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THE USE OF INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
AND THE QUEST FOR ACCOUNTABILITY
AMONG POLITICAL LEADERS
AND PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS
IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Quite a few studies and inquiries on the impact of ICT, primarily in the promotion of good local governance in Nigeria, have been prompted by persistent cases of poor and outright lack of accountability and transparency in government affairs and institutions, low citizen participation, outright poor service delivery and provision of public goods, and low participation in governance and decision-making processes (Onimode, 2000; Yagboyaju, 2004; Yagboyaju, 2011). The infrastructural prominence is waning at the local level, and, most crucially, the situation shows signs of infrastructural decadence at the national level.

In addition, the literature (Onuoha, 2005; Kukah, 2012; Akinlo, 2015; Adeyeye, 2016 and Aransi, 2017) has revealed that, despite allocations from the Federal Government and the Internally Generated Revenues (henceforth

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referred to as IGRs) and the economic capacities of several grass roots governments, there has been little to show as an indication of an expected outcome on grass roots development, owing to corruption and bad governance. Furthermore, there are voting irregularities and apathy (lack of involvement) among the local population, lack of accountability and transparency of grass roots political leaders and public office holders, which have rendered good local governance and development aspirations a mirage. The introduction and acceptance of information and communication technology (ICT) in Nigeria's governance and electoral systems has prompted research targeted at reversing bad governance caused by a lack of transparency and openness among state officials and government leaders in local government.

A number of studies have observed the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for improving good governance at the national and regional levels of government, as well as its executable roles (Misuraca, Kwami, 2013; Adesola, 2012; Iwasokun, Alese, Thompson & Aranuwa, 2011; 2007; Nasser, Gage & John, 2005; Olowu, 2004; Mundy & Sultan, 2001; Agere, 2000); they have not been able to demonstrate the impact of ICT not just on accountability but also on local administration, service delivery efficacy, the implications of ICT for good governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria, as well as the openness of local public and political office-holders.

GOVERNANCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Profoundly, an appropriate working understanding of what governance represents could be labeled in this study as a multifaceted compound situation of institutions, systems, relationships, structures, processes, procedures, practices, and leadership behaviour in the isometrics of social, political, economic, and managerial or administrative authority in the running of either public or private affairs (K.W. Olawoyin and K. O Lamidi).

Nevertheless, it will be used in conjunction with a definition of "local government," which refers to the application of authority at the local community level. However, we must keep in mind that not all forms of local governance are local governments. As a consequence, it is conceivable to have central or even foreign governance at the local level. The level of the local populace's involvement in the steering (i.e., selecting the direction) in harmony with their local needs, priorities, and issues is the most important and determinant aspect in establishing whether or not governance is local. Governance ceases

to be a substance of government alone; it becomes a position of multiple inter-linkages and relationships in which dissimilar and various actors in the public and private sectors and civil society at local, national, and international levels play different roles, sometimes mutually conflicting, sometimes mutually reinforcing, and complementary, especially with aligned purposes in satisfying the local community's interests. It is possible that "local governments behave more in conformity with the demands and priorities of local populations than would larger authorities", according to Klugman (1994), cited in Kauziya (2000). As a result, higher authorities must prioritise close collaboration with local governments in order to complete their share of the task and effort in harmony with the demands and goals of the local community.

Suffice to ask then "What does locality in local governance truly imply?". Local government and local inhabitants are not the only elements of local governance. Perhaps, this describes a scenario in which any governance actor (an international NGO, a central government entity, a local government agency, or a private-sector enterprise) engages in long term planning, execution, maintenance, assessment, and regulation with a pivotal superintendent responsive to the needs, priorities, preferences, involvement, and well-being of the local population. In other words, the local people's needs, interests, priorities, involvement, control, and well-being are more important than the actor in local government. It is also critical to keep this in mind, or we will continue to be entombed in the structural limits of equating local governance with local government. A number of studies have proved that not all local governments work in the interests of local residents for better analysis. As a result, there is a risk that some local governments will become exploitative and authoritarian to the local population to serve local leaders' interests.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Through the democratic participation paradigm of local government, the study employs a bottom-up development method. The bottom-up approach's synergy is the splicing together of systems to produce more complex systems. Bottom-up information is a derivative of incoming input from the environment in order to construct a perception. In a bottom-up approach, the system's separable base elements are meticulous in great detail; these elements are then integrated to build a more significant subsystem, which is then linked to make a complete top-level system, sometimes in several tiers. Scholars such as Haward (1952), Carl (1950), Gutman (1951), Staughton

(1950), Thompson (1952), and Jesse (1954) are proponents of this theory, but Thompson (1952), who first proposed it in the 1950s, is the main intellectual mentor of this method.

