system (Adeyemo, 2010). Despite the lofty ideals and goals of this innovation, the country appears to be lacking in its implementation of e-governance (Nwoke, Ude, Ugbor, Kalu & Ogu 2021).

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There are numerous challenges to implementing e-governance in Nigeria, including bottlenecks and bureaucratic impediments that appear insurmountable; some of which have been found to include poor power supply, infrastructural deficiency, and the resistance to change by most public servants (Adeyomo, 2011; Onuigbo & Eme, 2015; Fatile, 2012; Aneke, Bakht & Desta, 2019). This interests the researchers of this study to first, ascertain Nigeria's status on the global e-governance developmental index (EGDI); and to explore the more possible challenges impeding the proper implementation of e-governance in the Nigerian public sectors with the motive of proffering some solutions to their effect. Also, the study

Literature Review

Conceptualising E-Governance

E-governance is a broad vision of the use of information and communication technology in government business with the primary goal of encouraging greater participation in the state and improving the relationship between the government and citizens. Ojo (2014) referred to e-governance as the use of ICT by the government to improve accountability, raise awareness, and ensure transparency in the management of government business. It is a political strategy that uses modern communication technology to publicise the activities of the government. Backus (2001) also views electronic governance as the process of delivering government services and information to the public through devices which operate on electronic principles.

The scope of e-governance, according to Danfulani (2013), revolves around e-registration, e-participation, e-taxation, e-mobilization, e-education, e-service delivery, e-feedback, e-policing, e-debate, and the analysis of public financial statements. Thus, e-government is a network of organisations such as the government, non-profits, and private institutions that collaborate to achieve a common goal. Adeyemo (2013) sees the primary goal of ensuring the application of e-governance in state affairs is to promote good governance, which is characterised by equality, participation in the democratic process, transparency, and accountability in various sectors of the nation's economy.

Electronic governance examines the entire component of the interdependence and networks that exist between the government and other institutions in the state in terms of the use and application of information and communication technology (Sheridan & Riley, 2006). As such, e-governance is an approach that investigates the processes involved in an organization's administrative relationships.

Service Delivery in E-Governance

The desire to improve service delivery in governments using ICTs typically comprises the following facets:

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Government-to-Citizens (G2C): This refers to the roles that governments can play in allowing citizens to obtain information and services online. Citizens of a country are allowed to inquire about government institutions, keep records of income taxes, pay tickets, renew driver's licences, and so on under the Government to Citizens (G2C) model. Furthermore, the government can assist in disseminating information on the web, providing downloadable forms online, assisting citizens in finding employment, and disseminating information about health and safety issues (Palvia & Sharma, 2007).

Government-to-Business (G2B): This aims to improve communications and connectivity between the government and the private sector to facilitate and enhance business transactions between the two parties. Sunday (2014) defined the G2B model as an online interaction between different levels of government and the commercial business sector. These relationships and interactions are unrelated to commercial enterprise and serve only to disseminate business information and advice on electronic-business operations.

Government-to-Government (G2G): This is an inter-governmental effort aimed at improving communication and quality of service between federal, state, and local governments in day-to-day administration. Its overall goal was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. This also aims to use ICT to cut costs and improve administration and management within government organisations (Islam & Ahmed, 2007). E-governance: Enhances inter-governmental and organisational processes; streamlines coordination and collaboration of government activities; and facilitates and streamlines inter-governmental business operations such as compliance with regulations, service delivery, and improvements (Obodo & Anigbata, 2018).

Governments-to-Employees (G2E): This is the smallest of the e-governance classifications. According to Riley (2001), the purpose of this relationship is to serve the employees by providing online services such as applying for annual leave online, verifying the balance of leave, and analysing salary payment records, among many other things. It is also an important method of delivering e-learning, bringing the workforce together, and encouraging knowledge sharing among them. This also allows employees to gain access to important information about compensation, benefits policies, wages and compensation system, training and development, and how to access their benefits.

Principles and Benefits of E-Governance

Many governments around the world have recognised the benefits of digitalisation, web access, and the internet and have begun the process of re-engineering, reinvigorating, and revamping analogue systems to be on the cutting edge of global best practices in modern governmental and business transactions. The principles of e-governance, on the other hand, are to design services with citizen preferences in mind, improve government accessibility, foster social inclusion, disseminate information responsibly, and use taxpayers' resources effectively and efficiently (Holzer & Schwester, 2011).

