

EFFECTS OF E-GOVERNANCE ON TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

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Abstract

The paper analyzed the role of e-governance in Nigeria on transparency and citizen engagement in the delivery of public services with special reference to Lagos, Rivers, Cross River, and Kano States respectively. Using a descriptive research design and analyzing only secondary sources in the form of scholarly articles, government reports, and institutional records (2020-2025), the research is an evidence-based inquiry of the digital governance initiatives. The paper is based on Systems Theory that describes how e-governance can combine inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback to make the process of public service more efficient and Participatory Governance Theory that accents the involvement of the citizens in the decision-making process and control. Results indicate that e-governance has improved transparency in public service, through digital payrolls, web-based recruitments, and service portals, as well as increased citizens' participation by providing access to information and using complaint platforms. Lack of proper ICT infrastructure, insufficient digital literacy, and institutional capacity are some of the challenges impeding full implementation. It is then recommended that there should be more investment in e-governance ICT infrastructure, capacity building, effective feedback mechanisms, and encouragement of the participatory policy that would be inclusive so as to have a sustainable and effective delivery of public services to citizens.

Keywords: e-governance, citizen participation, transparency, accountability, public service delivery, Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

E-governance, or the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enhance the processes and delivery of government services, has become an overriding trend in the world and especially in developing nations like Nigeria in recent years. The increasing complexity of the public administration, the increase in the demands of the citizens for accountability of the government and the fast development of digital technology all come together to make e-governance one of the primary tools to modernize the delivery of public services and improve good governance.

E-governance in Nigeria is not merely the process of digitalizing the paper process; it is a wider institutional change that will provide improved transparency, effectiveness, access to services, and involvement of the citizens. Empirical evidence has reported that e-governance could change how the public administration functions by simplifying the working process, minimizing bureaucracy, and enhancing the quality and speed of service delivery (Chiekezie and Aniekwe, 2024) On another note, another recent study has reported that e-governance has a potential to alter the performance and the ethical standards of the public sector, thus restoring the confidence of the citizens in the system of the government (Alegbeleye, Igbokwe and Sule, 2023) In addition to streamlining internal government operations The manner in which Nigeria has traditionally delivered public services has been characterized by lack of transparency, lack of access to information by the populace, a lack of avenues through which citizens can give feedback and inefficient ways through which the services can be

monitored and held to account. Through digital platforms, the public institutions can offer online portals in which they can apply to the services, and also through which they can receive feedback, as well as public data publication, which will allow citizens to have a more convenient access to information and allow them to track the service delivery (Enwelu & Nnaji, 2023). As an illustration, in the education sector, a study in Lagos State discovered that e-governance has greatly enhanced transparency, accountability, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction, but infrastructural and administrative issues persisted (Dehinsilu Isa & Amodu, 2025).

Nonetheless, e-governance has not been rolled out and experienced in Nigeria on an even footing, but the rollout has been characterized by structural and institutional problems. The lack of infrastructure is one of the greatest challenges: unstable electricity, bad internet connectivity, and weak ICT infrastructure are widespread, especially beyond large urban centres (Oloyede, 2024; Gberevbie and Oni, 2022). One of the studies found that poor legal frameworks, insufficient ICT literacy among government officials and citizens, and their institutional commitment are key factors that hinder the adoption of e-government (Gberevbie and Oni, 2022).

In addition, institutional culture and bureaucratic resistance are significant impediments even in cases of the availability of digital tools. Employees in the public sector might be undertrained, not open to change, or continue with manual and legacy procedures, which undermines the possible efficiencies of e-governance (Chima & Ojochegbe, 2022). The implementation has, in other instances, been partial or superficial, and therefore, there have been incremental improvements in service delivery with the core problems of corruption, lack of transparency, or poor oversight being left unaddressed (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2025).