After the strategy and priority selection are tailed in their local region, the bottom-up method means that local actors democratically participate in decision-making. This technique involves local stakeholders such as local institutions, economic and social interest groups, and private organisations, all of whom participate. Capacity building is a precarious element of the bottom-up method, on which ICT can act as a catalyst. According to Enri (2006), the shift from top-down to bottom-up mechanisms began in the 1980s. Concurrently, with the appreciation of the value of indigenous technical know-how. Moreover, with the ability of the poor to contribute to solutions to their problems. Technically and, occasionally, a reflection of over-relating actions to recognise the uniqueness of local experiences, making them sacred.

Willy-nilly, Sharma (2006) recognised that both practice and theory influence the shift. This approach can also manifest as a shift towards an organic, holistic, participatory approach with management and collaboration with local institutions to recognise local development sustainability through ICT instrumentality. Using the African development experience, Olowu (2000) explains several challenges with top-down development planning. "Past centralised efforts, however well-intentioned, failed to benefit the rural poor," writes Olowu (2000), and supplementarily added to the paradigm shift to favour community participation and local development planning, thus, creating, according to Olawoyin and Lamidi (2020), development, and reduce poverty, as well as empower local people through the bottom-up mechanism and ICT's aid, from side to side.

According to Erni (2006), the bottom-up approach focuses on strengthening indigenous capacities for development and how local actors synergise and utilise local resources to achieve local goals. According to Robinson (1997), the bottom-up approach views local/rural development as community-based, and individuals should have the ability to participate in their futures, as Behere (2009) puts it. What is more, this demonstrates the importance of careful planning and local-centric consideration, particularly in terms of local groups and demographics and their active participation and involvement enabled by e-governance and ICT instrumentality, in order for developmental multitudes to be broadly successful. However, the bottom-up approach centred on how local people can be involved in the development process in terms of human resources, community capacity, physical innovations

and capabilities within their locality; it focuses on how local people can be convoluted in the development process in terms of physical innovations and capabilities, human resources, and community capability within their locality. Consequently, this strategy represents a paradigmatic shift away from the apathetic political behaviour of the past and towards a more participatory role and involvement of the local population.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised primary data collected from key informants and questionnaires administered to local party officials, elected political office holders, Nigerian Union of Local Government Employee (NULGE), and executive members of ICT-oriented non-governmental organizations. It is imperative that to elicit information on the interconnection between information and communications technology and authority at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria 460 copies of the questionnaire were dispersed to the category of respondents, as mentioned earlier. Conversely, 418 questionnaire copies were recovered from the field, accounting for 90.8% of the total number of questionnaires distributed. Additional data was massed through interviews with 18 people, all of whom were ICT officers from non-governmental organisations (Revoder, Tracker, and BudgIT) with a thorough understanding of the topic at hand.

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This section looks at the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on political leaders and public officials' accountability in governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. In order to gather quantifiable data for this specific purpose, respondents were inquired to agree or disagree with several assertions. In this regard, Table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents on each of the statements used to assess the impact of ICT on political leaders and public office holders' responsibility in grass roots governance processes. Furthermore, the mean value (\bar{X}) summarises the strength of the respondents for each of the claims made to reach this goal, using the following decision rule: more respondents agreed where ($\bar{X} > 2.5$), and more respondents disagreed where ($\bar{X} < 2.5$).

Effect of ICT on accountability of political leaders and public office holders in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria

This section contains data analysis and interpretation of the respondents' perspectives on the impact of ICT on political leaders and public office holders' accountability in the governance arena at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. The percentage and frequency distribution of respondents on each of the statements set forth to attain the above-stated purpose are shown in Table 1, and the values/responses are grouped using a Likert scale of measurements. The mean value and standard deviation would also confirm the respondents' level of agreement and disagreement with the established statements.

In response to the first assertion in Table 1, 206 respondents (49.3%) strongly agreed, and 180 respondents (43.1%) agreed that excellent local governance is based on accountability, openness, and involvement. Another 9 (2.2 per cent) disagreed with the assumption, and only 7 (1.7 per cent) strongly disagreed, while 16 (3.8 per cent) said nothing ($\bar{X} = 3.32$, $SD = 0.907$). The components of excellent local governance, to a considerable extent, are reliant on the trinity of transparency, accountability, and involvement at the distinct local levels, according to this distribution.