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According to Ojo (2014), the overarching goal of e-government and e-governance is to be able to provide citizens with a broader range of public services more efficiently and cost-effectively. E-governance also ensures transparency in government operations; government transparency is critical because it keeps the public informed about what the government is working on as well as the policies it is attempting to implement.

E-governance is equally convenient and cost-effective for businesses and the general public, as they provide easy access to the most up-to-date information available without requiring time, energy, or money to obtain it. E-governance facilitates access to government information and simplifies processes for public sector agencies and citizens. It also contributes to increased governmental efficiency, better services, easier access to public services, long-term community development, and greater transparency and accountability (Ibikunle, Eweje & Obisanya, 2019).

Citizens and other service users are encouraged to participate and exchange ideas and solutions via electronic forums and websites. Through e-payment initiatives, the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure has promoted accountability (Islam & Ahmed, 2007; Onuigbo & Eme, 2015).

E-governance is a foregone conclusion when it comes to national integration. It increases citizen participation in their government's affairs. With the proper application of e-governance, a government could theoretically move closer to true democracy. As a result, government transparency will increase, allowing the public to gain insight into how decisions are made or taken, as well as hold elected officials or public servants accountable for their actions and inactions (Obodo & Anigbata, 2018).

Furthermore, it has the potential to strengthen institutional capacity for better service delivery to citizens and businesses, as well as to reduce corruption through increased transparency and social control (United Nations Division, 2001).

Other advantages of e-governance include increased efficiency, objectivity, accountability, and speed in offering services and information to the public; providing qualitative and cost-effective services; providing a single window for all government services; evolving responsive administration; and providing a friendly, faster, and efficient interface.

Review of Previous Empirical Studies

Obi et al. (2020) studied e-governance and service delivery in the Nigerian civil service. This study aims to determine the extent to which e-governance implementation has improved administrative efficiency in the Nigerian Civil Service, as well as whether e-governance implementation has helped to reduce corruption in the Nigerian Civil Service. The study relied on modernisation theory and the qualitative research method because the majority of the data used in the study came from secondary sources. Findings show that e-governance has made service delivery easier, as evidenced by the ways and manner in which old methods

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have been transformed. Researchers recommend that Nigeria's public service demonstrate a high level of e-readiness in their operations on the one hand and that the government provide adequate infrastructure; enact Information and Communication Technology for successful implementation on the other.

Nwoke et al. (2019) studied e-governance and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa with Nigeria as a case study. The research examined e-governance and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data. The results showed that South Africa (43 per cent to 59 per cent) had the highest internet use, followed by Senegal (34 per cent to 46 per cent) and Nigeria (33 per cent to 42 per cent); it had a positive impact on education, economy, personal relationships, politics, and morality in 2017. The Internet's contribution to GDP varies across Africa, ranging from 59 per cent in South Africa to 25 per cent in Tanzania. In 2020, the West African region had the lowest regional index in the 2020 Survey, scoring 0.2209, compared to the global average of 0.4939. Cape Verde (0.4221) maintains its lead in the region, with Nigeria (0.3491) and Ghana (0.3201) rounding out the top three. In terms of service delivery by stage (per cent utilisation index), Nigeria scored 9.7 and 0.5 in the implementation of stage 4 and stage 5 of the e-government indicator in 2020, respectively, while the ranking for these two stages in previous years was not better. The Nigerian infrastructure Index increased from 0.0492 in 2010 to 0.0792 in 2020. Nigeria's Human Capital Index increased from 0.59 in 2010, to 0.61 in 2015, and 0.63 in 2020, while her Web Measure Index increased from 0.1303 in 2010 to 0.2241 in 2020. Nigeria's e-government readiness index is currently 0.5053, indicating improvement but only in an African context. The study recommended that the government should take the lead in developing ICT infrastructure, which is critical for successful e-government implementation in a developing economy.