Simultaneously, increased opportunities have been created as a result of the overall trend of digitalizing governance in Nigeria. A higher penetration of internet, proliferation of mobiles, and policy efforts by government bodies provide an opportunity to expand e-governance to target underserved groups (Imo State University Journal Article, 2025). E-governance has the potential to assist in minimizing bureaucratic bottlenecks, increasing transparency, fostering accountability, and expanding citizen involvement thus making the process more inclusive, efficient, and responsive to the citizens (Chiekezie and Aniekwe, 2024; Dehinsilu Isa and Amodu, 2025).

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Inefficiency, corruption, lack of transparency, poor accountability systems and a low level of citizen involvement has long defined how Nigeria has provided its services in the country and this has collectively contributed to a loss of trust amongst the citizens in government institutions and impeded socio-economic development. The Nigerian government on its part, has launched e-governance projects that are meant to digitize administrative systems, enhance transparency, and citizen involvement by means of online portals, online feedback systems, and integrated financial management systems. Although these efforts have a significant potential to improve the process and reduce bureaucracies and delays, and enhance participatory governance, they have not been effective due to a number of challenges such as the lack of adequate ICT infrastructure, an unstable power and internet connection, low rates of digital literacy among citizens and public servants, and opposition among institutional actors. Therefore, even with the increasing use of digital governance tools, it is uncertain so far how much e-governance has actually improved transparency and citizen involvement in the administrative delivery of the public services in Nigeria; therefore, creating a need to systematically analyze the effects, shortcomings, and facilitating conditions of e-governance to make it a basis for policy and practice.

3.0 Objectives of the Study

The major objective is to discover the influence of e-governance on the transparency and engagement of citizens by governments in Nigeria. The specific objectives targeted were to:

1. determine the effect of e-governance projects on enhanced transparency in services delivery by the government.
2. ascertain the effectiveness of e-governance as a tool for the involvement and engagement of the citizens in government processes.
3. determine the major issues that affect the successful application of e-governance in Nigeria.
4. provide policy recommendations on the course ahead in improving the performance of e-governance as one of the instruments of ensuring transparency and participation by citizens.

4.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

4.1 Provision of services and E-Governance.

E-governance is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by the government to improve the effectiveness, availability, and transparency of the provision of services in the government (Chiekezie and Aniekwe, 2024). E-governance has been singled out as one of the tools in the modernization of the public administration, reducing the bottlenecks in the bureaucratic system, and enhancing the communication between citizens all over the world (Alegbeleye, Igbokwe & Sule, 2023). Nigeria has several programs such as the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TSA), and online service portals, whereby the populace services are being computerized, and accountability is being promoted (Dehinsilu Isa, 2025). E-governance has been said to have the capacity to improve service delivery through the minimisation of delays, simplification of the administration process, and proper record keeping (Gberevbie and Oni, 2022).

4.1.2 Transparency and e-Governance.

The openness, availability and clarity of the decision-making process in the governance process all involve being open. Transparency is also boosted through e-governance because citizens can access information with ease and through online detection tools (Enwelu & Nnaji, 2023). As one case in point, real-time tracking of government expenditure can be made possible by digital financial management systems, thereby removing corruption and malpractice in finance (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2025). Similarly, internet-based service platforms can enable citizens to track requests, create complaints and receive timely feedback and this creates trust in state institutions (Dehinsilu Isa & Amodu, 2025). Despite these merits, the most interesting obstacles to the full application of the advantages of transparency in Nigeria include poor ICT infrastructure, low internet penetration, and low digital literacy (Oloyede, 2024).

4.1.3 Governance and participation of the citizens

Citizen participation is the active participation of the masses in decision-making, policy formulation and also in service monitoring. It has been shown that online delivery of feedback, consultation and service tracking are some of how citizens can participate in e-governance (Chima & Ojochegebe, 2022). This was the situation in Lagos State, with the online educational service platforms promoting the participation of the parents and they could observe the administrative activities in real-time (Dehinsilu Isa & Amodu, 2025). However, the participation is mostly unequal due to the infrastructural disparity, digital illiteracy, and

socio-economic imbalance, particularly in rural locations (Gberevbie and Oni, 2022). However, the most important factors in achieving success in citizen turnout are the technological solutions and the awareness and capacity-building efforts.