However, it was questioned if the use of ICT had resulted in effective accountability of public and political office holders through citizen participation. In response to the second allegation, a higher percentage of respondents agreed, with 127 (30.4) strongly agreeing and 221 (52.9%) agreeing. However, just 25% of respondents (or 6% of the total) disagreed with this assumption regularly, with 7% strongly disagreeing ($\bar{X} = 2.99$, $SD = 1.000$). As a result, it can be firmly assumed that the use of ICT will be an effective tool for ensuring proper accountability of public and political office holders at the local level in Nigeria.

In response to the third question, 126 respondents (30.1%) strongly agreed, and 216 respondents (51.7%) agreed that ICT could help local governments become more responsive and accountable to their citizens. In contrast, 28 respondents (6.7 per cent) disagreed, 25 respondents (6% strongly disagreed), and 23 (5.5 per cent) did not react to this allegation ($\bar{X} = 2.95$, $SD = 1.050$). As a result, the use of ICT in various local communities can help achieve governance objectives at the local level.

The statement that ICT in Nigeria has enhanced accountability of public/political office holders in the conduct of local governance in Southwestern Nigeria was strongly agreed by 118 (28.2%) and agreed by 205 (49%) respondents, which is shown in Table 1. In all, 77.2 percent of respondents

agreed with this statement ($\bar{X} = 2.86$, $SD = 1.088$). This suggests that the use of ICT in governmental administration at the local level may be claimed to be a viable technique for promoting accountability in the conduct of local governance in the researched area.

Respondents were requested to agree or disagree on whether accountability is better now (2017) than in 1999, before the advent of ICT and its tools. When it came to the fifth assertion, 118 people (28.2%) strongly agreed, and 182 (43.5%) agreed. On the other hand, 58 (13.9%) disagreed, with 40 (9.6%) strongly disagreeing ($\bar{X} = 2.81$, $SD = 1.096$). The respondents overwhelmingly accepted the importance of ICT technologies on accountability as important for promoting democratic local governance and successful service delivery at the local level, as inferred from this distribution.

Reduced election cheating is a significant threat to Nigeria's governance system at the local level and beyond. However, this stance was asserted to confirm if election rigging (both local and national) may be minimised in Southwestern Nigeria through the widespread deployment and use of ICT tools. One hundred twenty respondents agreed strongly with this sixth assertion, accounting for 28.7% of the total, while 210, i.e. 50.2 per cent, respondents agreed with. In terms of deviation, approximately 39 respondents (9.3%) disagreed, 31 respondents (7.4%) strongly disagreed, and 18 respondents (4.3%) did not answer to this allegation ($\bar{X} = 2.92$, $SD = 1.030$). The simple reading of this data distribution is that using ICT would reasonably reduce election fraud at the local level, encouraging accountability of political and public office holders to the masses, knowing that their vote will always count and that they will be held accountable.

Nigeria's economic development has been hampered by a lack of accountability and, what is more, transparency in local governance, as well as election cheating. In response to the seventh assertion, 162 respondents, or 38.3%, strongly agreed, while 180 respondents, or 43.1 per cent, agreed.

However, this does not imply complete agreement, as almost 14% of respondents disapproved of the claim ($\bar{X} = 3.07$, $SD = 1.033$). Nonetheless, based on an agreement rate of around 81 per cent, economic development at the local level suffers a significant setback due to inadequacies in government openness and accountability in the conduct of governance activities at the local level and the consequences of election rigging.

In response to the eighth argument, a total of 354 respondents (84.7 per cent) agreed that corruption and a lack of accountability had harmed democratic survival and growth in Southwestern Nigeria. ($\bar{X} = 3.10$, $SD = 1.016$). However, this does not have an absolute meaning because

10.5 per cent of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 4.8 per cent did not reply. In consequence, there is compelling substantiation that insufficient accountability can stifle democratic activities and create local content at the grass roots level in Nigeria.

In response to the ninth claim presented in Table 1, respondents in Southwestern Nigeria's local government areas shared their thoughts on accountability in revenue production and expenditure. Lack of accountability in local revenue generation processes and expenditure by public office holders will engender corruption on the part of public and political office holders in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria, according to 151 (36.1%) of respondents who strongly agreed and 210 (50.2%) of respondents who agreed. Meanwhile, 26 (6.2 per cent) of respondents disagreed, with 15 (3.6 per cent) strongly disagreeing ($\bar{X} = 3.11$, $SD = 0.949$). This indicates that a sizable proportion of respondents acknowledged the lack of accountability in municipal revenue generation processes and spending procurement systems.