Aneke, Bakht and Desta (2019) studied the challenges to e-government implementation in developing countries with Nigeria as a case study. Using the Institutional Theory, this study assesses key factors influencing the implementation of an e-government system in Nigeria. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and used to collect data in this study. According to the findings of this study, the most difficult barriers and factors influencing the implementation of e-government services in Nigeria are related to corruption in public office, financial planning and financial costs, skills and expertise, resistance to change, technology factors, a lack of IT professionals in public offices, data protection, the legal framework, a lack of IT infrastructure, limited electricity supply, and administrative barriers. The study concluded that the achievement of any e-government system is dependent on the ability of most of the intended users to use the system seamlessly; it is therefore critical that the diversity of users, which is unique to developing countries such as Nigeria, be considered.

Ibikunle, et al (2019) examined the effects of e-government and public service delivery in Lagos state ministry of works and infrastructure. The study used both primary and secondary data. The data were gathered from textbooks, journals, and articles, as well as newspapers and magazines. Questionnaires were distributed to the Lagos State Ministry of Works and

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Infrastructure, and 100 were retrieved and analysed using Pearson Coefficient Correlation. The findings show that e-government has significantly improved public service delivery in Lagos; the issue of corruption and incompetence and lack of transparency in the previous delivery system has been addressed. However, the findings revealed that there are still some government activities that are closed to citizens, preventing them from making proper contributions. This study thus recommends, among other things, that the Lagos state government include citizens in all of its operations so that proper scrutiny and opinion on government activities in Lagos State can be formed.

Obodo and Anigbata (2018) studied the challenges of implementing electronic governance in public sector organisations in Nigeria. Nigeria's public sector, as a global partner, has opted for e-government systems in the conduct of government affairs. To ensure that this is a reality, the government has devised several policies, programmes, and project options. Unfortunately, the policies, programmes, and projects devised by the government over the years to ensure the smooth implementation of e-governance in its operations have not yielded positive results. In line with this development, this study investigated the obstacles to its realisation and proposed some solutions to mitigate the effects of these impediments, which have become a cog in the wheels of e-governance in the Nigerian public sector. Various literature was reviewed, and the study made recommendations after sitting through the problems. A various literature review was conducted, and the study, after going over the issues, makes recommendations and concludes with a call for more research on the topic of governance.

Theoretical Framework

Although there are several scholarly theories which are relevant to this study, the study is situated within the ambit of the Technological Determinism and Modernisation theory.

Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that holds that the development of a society's social system and cultural norms are driven by its technology. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), an American sociologist, is thought to have coined the term. The German philosopher and economist Karl Marx developed the first major elaboration of technological determinism, whose theoretical framework was based on the idea that changes in technology and production technology have the greatest influence on the organisation of social relations, and that social relations and cultural practises ultimately revolve around a society's technological and economic base. Marx's viewpoint has become entrenched in modern society, where the notion that rapidly changing technologies alter human lives is pervasive. The above technological determinism theory assertion can be used to explain the use of ICT as a means of communication between citizens and the government (Ibikunle et al., 2019). According to this theory, the government is a representative of the people and must be accountable to the people over whom he governs. People must communicate with their governments through ICT regularly to ensure that appropriate relationships exist between

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them. Furthermore, the theory explained that government activities must be transparent to increase people's participation in societal decision-making.

Rostow (1953) and Roxborough (1954) are two of the most prominent proponents of modernisation theory (1979). Modernisation theory describes and explains the processes of transition from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern societies. Modernisation is a model of a gradual transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' society to modern society.

Critics of modernisation theory include socialist and free-market ideologies, world-systems theorists, globalisation theorists, and dependency theorists, amongst many others. Modernisation theory emphasises not only the process of change but also the reactions to that change. It also considers internal dynamics, as well as social and cultural structures, as well as the adoption of new technologies. A basic question about modernisation theory is its presumptions about the fundamental causes of underdevelopment and poverty. According to modernisation theorists, poverty is caused primarily by insufficient economic growth and traditional social structures. According to modernisation theorists, economic modernisation is required for wealth creation, and poverty will be reduced as benefits trickle down through society (Obi, Uzor & Chukwurah, 2020).

This theory is relevant for this research because it accurately depicts the fundamental causes of underdevelopment and poverty, as well as because it is a definition or explanation of the transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern societies. It calls for a model of a gradual transition from a pre-modern or traditional society to "modern" society.