4.1.4 E-Governance Implementation Problems in Nigeria

Part of the investigations point to structural and institutional limitations to limit the performance of e-governance. Some of the critical barriers include poor ICT infrastructure, poor power supply, and poor internet penetration, and excessive implementation (Oloyede, 2024; Sukare & Abdullahi, 2025). They are also not the institutional factors that adopt and maintain digital systems (resistance to change, untrained, weak regulatory frameworks) (Chima & Ojochegebe, 2022). These problems point to the fact that although e-governance has the promise of improving transparency and participation, whether it will do so will rely on its ability to conquer technological and institutional difficulties.

A table showing some e-governance platforms in Nigeria and their functions

S/N	PLATFORMS	FUNCTIONS
1	Government Integrated Financial Management(GIFMIS)	They automate budget preparation, expenditure management, and financial reporting to reduce leakages and encourage transparency and accountability.
2	National Identity Management System (NIMS)	They provide biometric identity and verification to support and secure access to public services and reduce duplication of activities.
3	Corporate Affairs Commission online portal	They enable online business registration and updates to simplify corporate governance and reduce unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks.
4	National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) e-Portal	They provide digital enrollment, verification, and claims processing for health insurance schemes.
5	National Social Investments Programmes (NSIP) online portal	Facilitates beneficiary registration, payments, and monitoring for social welfare initiatives.
6	Drivers' License Management System (DLMS)	They enable online application, verification, and renewal of driver's licenses via FRSC.
7	Public Procurement Monitoring Portal (BPP Portal)	Allows citizens and CSOs to monitor contract awards and procurement compliance.
8	Nigeria Police Character Certificate Portal	Allows online application and verification of police clearance certificates.
9	e-Voting Platforms (INEC Pilot Systems)	They support voter accreditation and the electronic transmission of results to improve election integrity.
10	Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) e-Portal	They facilitate online registration, examination checks, and admissions for higher education applicants.
11	e-Tax Filing System (FIRS e-Tax)	They enable individuals and companies to pay taxes online, reducing human contact and improving compliance.
12	Treasury Single Account (TSA)	They consolidate government revenues into one account to enhance accountability and prevent diversion of funds.

Source: Author's Research, 2025.

4.1.5 Consideration of some case studies in selected states

Lagos State has been endeavoring to establish several e-governance initiatives to enhance transparency and involvement of citizens in the delivery of services to the people. Other notable reforms have been online teacher recruitment, online payroll, and school management portals, which have automated administrative operations, minimized human involvement, and increased accountability (Adebayo and Adekeye, 2022). This has enhanced oversight and engagement as citizens, especially parents and other concerned parties, are now able to access the information and give feedback in the online spaces. Nevertheless, the barrier to full participation includes the lack of even distribution of ICT infrastructure and a lack of digital literacy in certain districts, limiting the efficacy of these programs in rural or underserved communities (Ojo and Afolabi, 2023).

Cross River State has undertaken a number of e-government reforms in order to enhance transparency and participation. Payroll anomalies were minimised and financial responsibility improved with the implementation of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (CRSIPPIS), which automated the screening of the staff and payment of their salaries (Bassey and Inyang, 2021). Digital systems of tax assessment and online payments were also introduced in the state, minimizing revenue losses and direct interaction between taxpayers and officials, thus enhancing transparency (Okoro & Effiom, 2022). Moreover, the digital channels of communication and public service portal have facilitated citizens to access information and also file complaints more conveniently, though the participation is still low due to low ICT literacy and infrastructure disparities, particularly in rural LGAs (Etta and Ushie, 2023). The limitation of technical capacity and irregular maintenance of the systems in MDAs are the challenges to sustain these gains (Agba & Odey, 2024).