Respondents were also asked to categorically agree or disagree on whether accountability is one of the factors of bad local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. In response to the last allegation in Table 1, 185 (44.3 per cent) of respondents strongly agreed, while 164 (39.2%) agreed. In all, 83.5 percent of respondents agreed, compared to 12.2% who disagreed, and roughly 4.3 per cent of respondents did not answer to this assertion ($\bar{\chi} = 3.15$, $SD = 1.027$). As a result, it is practical to assume that accountability impacts governance procedures in the researched region. As a result, the claim was put to a hypothesis test utilising correlation co-efficient analysis following the objective statement.

In addition to all of this, respondents agreed with the quantitative analysis results in an interview session. Almost all respondents agreed that ICT positively impacts political leaders and public office holders' accountability in local government in Southwestern Nigeria. However, a few respondents expressed reservations about ICT's ability to instil accountability in politicians and public office holders in local government. According to this group, the politicisation of ICT use in local government allows for politicians' non-accountability to the public. Furthermore, the state government's employment of a committee system to operate local governments exempts legislators from public responsibility because their positions are not determined by popular vote but by the state government's appointment, resulting in little or no accountability to the people.

In contrast, more respondents agreed that ICT encourages politicians and public office holders to be more accountable. The opinions of the few who opposed the opinion that ICT improved local accountability cannot

be disputed. It is critical to examine some factors that contribute to ICT's inability to promote accountability at the local level. According to a NULGE official in one of the selected states in Southwestern Nigeria, some of the issues leading to the failure of ICT in fostering accountability of political officers and public office holders include:

Despite using ICT tools, our political leaders in Ogun State, particularly in the Abeokuta local government, are not accountable to the people. I mean the ones selected by the state governor. They are held to a higher average by their superior, the governor who selected them. Accountability in local government is uncommon among political leaders and public office holders, except for career officials. This invariably has an impact on local governance¹.

The preceding argument demonstrates that, despite using ICT at the local level, governor-appointed politicians and public officials are not accountable to the people. Similarly, the Chairman of one of the most influential political parties in one of the study's selected states declares:

ICT is only effective on career public officials, not on state governors' nominated political leaders. How many of our leaders are answerable to the people? It is even worse when the state government appoints these political leaders. Political leaders are answerable to the governor who appointed them at the municipal level, not to the people. As a result, there is a show of poor governance at the local level².

Contrary to popular belief, most respondents believe that ICT encourages political leaders and public officials to be more accountable at the local level. One of the respondents' replies was quite thought-provoking. In one of the selected states in the study area, a Director of Admin and Supplies, in a Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs stated:

Using appropriate ICT tools, we, the public and government employees, can now hold our leaders responsible and accountable to the people. With the establishment of IPPIS, BVN, whistleblowing policy, and TSA, our political leaders and public office holders have been more accountable on multiple occasions. They have often expressed worry and anxiety about being embarrassed by these ICT tools, and the majority of them now have a positive attitude and demonstrate honesty. Buhari's dread is, in reality, the beginning of wisdom. The majority of ICT technologies are now quite proactive and effective. This invariably instills fear in them and forces them to take responsibility³.

¹ Interview with Egbewole G. O NULGE Official Akure South L.G.A. Ondo State.

² Interview with Olofin D. O A.P.C. Secretariat, Owo L.G.A., Ondo State.

³ Interview with Mrs. Roseline Jacob, Director of Admin and Supplies, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Oba's complex Oke Mosan Abeokuta Ogun state.

All of the comments above and the viewpoints of respondents are supported by empirical evidence. Specifically, data from Capron (2000), Odalonu (2015), Frey (2008), Mouffe (2007), Yanina and Anita (2016), and Groshek (2009) suggest that ICT has had a considerable positive effect on the accountability of political leaders and public office holders at the local level. This finding was backed up by quantitative analysis, which revealed that 83 per cent of respondents believe ICT has dramatically aided the proper accountability of public and political office holders through citizen involvement.