Methodology

This study follows the conceptual and empirical research approach which focuses on examining the existing data, established by seasoned academics on the issue under evaluation (Snyder, 2019). The data for this study were obtained from secondary sources which comprise journals, published books, reports, and articles that dealt with issues on governance, e-government, and public service delivery; both in Nigeria and abroad.

E-Governance Implementation in the Nigerian Public Sector

Even though e-governance integration in Nigeria varies by government level and agency, an attempt was made to provide a unified, national framework of ICT adoption in governance. According to Olatokun and Adebayo (2012), the federal government of Nigeria declared ICT a national policy priority in 2001. This culminated in the creation of an information technology policy the following year. The need for ICT in governance, or e-governance, arose from the realisation that no country or government can operate correctly in the information or digital age without the use of the internet and other mobile web technologies. Given the importance of ICT in governance, the Nigerian Federal Government determined that the country needed a national ICT policy. As a result, the National Assembly enacted the enabling Act; "the National Information Technology Development Act" in 2007, with an

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agency, established alongside the Act to "plan, establish, and promote the use of information technology in Nigeria" (Olatokun & Adebayo, 2012).

Various government agencies began implementing ICTs in their operations as a result of the enabling act. Moreover, in 2011, the Federal Government established a new Ministry called the Ministry of Communications Technology, tasked with modernising ICT development and progress by the nation's e-governance plan (Omerie & Omeire, 2014). The ministerial committee on ICT policy harmonisation presented a draught national ICT policy in 2012, this included several policy statements and reports (Obi, Uzor & Chukwurah, 2020).

The policy thrust of the National ICT draught policy of 2012 in terms of e-governance is as follows: To facilitate the implementation of e-government initiatives; to develop frameworks and guidelines, including an interoperability and e-government framework, for the enhanced development and use of ICT in government; to develop and implement ICT training programmes for public sector employees in connection with the introduction of e-government and other digital functions (National ICT Policy, 2012).

According to Obi, Uzor, and Chukwurah (2020), the Nigerian legal framework governing the use of ICT in governance is based on multiple policies rather than an integrated system. They are as follows: the Information Policy (supervised by the National Media Commission); the Telecommunications Policy (regulated by the National Communications Commission (NCC); and the ICT Policy (supervised by NITDA, which stands for the National Information Technology Development Agency) (Fraser-Moleketi, G. and Senghor, D. 2011). The private sector was not left out of drive-in Nigeria to implement ICTs in the governance business. In 2007, the National Information Technology Development Act established the National e-Government Strategies Limited (NeGST) to facilitate public-private collaboration in the adoption and management of ICTs in Nigeria (Fatile, 2012).

The NeGST was mostly a trilateral joint venture, that is, a framework involving three parties, namely the government (represented by NITDA), private and financial investors, and technology providers, each of whom owns 5%, 15%, and 80% of the joint venture, respectively (Omeire & Omeire, 2014). The goal of the NeGST, a strategic three-partner alliance, was to create an effective unified national structure for the implementation and adoption of ICTs in and across government entities and their customers. According to the NeGST website, the purpose of its establishment is "to facilitate, drive, and implement the Nigerian e-government programme through a public-private partnership model."

Through the digitisation of their operations and services, public sector organisations in Nigeria such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Abuja Geographical Information System (AGIS), and others have made service delivery to citizens more convenient, faster, and accurate. For example, JAMB now uses e-initiatives to conduct national matriculation examinations for admission to Nigerian higher education institutions (Ojo, 2014).

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Challenges of E-Governance in the Nigerian Public Sector

Globally, there are uniform threats to the implementation of e-governance in the public sector. However, some of these challenges vary from region to different country in the world. As highlighted by Abdulkareem and Ishola (2016), the following are the challenges pertinent to e-governance in the Nigerian public sector:

Poor electricity supply: The major technical challenge impeding the full success of e-government development in Nigeria is epileptic power supply. Power outages are a common occurrence in most Nigerian cities, towns, and villages, hurting the robustness of ICT. As an alternative power source for these items, most base stations are outfitted with power generating plants. The cost of acquiring these generating plants, as well as maintaining and fueling them, has increased the operating costs of these companies, and as a result, the final burden will be borne by the citizens.

