

**AN ASSESMENT OF E-GOVERNANCE IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY
IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

This study carried out an assessment of e-governance impact on public service delivery in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study relied on qualitative method based on logical deduction and analysis of documents. Findings revealed that there is an impact of e-governance on public service delivery, three domains of e-governance were identified namely e-administration, e-society and e-citizens/services, the study pointed out three e-governance interaction namely the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), improve inter-agency relationships (G2G), and establish efficient relationship between the government and business enterprises (G2B), findings identified eight components of e-governance namely transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, effectiveness and efficiency, equitable and inclusiveness, responsiveness and consensus orientation and finally the study shows two approaches for improving e-governance namely agency-centric approach and citizen-centric approach. The study recommends that government should ensure business process-engineering and adequate ICT infrastructure allowing automation to make processes faster and more efficient for citizens. Institutional restructuring, reforms and capacity building also required to provide government services.

Keywords

Assessment, e-governance, impact, Public Service, Public Service delivery, Service delivery, Ekiti State, Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

According to the OECD E-governance Project in Savic (2006), E-governance is the use of information and communication technologies and particularly the internet, as a tool to achieve better government. Okot-Uma (2004) conceives E-governance as the processes and structures for harnessing the potentialities of information and communication technologies (ICTs) at various levels of government and the public sector and beyond, for the purpose for enhancing Good Governance. Backus (2001), argued that e-governance, is the application of electronic means in (1) the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as (2) in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic government and business aspects of governance.

Service delivery simply means the extent to which an individual, unit or department of an organization discharge their assigned or statutory responsibilities. It is also a means by which an organization evaluates an individual employee or unit input and output level especially in the area of attaining set goals or task assigned. In the view of Byars and Rue (2006), service delivery is the degree to which an employee accomplished the tasks that made his or her job. The emergence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has provided means for faster and better communication, efficient storage, retrieval and processing of data and exchange and utilization of information to its users. E-governance is the logical next step in the use of ICT in systems of governance in order to ensure wider participation and deeper involvement of citizens. E-governance in Africa with special reference to Nigeria, Ekiti State has opportunities and challenges that serves as handbook on digitalization of Public administration Hub (2024)

UNESCO in Hassan and Siyanbola (2010), defines E-governance as the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision – making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective. The significance of e-government is closely connected to good governance and wellbeing of the citizens. In general, e-governance offer tremendous support and simplify government relationship with its key stakeholders (government

agencies, citizen and business entity). Bakry (2004) maintains that deploying e-governance results into innovations in the governing and administrative process of a country.

The efficiency of public administration can be enhanced through innovation and e-government, whereby it can provide better services and respond to demands for transparency and accountability. E-government can help governments go-green and promote effective natural resource management, as well as stimulate economic growth and promote social inclusion, particularly to the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. ICT systems are effective platforms for knowledge sharing, skills development, transfer of innovative e-government solutions and capacity-building. Furthermore, implementation of e-government can generate important benefits in the form of new employment, better health and education, which improves the sustainable development of any country. This paper is aimed at investigating e-governance impact on public service delivery in Ekiti State.

1.2 Statement of Problems of the Study

Despite growing excitement and benefits of adopting ICT, e-governance initiatives in Nigeria like other developing countries is yet to record significant success, or even affect the systems of governments in developing countries due to wide gap that exists between existing realities and scheme of e-governance initiatives and frameworks (Heeks, 2002; Rabaiah & Vandijck, 2009). No doubt, improving service delivery is not a remote process, it require painstaking effort to integrate and strengthening citizens participation through ICTs to diffuse e-governance processes on technical, non-technical, and state-specific issues but, it also require a well-functioning public sector that offer quality public services consistent with citizen expectations to foster private market-led growth.

Arising from the above, the challenges of service delivery in Nigeria upset citizens who demand quality services from government. Some of the major challenges to public service delivery in Nigeria as earlier noted are absence of coherent e-governance framework and poor capability to deliver service to the citizens effectively and efficiently. In general, public service delivery in Nigeria has been pronounced to be poor, inefficient and ineffective, and fall short of citizens expectations. These shortcomings in service delivery challenges are mostly due to poor

accountability, transparency, administrative bottlenecks/high cost of governance, wastage and poor commitment to make things work effectively for the citizenry (Achimuju, 2010; World Bank, 2012). Thus, this paper is poised to examine e-governance impact on public service delivery in Ekiti State.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at carrying out an assessment of e-governance impact on public service delivery in Ekiti State. The specific objectives included to :

- i. examine the impact of e-governance on public service delivery.
- ii. identify the domains of e-governance in relation with public service delivery.
- iii. discover the interaction in e-governance in relation with public service delivery.
- iv. find out the components of e-governance in relation with public service delivery.
- v. recommend on approaches for improving e-governance in relation with public service delivery.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research question were sought so as to provide solutions to the problems of the study.