Table 1

**Effect of I.C.T. on accountability of political leaders and public office holders
in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria**

S/N	Assertions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No response	Descriptive statistics	
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	Mean value	Standard deviation
i.	Accountability, transparency, and involvement are the cornerstones of good local governance.	206 (49.3)	180 (43.1)	9 (2.2)	7 (1.7)	16 (3.8)	3.32	0.907
ii.	The use of ICT has significantly led to proper accountability of public and political office holders through citizen engagement.	127 (30.4)	221 (52.9)	25 (6.0)	28 (6.7)	17 (4.1)	2.99	1.000
iii.	ICT can help local governments become more responsive and accountable to their citizens.	126 (30.1)	216 (51.7)	28 (6.7)	25 (6.0)	23 (5.5)	2.95	1.050
iv.	ICT in Nigeria has promoted accountability of public/political office holders in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria.	118 (28.2)	205 (49.0)	32 (7.7)	43 (10.3)	20 (4.8)	2.86	1.088
v.	Good and democratic local governance via accountability of political office holders is better now (2017) than in 1999 before the proliferation of ICT and its tool.	118 (28.2)	182 (43.5)	58 (13.9)	40 (9.6)	20 (4.8)	2.81	1.096

Table 1 (cont.)

S/N	Assertions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No response	Descriptive statistics	
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	Mean value	Standard deviation
vi.	Elections rigging (both local and national) can be reduced by deploying and exploiting ICT tools in Southwestern Nigeria.	120 (28.7)	210 (50.2)	39 (9.3)	31 (7.4)	18 (4.3)	2.92	1.030
vii.	Lack of openness and accountability in the conduct of local governance and election rigging has affected economic development in Nigeria.	162 (38.8)	180 (43.1)	38 (9.1)	19 (4.5)	19 (4.5)	3.07	1.033
viii.	ICT can help local governments become more responsive and accountable to their citizens.	163 (39.0)	191 (45.7)	28 (6.7)	16 (3.8)	20 (4.8)	3.10	1.016
ix.	Corruption on the side of the public and political office holders in local administration in Southwestern Nigeria will be engendered by a lack of accountability in local income collection procedures and expenditure by public office holders.	151 (36.1)	210 (50.2)	26 (6.2)	15 (3.6)	16 (3.8)	3.11	0.949
x.	In Southwestern Nigeria, poor local government is exacerbated by a lack of accountability.	185 (44.3)	164 (39.2)	34 (8.1)	17 (4.1)	18 (4.3)	3.15	1.027

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

This section looks at how the study's hypothesis was analysed and interpreted. The Spearman's correlation coefficient is the statistical instrument utilised in the data analysis. The analysis was conducted at a 5% level of significance (i.e. 0.05).

Table 2

Correlation analysis between effect of ICT on accountability of political leaders and public office holders at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria

Hypothesis				
In Southwestern Nigeria, ICT has had no substantial impact on the accountability of political leaders and public office holders at the local level.	Correlation coefficient (r)	Df	p-value	N
	+0.576	1	0.000	418

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 2 shows a correlation analysis of the impact of I.C.T. on political leaders’ and public office holders’ accountability in selected local government areas in Southwestern Nigeria. The Spearman’s correlation coefficient was positive (+0.576), which is significant at p 0.05, according to Table 2. The positive coefficient suggested that ICT and accountability have a 57 per cent positive influence at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Because the probability value (0.000) is less than the alpha level (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected, and the study indicated that ICT has a substantial impact on political leaders and public office holders’ accountability at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria (r = 0.576, p 0.05). As a result of the Spearman’s co-efficient, half of the changes in public accountability at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria are linked to the influential roles of ICT platforms.

The positive link also demonstrates that the more significant the impact of ICT tools on public accountability in local government in Southwestern Nigeria, the better. This is in line with the findings of empirical studies such as Nassar (2005) and Odalonu (2005). Furthermore, practically all respondents agreed that ICT has always positively impacted political leaders and public office holders’ responsibility at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are discussed in further depth in this section. It synchronises and triangulates quantitative and qualitative data with comparable empirical findings from other research on the study’s topic. It did, however, point out a point of disagreement between the conclusions of this study and previous empirical results. Data acquired from the field in the questionnaire and in-depth interviews with essential respondents were used

to assess the study's objectives and assumptions, which were described in the introduction section. We must discuss our findings further after we have tested and accepted the hypothesis.