Kano state has acquired the e-governance projects within its civil service and its local government administration to enhance transparency and participation of the citizens. The online payroll systems, service request portal, and complaint management systems have minimized bureaucratic bottlenecks, increased financial accountability, and enabled citizens to remotely monitor service delivery (Abdullahi and Sule, 2023). Although these are enhancing, lack of ICT infrastructure, digital illiteracy levels among employees and citizens, and intermittent internet connection, especially in rural regions, restricts the effectiveness of e-governance, hence contributing towards not being inclusive (Ahmed & Musa, 2022).

Rivers State has introduced e-governance reforms in selected ministries as well as Rivers State University in order to promote transparency and citizen participation. Administrative services, record management and payment portals were implemented, and the chances of corruption were minimized, and the efficiency of services was enhanced (Worlu & Peters, 2022). The advantage was more feedback and access to information, whereby the citizens were able to have more oversight. Nevertheless, intermittent power access, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and the unwillingness of some employees to change hindered the maximum effectiveness and scope of these efforts, especially in the rural environment (Worlu & Peters, 2022).

4.2 Theoretical framework

The research paper has been anchored on Systems Theory and Participatory Governance Theory, which are analytical frameworks of how e-governance can impact transparency and citizen engagement in the delivery of public services in Nigeria.

The conceptualization of governance is on Systems Theory (Easton, 1953) as a system in which there are inputs, conversion processes, outputs and feedback. In the e-governance environment, the inputs are the citizen demands and expectations, which are processed using digital platforms to generate outputs like better service delivery, transparency and

accountability. Feedback systems- that are facilitated by ICT tools enable citizens to react to actions taken by the government, and as a result, the responsiveness of the system is enhanced. This theory can be applied to the current study since under this theory, e-governance is a system that unifies information flow, improves transparency, and strengthens accountability through the continuous interaction among the government institutions and citizens.

According to the Particulate Governance Theory (Fung and Wright, 2003), democratic rule becomes more robust in a scenario when the citizens are actively engaged in the decision-making process and the process of overseeing the work of the public institutions. E-governance systems, e.g., online portals and electronic feedback systems, increase the possibility of public involvement by reducing the obstacles to it and providing a direct channel of interaction with government agencies. The theory has relevance to the study since it illuminates the impact of digital governance tools in promoting the voice of citizens, enhancing oversight, and collaborative governance. It also offers a reference point to the level of improvement of e-governance on inclusion of citizens, transparency and shared responsibility towards the delivery of services to citizens.

The two theories together are sufficient to justify the study since they reveal that e-governance does not only restructures the public service into a more responsive and transparent system but also enables the citizen to have a more active role in the processes of governance.

5.0 Methodology

This research paper followed the descriptive research design, to examine the impact of e-governance on transparency and citizen participation in the delivery of public services in Nigeria. Through the design, the researcher analyzed the existing conditions, patterns and relationships without manipulating the variables. The research is based purely on secondary data, which consists of academic articles, reports of international aid organizations, trustworthy online sources, and institutional documents published in recent times (2020-25). The sources were carefully reviewed to obtain the information concerning the use of e-governance, its effects on transparency, engagement between the populace, and the issues related to its implementation in Nigeria. The secondary data were organized and interpreted by the means of a documentary analysis approach. The choice of materials was done according to relevance, recency, credibility and suitability to the study goal. The analysis was conducted in a thematic manner, which enabled the researcher to categorize the findings in broad themes that included transparency, participation, challenges, and policy implications. The methodology is suitable in that it offers a full and evidence-based insight into the impact of e-governance initiatives in influencing the outcome of the public service delivery in Nigeria without the need to conduct field data collection.