1. Is there an impact of e-governance on public service delivery?
2. What are the domains of e-governance in relation with public service delivery?
3. Is there the interaction between e-governance and public service delivery?
4. What are the components of e-governance in relation with public service delivery?
5. Are there approaches to apply to improve e-governance in relation with public service delivery?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The concept of e-governance

E-governance, the application of Information and Communications Technology to the government processes to bring Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) governance (Heeks, 2001). Different governments defined this term to suit their own aims and objectives. Sometimes, the term e-government is also used instead of e-governance but there is a debate on the correct use the two terms. E-governance defined as the use of emerging information and communication technologies to facilitate the processes of government and public administration (Drucker, 2001) while e-government defined as the use of information technology to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services (West and Wind, 1996). Coleman (2006) defined e-government as the combination of electronic information-based services (e-administration) with the reinforcement of participatory elements (e-democracy) to achieve the objective of balanced e-government. Muir and Oppenheim (2002) defined egovernment as the delivery of government information and services online through the internet or other digital means. Kumar et al. (2007) was defined e-government as the delivery of improved services to citizens, businesses, and other members of the society through drastically changing the way governments manage information.

2.2 Public Service Delivery

Public service delivery as a concept has been at the forefront of public sector reforms discourse. It is associated with the New Public Management (NPM) theory attributed to the works of Pollitt (1990); Hood (1991); Pollitt & Bouckaert (2004). This places high premium on good governance, technological innovation and democratization. The theory also focuses on institutional and organizational restructuring as one of the panaceas of raising the performance of the public sector, which will in turn lead to a better and improved service delivery (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2015:189). Proponents of this theory stress the need for a paradigm shift from the norms of traditional public administration which places high emphasis on adherence to procedures rather than result orientation (Pollitt, 1990; Sarker, 2006; Hughes, 2012). Some scholars advocate the borrowing of some of the guiding principles adopted in private business organizations, which include:

accountability and transparency, efficiency and effectiveness; reduction of public sector (cost) expenditure; improvement in resource use through labour discipline; flexibility in decision making; competition in the public sector through decentralization and emphasis on result and not procedure (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004:66). According to Oronsanye (2010:31), public service delivery can be seen as the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. This implies that the interaction between government and citizens are such that the needs of the citizens are met in a timely manner, thereby making the citizens key in public service delivery. The implication here is that as the private sector considers its customer as king thereby ensuring quality service delivery, the public should be regarded as the master and beneficiary of enhanced performance of the public service (Aladegbola & Jaiyeola, 2016:162).

Acceptable service delivery can be seen as one of the core responsibilities for the establishment of public organizations. It is identified as one of the key functions of the public sector. (Mitel, 2007:2). Okafor, Fatile & Ejalonibu (2014:49) comprehend public service delivery as the result of the intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions. They opine that it is the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them (p. 49). Underscoring the opinion above, Ohemeng (2010:115) views public service delivery from the light of its key features as doing more with less, empowering citizens, enhancing transparency and holding public servants accountable. Corroborating this further, Coopers (2014:9) itemises seven core objectives for public service delivery, namely:

- i. Speed: The time taken to deliver a service should be the shortest possible for both the customer and the organization delivering the service, right first time.
- ii. Engagement: The manner in which services are delivered should be seen as customer centric (i.e. participatory and trustworthy with the customers needs at the core).
- iii. Responsiveness: There should be an intelligent mechanism in place to address any variation in meeting service levels and to drive changes in the service delivery

organization.

- iv. Value: The customer needs to believe that the service delivery mechanism is cost effective, and value is driven by customer outcomes, not organizational processes.
- v. Integration: The service delivery mechanism should be integrated. There should be no wrong door policy for the customer.
- vi. Choice: There should be multiple channels for service delivery, so that customers can have channels of choice depending on specific needs at specific times.
- vii. Experience: Personalization of service is necessary to ensure that customers experiences are on a par with what they are used to receiving from the private sector.

Consequent upon the above, it can be deducted that there is a relationship between e-governance adoption and enhanced public service delivery in a country.

3. Methodology

The paper relied on qualitative method based on logical deduction and analysis of documents. Qualitative method is considered appropriate for this study because the method is well-suited for contextual analysis particularly when the task is to glean, illuminate, interpret and extract valuable information to draw inference from the available evidence so as to reach a conclusion. Accordingly, the study employed secondary sources of data. Data will be drawn from institutional and official documents sourced from the internet, journal articles and conference materials. The mass qualitative data generated in the course of this study will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The method requires some creativity, for the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

4. Result and Data Analysis

1. Research Questions Analysis:

Is there an impact of e-governance on public service delivery?