Infrastructural Challenge: Another impediment to the advancement of e-government in Nigeria is a lack of infrastructure. Infrastructure problems are numerous, including multiple regulations on the same infrastructure, a lack of standard guidelines for the procurement of right of way, theft and vandalism of ICT equipment, an infrastructural deficit, and so on.

Privacy and Security challenges: Internet privacy and security are critical for successful e-government implementation. Internet fraud (commonly referred to as 419) has been a long-standing issue in the country due to a lack of cyber security laws, which has harmed the country's image both at home and abroad. Most e-payment providers in Nigeria have been pleading for the quick passage of the long-awaited cyber security law to crack down on fraudsters' activities (Daily Independent. 2013).

Administrative challenges: Effective communication and organisational skills are required for the successful implementation of e-government. One of the organisational issues that can contribute to Nigeria's low level of e-government progress is a lack of cooperation and understanding among government agencies. Each agency has its website, and only a few have links to the websites of other agencies. Even though there is a single unified portal.

Digital divide: The difference in ICT access and usage between different regions with similar characteristics is referred to as the digital divide. In Nigeria, it can be perceived as a disparity in the accessibility and utilisation of ICT services between the rural and urban populations. The digital divide in Nigeria is caused by a variety of factors, including a disparity in literacy levels between rural and urban areas, an infrastructural gap between what is available in urban and rural areas, poverty, and the high cost of internet connectivity, among others.

Nigeria and Africa in the Global E-Government Ranking

The United Nations global e-government readiness index is a composite index made up of three components: the Web measure index, the telecommunication infrastructure index, and

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the human capital index. The UN e-government survey is the only report in the world that evaluates the status of e-government development across the world's continents and 193 member states (Benson, 2018). The report is generated every two years by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The UN has produced ten since its inception in 2001.

According to an analysis of UN e-government survey reports, Africa is at the bottom of the global continental e-government ranking. This means that some environmental variables within Africa as a continent may be to blame for the continent's poor implementation of e-government reforms. In 2001, no African country was ranked among the world's countries with greater e-government capacity. In fact, in the global e-government ranking, only Egypt in Africa made the list of countries with medium e-government capacity. The rest of Africa's countries were classified as having the world's lowest level of e-government capacity (United Nations, 2001). However, in 2016, Mauritius, Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, and Seychelles were among the countries with the highest e-government development indexes in the world, but Nigeria was not among them (United Nations, 2016). As of 2016, Africa remained at the bottom of the global e-government ranking, with a significant gap between African countries and other countries, particularly those in the global north, in terms of the progress made in this area.

Many African countries are understandably affected by poverty, food insecurity, terrorist acts, corruption, unemployment, civil war and currency devaluation. As a result, they have been unable to implement e-government reform strategies effectively and enjoy the benefits of such reforms in terms of increased efficiency, economy, and accountability. Countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, were ranked near the bottom of the global e-government rankings. These are countries with extreme poverty, illiteracy, and political instability that have the potential to stymie the effective implementation of reforms in public service delivery (Benson, 2018). Apart from Mauritius, which is ranked first in Africa and 63rd globally, Seychelles, which is ranked second in Africa and 76th globally, South Africa, which is ranked third in Africa but 78th globally, Ghana is ranked fifth in Africa and 101st globally (United Nations, 2020). All other African countries, including Nigeria, are classified as having low, medium, or minimal e-government capacities for the effective implementation of e-government reform strategies in the world.