6.0 Discussion of Findings

The results of this study reveal that e-governance has improved transparency in states such as Lagos, Rivers, Cross River, and Kano. Online payroll services, automatic service portals, and digital financial management systems have lowered the number of human interferences, minimized chances of corruption and guaranteed record-keeping. To illustrate, the Cross River State Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (CRSIPPIS) and online recruitment system at Lagos State have enabled citizens and other stakeholders to check processes that have created accountability and enhanced trust. Nevertheless, these initiatives have been limited by the inequality in the ICT infrastructure, unreliable power supply, and gaps in technical capacity, which in some cases restricts transparency in rural or underserved regions.

The e-governance platforms have opened opportunities to increase participation by the citizens by allowing comments, submission of complaints, and live service tracking. In Lagos State, parents can now be digitally stable with what is happening in the school administration, and in Kano, the citizens are able to interact with local government services via complaint portals. On the same note, in the Cross River State, citizens can use online service platforms to make their queries and monitor service provisions. These tools have increased inclusion and control. Nonetheless, there is unequal participation because of the low level of digital literacy and awareness and infrastructural constraints, particularly in rural settings, which hinder equitable citizen participation.

The same issues were identified throughout the case studies: a poor ICT infrastructure, low internet penetration in the rural communities, unreliable power supply, and limited technical capacity among employees, and resistance of institutions to digital changes. All these barriers have resulted in the non-uniform adoption of e-governance systems, a lack of efficiency within certain ministries or local governments, and a lack of transparency as well as participation of citizens. Also, unsustainable system maintenance and ineffective regulation systems were identified to hamper sustainability.

According to the findings, the policy should focus on investment in the infrastructure of ICT, stabilization of power supply, and digital literacy of citizens and public servants. Transparency and participation may be maximized further by enhancing institutional capacity through training, establishing effective feedback systems, and imposing regulations that would guarantee adherence to the standards of e-governance. This will be achieved by promoting participatory governance measures that will see the citizens in all parts of the country, whether in urban areas or rural areas, have access to e-governance services. All in all, the results show that e-governance positively influences transparency and civic engagement in the Nigerian delivery of public services. The returns are higher in those states that have good ICT infrastructure and institutional preparedness. Nevertheless, there are chronic issues, particularly in rural locations and within low digital literacy groups, which constrain the potential of these reforms.

7.0 Conclusion

The paper has proven that e-governance in Nigeria supports transparency and citizens' participation in reducing human influence, accountability, and avenues of public feedback. Digital portals ensure that citizens interact better with the government services, and this results in more oversight and participatory governance.

The inefficiency of ICT infrastructure, poor levels of digital literacy, intermittent power supply, and poor technical capacity, particularly in rural regions, however, are challenges that curtail the full potential of such initiatives. These limitations need to be addressed by investing in technology, capacity building, and inclusion of policies. All in all, e-governance has been proven to be of great help, though its success relies on whether it can overcome infrastructural and institutional challenges in order to have equitable and sustainable delivery of public services.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In a further move to increase transparency, government services in terms of service delivery should increase platforms that are digital, such as online payroll and procurement, and administrative systems. Consistency in auditing these platforms should be in place as well to ensure accountability and minimize corruption.

2. The policies must promote broader citizen participation via digital platforms by facilitating awareness creation, communicating with people about e-governance tools, and making the user interface of online portals easier. This will make sure that the citizens will be able to take an active part in the decision-making and monitoring of the services provided to the citizens, even in rural locations.
3. To solve the infrastructure and technical-related challenges, ICT infrastructure, constant power supply, and staff capacity building have to be invested in. Both public officials and citizens' training programs will enhance the use of the systems and minimize the opposition to the digital adoption.
4. Government must implement uniform policies and regulations of e-governance, maintain digital systems, and use participatory practices of governance. Involvement of communities and stakeholders in the planning, monitoring and evaluation will maintain reforms and enhance the outcome in service delivery.

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