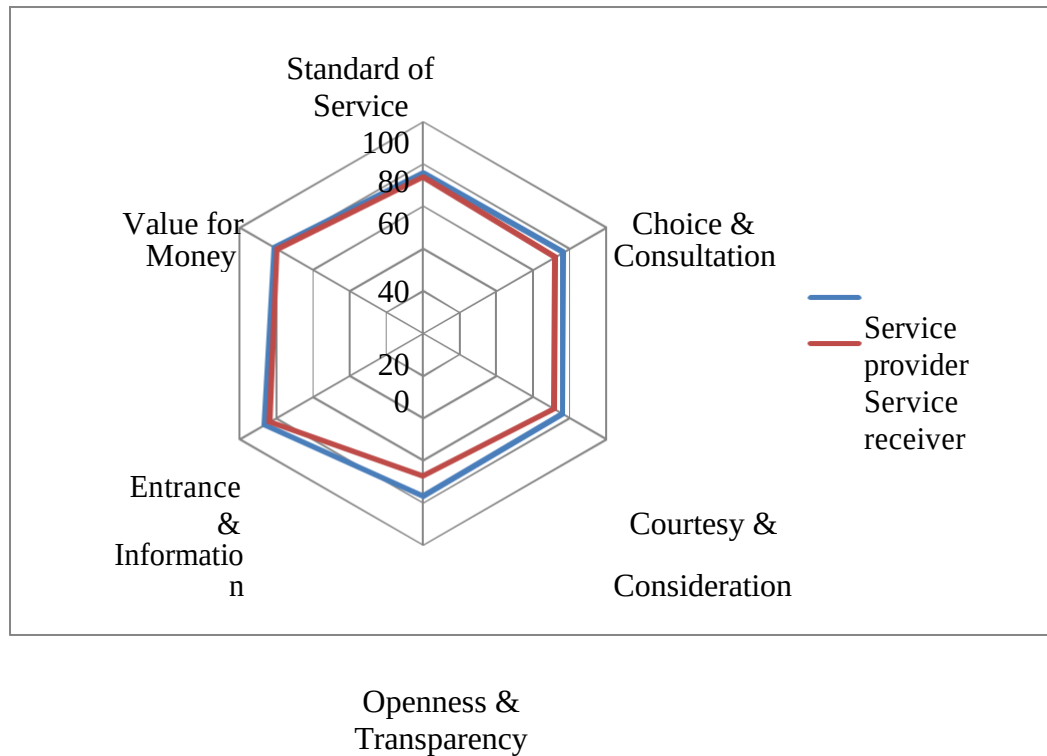


Figure 4.1 Indicators between e-governance and Public service delivery
Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

The contour (Figure 4.1) showed the indicators used in assessing the impact of e-governance on public service delivery. The figure demonstrated the relationship between the e-governance and public service delivery perception in all cases like standard of service, choice & consultation, courtesy & consideration, openness & transparency, entrance & information as well as value for money. The citizen acuity about the openness and transparency of e-service delivery 67.19% was not as much of service provider insight, 76.88%. Case of courtesy and consideration also showed

the similar trend of citizen perception (71.56%) as well as the service provider (76.25%) sensitivity.

2. Research Questions Analysis:

What are the domains of e-governance in relation with public service delivery?



Figure 4.2 Domains of e-governance and Public service delivery

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

Figure 4.2 above reveals three domains of e-governance in relation with public service delivery in Ekiti State. The main purpose of the e-administration is to improve the internal workings of the public sector by cutting process costs, managing process performance, creating strategic connections within government bodies. E-service initiatives focus mainly on improving the relationship between the government and its citizens by increasing the information flow and improving the service levels of government towards its citizens. E-society initiatives extend the previous e-services domain by focusing on institutional stakeholders, such as private sector service providers, other public agencies, and not-for-profit and community organizations. The three domains of e-governance are seldom separate in their implementations; rather, they involve overlapping activities as part of the same initiative. Findings from this study is in agreement with Heeks (2001) reports that identified three main domains of e-governance namely e-administration, e-services and e-society.

3. Research Questions Analysis:

Is there the interaction between e-governance and public service delivery?

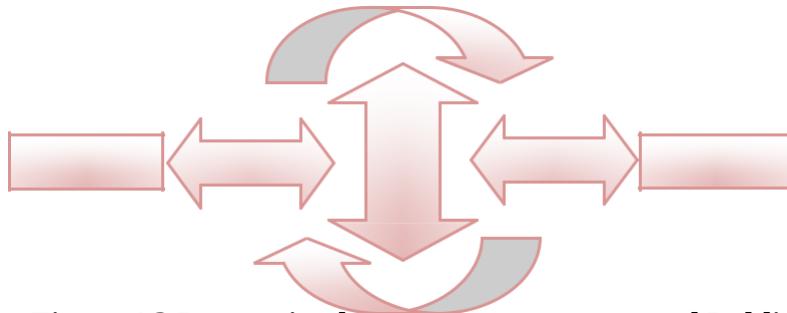


Figure 4.3 Interaction between e-governance and Public service delivery

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

Figure 4.3 above pointed out three e-governance interaction namely the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), improve inter-agency relationships (G2G), and establish efficient relationship between the government and business enterprises (G2B). Findings above corroborate Backus (2011) reports that identified G2C, G2G and G2B as the core interactions between e-governance and public service delivery.

