Chapter 3
E–Government adoption in Nigeria and the Journey So Far:
The End of Corruption?

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ABSTRACT

E-government is an emerging field of research that has generated considerable interest recently. This research examines contributions from e-government as a means of providing solutions to developmental challenges that have been linked to corruption and a lack of transparency. Although the government has embarked upon a number of e-government initiatives, Nigeria ranks low in the area of e-government provision to its citizens. Initial findings show that the focus of existing studies have been on the supply side with little research focusing on the demand side. Initial findings also indicate that the e-government initiatives that have been implemented have little to no effect on increasing transparency and decreasing corruption. A framework for the evaluation of current e-government provision with a view to combating corruption is proposed. This will incorporate the users' perspectives into further development of e-government initiatives. The resulting framework will be applied to verify the contributions of e-government towards resolving some of the challenges facing the populace.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is currently faced with a number of challenges. Falling oil prices, high rates of inflation, a weakening currency and attacks from extremist groups in the north-eastern and southern regions of the country are just a few of the challenges plaguing the current regime and the citizens. More than at any point in the country's history, there is a need for reassurance that the government is quite capable of handling these challenges and coming out on the other side. One way of achieving this is by ensuring that better services are provided to citizens and businesses through electronic government. This also ensures that the government is close to its citizens and may as a result inspire confidence.

Electronic government and electronic governance are terms that have been used interchangeably in existing literature and are arguably close in meaning. For the purpose of this research however, the terms are defined as follows. Electronic Government has been described as the use of ICT by Government agencies in order to better manage relationships with citizens, business and other arms of Government (Silcock, 2001), while Electronic Governance is the application of technology by government to transform itself and its interactions with customers, in order to create an impact on the society (Estevez & Janowski, 2013). The benefits of e-government for citizens have been widely published. They include, saving time and money (Gilbert, Balestrini & Littleboy, 2004), bringing government closer to people (Veljković, Bogdanović-Dinić & Stoimenov, 2012). It has also been used to improve transparency in the government sector and to combat corruption (Kim, Kim & Lee, 2009). Furthermore, it can be used to simplify bureaucratic procedures or even eliminate them altogether (Silvia & Adela, 2014). Although several countries have been enjoying the benefits of e-government, the phenomenon can be said to be in its infancy in Nigeria. Admittedly, there are barriers to its adoption including, trust, financial security, information quality (Gilbert, Balestrini & Littleboy, 2004). However, on balance, the benefits so far, outweigh the risks for countries that have fully adopted the phenomenon.

Nigeria is a country of approximately 182,202,000 million people (World Bank, 2015) who speak over 500 languages (Gordon, 2005). Over the years, factions have developed, corruption has been rife and there is a deep distrust of government (Friedman, 2006; Obadare, 2005) indicating even more of a need to bring government closer to the populace. E-government is an avenue that makes this possible. The government can have a chance of regaining the people's trust by providing services electronically and a platform for information exchange between citizens and the government agencies.

Although the subject matter of e-government has appeared as an area of concern in a number of government initiatives, Nigeria ranks low in the area of e-government provision to its citizens. This is in spite of the fact that the country has the fastest growing and most lucrative telecommunications, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) market in Africa (Adeyemo, 2011). In terms of e-government provision, Nigeria is currently ranked in the 141st position, out of 193 member states (United Nations, 2014). Furthermore, data that could be useful in ensuring the success of e-governance is not widely available within this area. For example, the north-eastern region of Nigeria has been plagued by violence in the wake of attacks from terrorists, which has led to millions being displaced from their homes. However, there is scant data from this region regarding casualties and displaced people. This is a general problem within the country and the continent. In 2014 more than 50 per cent of the countries in the world regions, except for Africa, provided some data pertaining to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (United Nations, 2014) indicating limited transparency.

The success of e-government deployment among developed countries has been well detailed in existing literature. Themes of e-government research in developed countries are more specific and focused. This is indicated by several focused themes such as trust, information quality, data privacy, personal identity, and intelligent information (Wahid, 2013). There is however limited research as far as the phenomenon is concerned among developing countries. Wahid (2013) mapped the themes of e-e-government research in developing countries published between 2005 and 2010 and listed the following themes as the main focus of research on e-government in developing countries. These include design/implementation, adoption, impact, evaluation and context. In Africa, there is scant documentation of how effective e-government initiatives have been (Rorissa & Demissie, 2010). In addition, there is little or no evidence to suggest that a clear framework for the adoption of e-government is being followed in Nigeria (Mundy &Musa,

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