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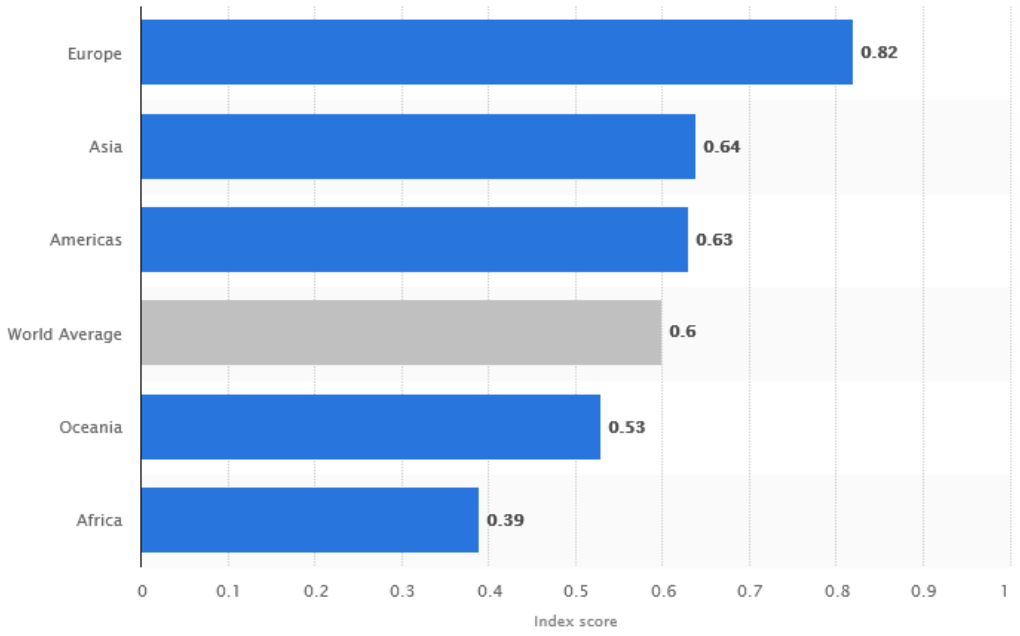
Figure 1: Global Regions E-Government Development Index (EGDI) of 2020



Source: Johnson (2021)

From the analysis in the Chart above, Europe top the list of the regions with the highest e-governance development index with an average score of 0.82. Asia is ranked second with an average score of 0.64 and the Americas ranked third with an average score of 0.63. Oceania and Africa ranked fifth with an average score of 0.53 and 0.39 respectively, leaving the world average at 0.6. this simply means Oceania and Africa are below the world average.

Table 1: West African Countries E-Government Development Index

Country	Group	Rating Class	Rank 2020	EGDI 2020
Ghana	HEGDI	H2	101	0.5960
Cabo Verde	HEGDI	H2	110	0.5604
Côte d'Ivoire	MEGDI	MH	139	0.4457
Nigeria	MEGDI	MH	141	0.4406
Togo	MEGDI	M3	147	0.4302

Source: United Nations, 2020

The analysis from Table 1 shows the position of Nigeria among the top West African countries. Ghana is ranked first in West Africa and 101 in the world; Cabo Verde came second and ranked 110 in the world; Cote d'Ivoire is third in West Africa and 139 in the world; Nigeria is ranked fourth and 141 globally; and Togo is ranked fifth and 147 globally.

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Table 2: Nigeria in Global E-Government Development Index (2012-2020)

Survey Year	Index	Rank	Remark
2012	0.2676	162	---
2014	0.29287	141	
2016	0.3291	143	
2018	0.3807	143	
2020	0.4406	141	

Source: United Nations, 2020

Table 2 shows that Nigeria was ranked 162 in 2012; 141 in 2014; 143 in 2016; 143 in 2018; and 141 in 2020 in the United Nations global e-governance developmental index. This shows that Nigeria has not improved in the global ranking in the last 8 years.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis from the literature review shows that e-governance has made service delivery easier which is evident in the ways and manner the old methods have been transformed Even though Africa unlike her European counterpart, has persistent gaps in infrastructure and human capital development that have prevented many countries in this region from moving to the higher e-government Development Index (EGDI) levels, the application of e-governance is on the increase as more Governments are using online platforms for public procurement and the recruitment of civil servants. E-governance has been able to reduce the workloads on the employees of the Nigerian civil services. When the citizens pay bills and utilities online, the time and energy that should have been expended on serving the public are conserved for other important activities (Obi et al. 2020).