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4. Research Questions Analysis:

What are the components of e-governance in relation with public service delivery?



Figure 4.4 Components of e-governance and Public service delivery

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

Figure 4.4 above shows eight identified components of e-governance namely transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, effectiveness and efficiency, equitable and inclusiveness, responsiveness and consensus orientation. Findings from this study is in agreement with OECD & Ketanni (2009) that enlisted accountability, transparency, responsiveness, forward vision and rule of law, participation, rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency, equitable and inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and consensus orientation

5. Research Questions Analysis:

Are there approaches to apply to improve e-governance in relation with public service delivery?

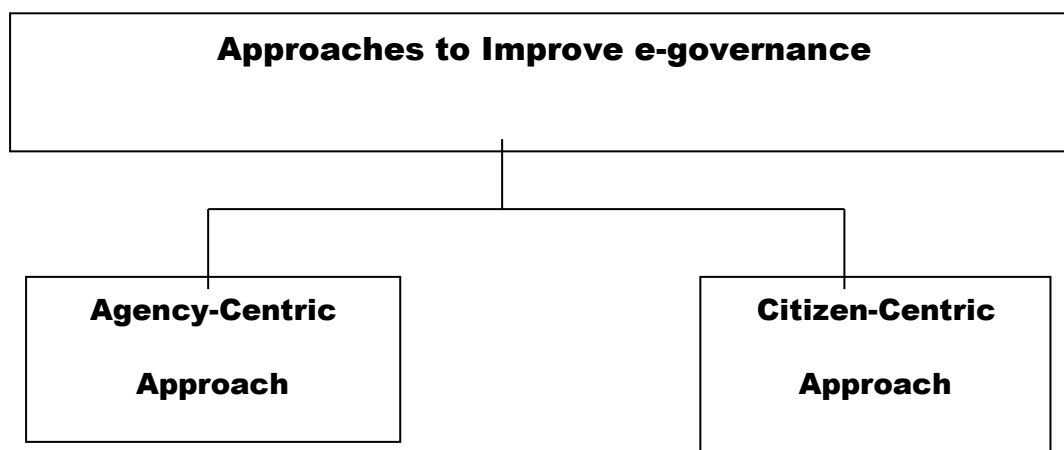


Figure 4.1 Approaches to improve e-governance and Public service delivery

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

Figure 4.4 above shows two approaches for improving e-governance namely agency-centric approach and citizen-centric approach. Agency-centric approach of e-governance is also known as department centric. Findings above is in line with Al-Khoury (2011) argued that in a department centric approach, citizen needs to interact with each department separately causing inconvenience and inefficiency. Moreover, any services that requires approvals or intervention of more than one department, would take a long time to deliver and consistent with Mehra (2004) assertion that A citizen-centric approach will enable governments to achieve essential efficiency gains and improve service delivery levels, improve citizen satisfaction with government services and improve quality of life.

5.1 Conclusions

This study carried out an assessment of e-governance impact on public service delivery in Ekiti State. Findings revealed that there is an impact of e-governance on public service delivery and that e-governance is still the best way of encouraging transparency and accountability. Three domains of e-governance were identified namely e-administration, e-society and e-citizens/services, the study pointed out three e-governance interaction namely the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), improve inter-agency relationships (G2G), and establish efficient relationship between the government and business enterprises (G2B), findings identified eight components of e-governance namely transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, effectiveness and efficiency, equitable and inclusiveness, responsiveness and consensus orientation and finally the study shows two approaches for improving e-governance namely agency-centric approach and citizen-centric approach.

5.2 Recommendations

This paper has given rise to the following recommendations:

- i. There is need for strong political will and commitment toward the adoption and implementation of e-governance in Nigeria to drive the process of public sector reform for accelerated service delivery. Therefore, government should intensify effort towards the development of policy framework that will enhance Nigerians global information infrastructure at national, state, and local government levels by adopting emerging satellite technologies such as VSAT, fibre optic networks, high speed gateways and broad band/multimedia equipment that is most suitable to our local needs.
- ii. Ensure business process-engineering and adequate ICT infrastructure allowing automation to make processes faster and more efficient for citizens. Institutional restructuring, reforms and capacity building also required to provide government services.

- iii. The implications of this study for further research can focus on mass awareness through the promotion and marketing of e- governance initiatives and policies, citizens education and participation in the formulation of e-governance policies and initiative as well as the extension of information and communication technology infrastructure to the rural poor.

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