From the reviewed literature, the objectives of e-governance are to increase government accessibility; foster social inclusion; responsibly disseminate information, and use taxpayers' resources effectively and efficiently. The advantages include equally convenient and cost-effective access to the most up-to-date information available without having to spend a lot of time, energy, or money. It also contributes to increased governmental efficiency, better services, easier access to public services, long-term community development, and greater transparency and accountability (Ibikunle, Eweje & Obisanya, 2019). Citizens and other service recipients are allowed to contribute and exchange ideas and suggestions through electronic forums and websites through e-governance (Islam & Ahmed, 2007; Onuigbo & Eme, 2015). According to Obodo and Anigbata (2018), e-governance is a sure way to national integration as it brings about greater citizen participation in the affairs of their government. Aside from the benefits, e-governance comes with some threats and challenges

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which were found to be database hacking; citizens' hyper-surveillance; false transparency and accountability; citizens' accessibility; and cost implications (Kaylor, 2001; Jeong, 2007; Obodo & Anigbata, 2018). In Nigeria, the specific challenges are limited power supply; inadequate Infrastructural facilities; privacy and data security; budgeting and financial costs; organisational challenges; digital divide; corruption in public offices; lack of IT professionals in public offices; and the legal framework (Daily Independent. 2013; Abdulkareem & Ishola, 2016; Aneke et al. 2019).

However, Obi, et al. (2020) affirmed that e-governance is applied in the civil services in Nigeria as government staff are trained to easily use electronic gadgets provided to serve the public effectively and efficiently in the best possible paradigms and hence causing a positive increase in the quality-of-service delivery in the Nigeria Civil Service. Also, the study of Ibikunle, et al (2019) revealed that e-government has greatly improved public service delivery in Lagos, and the issue of corruption and incompetence and lack of transparency in the previous delivery system has been addressed. But it is imperative to note that Lagos state is just one out of the 36 states in Nigeria, therefore, the assertion of Ibikunle *et al* cannot be generalized.

Also, the analysis of the data presented in the Chart and Tables shows the position of Nigerians in the global e-governance developmental index (EGDI). African generally ranked at 0.39 on average, below the world average of 0.6. Nigeria is ranked 141 globally and fourth among the West African countries behind Ghana, Cabo Verde, and Cote d'Ivoire respectively. The ranking is the result of the country's cumulative score of e-participation index, online service index, human capital index and telecommunication infrastructure index. This shows that Nigeria has not improved in the last 10 years in terms of e-governance. Abdulkareem and Ishola (2016) concluded that Nigeria's e-government operation has been a combination of failure and success over the years.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Various nations in the global community are projecting the main goal of e-governance, which revolves around the use of information and communication technology to disseminate information from one sector to another. Records show that there are disparities in the process of implementing e-governance in various countries. These distinctions are based on an examination of the three parameters used to assess nations' readiness to use e-governance services (online service delivery, telecommunication infrastructure, and human capital development). According to the global assessment, despite the growth of ICT in Nigeria, there are still certain challenges that have hampered the development of e-governance status to an international standard. As e-governance is intended to achieve its intended goal of providing internet services to every individual, there should be an element of equality in the distribution chain of internet services and facilities.

The establishment of the global survey on e-governance has thus created a channel through which various governments in the global community can access and assess their status and

level of preparedness in the provision of ICT services in the governing process. Thus, global surveys conducted by the international community clearly show the status and nature of Nigeria's e-governance as part of establishing a new culture in public service, the government should create an enabling environment in which maintenance culture becomes an acknowledged ethic or norm in public life. This should be accomplished by making accessible to all government agencies or institutions the necessary funds and infrastructure for maintenance. are at a primitive stage (141 out of 193 ranked countries).

After assessing the current state of e-government in the country using the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI), it can be concluded that Nigeria has yet to achieve its full potential in the pursuit of viable, transparent, efficient, and effective e-public service deliveries.

The following recommendations were suggested based on the findings from the study:

i. Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries should keep in mind that the ranking techniques used by the international community to assess the state of preparedness among nations will always vary. This is since as society evolves, new technological innovations emerge. As a result, nations should strive to keep up with innovations in the international community to meet standards.
ii. The government should provide the necessary infrastructure that will aid the successful implementation of e-governance in Nigeria's public service. For example, robust internet services, functional computers, and the availability of electrical supply, which has been noted as one of the major challenges to the implementation of e-governance in the public sector, must be addressed.
iii. As part of a new culture in public service, the government should put in place an enabling environment where maintenance culture will be an accepted ethic or norm in public life. This should be achieved by making available to all departments or institutions the required funds and infrastructures for maintenance purposes.
iv. Nigeria's public service (ministries, departments, and agencies) must show a high level of e-readiness in their operations. This can be done through personal and organizational sponsored training. Public service workers must also be positive in their willingness to adopt and adapt to global trends.

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