There is an agreement between quantitative and qualitative evaluations on the impact of ICT on political leaders and public office holders' accountability in governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. According to the findings of the interview session, all respondents believe that ICT, when properly applied and executed, has a substantial impact on political leaders and public office holders' accountability in government practices at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria⁴. Although a few respondents disagreed, most respondents agreed that information and communication technology (ICT) had had a considerable positive impact on political leaders' and public office holders' accountability in governance procedures at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. This result was largely unswerving in view of the findings of quantitative analysis, which revealed that governance processes such as revenue generation (81 per cent), political leader recruitment and transparency (66 per cent), corruption-free (70 per cent), and financial leakage prevention (79 per cent) are all important (See items ii–ix of Table 1). Odalonu (2015), Frey (2008), Mouffe (2007). As a result of data acquired through interviews and questionnaires, the second aim was met, and this corresponds to the second research hypothesis that ICT has a substantial impact on transparency in governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Given the correlation between the objective and the hypothesis that ICT has affected favourably in making political leaders and public office holders accountable in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria, the hypothesis is valid and credible. This is correct, reliable, and widely regarded.

These findings demonstrated that information and communication technology (ICT) had aided in promoting accountability among political leaders and public officials at the local level. Mkandawaire (2010) finds that ICT tools such as the mobile phone, BVN, IPPIS, e-payment, e-pension, and e-governance help to close financial loopholes and improve financial integrity at the local level.

In a similar line, Adesola (2012) finds that ICT increases government honesty, openness, and legitimacy at the local level. On the issue of reduced corruption and prompt and direct payment of civil servants' salaries with the

⁴ Interview with Mr Sanusi Modupe Kehinde, Senior Adm. Officer, Abeokuta North L.G.A Osun State.

introduction of e-payment, e-tax collection, and IPPIS (Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System), all respondents agreed that the use of ICT at the local level reduces corruption and improves prompt and direct payment of workers' salaries. The quantitative test confirmed this conclusion, with seventy per cent of respondents believing that adopting ICT at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria improved corrupt behaviours, timely and speedy payment of civil officials' salaries.

These findings were in line with Fukuyama's (2013) empirical investigation, which finds that the purpose of ICT is to reduce corruption and expedite the payment of workers' salaries in government offices. Issues such as the usage of ICT platforms such as the newly established IPPIS, TSA, BVN, FOI, whistleblower policy, and government e-payments systems to limit leakages of local public funds were also raised during the interview session as respondents gave insight into the usefulness of ICT. ICT platforms such as IPPIS, TSA, BVN, and others, according to 77% of respondents, have considerably aided in the prevention of financial leakages of local public monies.

A response from the Chairman of a Community Development Association in one of the researched area's selected states corroborates this viewpoint:

IPPIS tools/platforms like TSA. and BVN have considerably aided in the blocking and bridging of local public funds leakages in public offices, particularly at the local government level. IPPIS, TSA, and BVN, in particular, are all helping the government save money. Direct payment of employees' salaries when due generates a strong sense of connection among government employees. ICT is a tool for advancing and developing an organisation⁵.

According to the findings, information and communication technology (ICT) has aided in preventing money leakages in government agencies, particularly local governments. It increases local government performance in terms of timely service delivery and accountability. More importantly, ICT fosters a sense of community among workers who use the technology. By inference, it can be concluded that the usage of ICT has had a bigger impact on political leaders and public office holders' accountability at the grass roots level.

⁵ Interview with Alabelewe H., A Community Leader, Community Development Association in Ife Central L.G.A. Osun State.

CONCLUSIONS

So far, our investigation of the role and impact of ICT on local governance in Southwestern Nigeria has been reasonably instructive. The degree of ICT's benefits and effects on strong grass roots governance, which is based on practical and unfettered public participation, openness, accountability, and effective local service delivery, is a big revelation. The results of the data analysis for this study, which was evaluated and analysed with the use of Spearman's correlation coefficient to look for a significant link between the factor and the outcome variables at 0.05 levels of significance, further validated this position. The independent variable (ICT) is substantially connected to the outcome variable when the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05. (good local governance predicated on accountability of political and public office holders). Also, the propositions that were investigated were validated.

As a result, Spearman's correlation coefficient was positive (+0.576), statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. The positive coefficient suggested that ICT and accountability have a 57 per cent positive influence at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Because the probability value (0.000) is less than the alpha level (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected, and the study indicated that ICT has a substantial impact on political leaders and public office holders' accountability at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria ($r = 0.576$, $p < 0.05$). As a result of Spearman co-efficient, half of the changes in public accountability at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria are linked to the influential roles of ICT platforms.

The positive link also demonstrates that the more significant the impact of ICT tools on public accountability in local government in Southwestern Nigeria, the better. This is in track with the findings of empirical studies such as Nassar (2005) and Odalonu (2005, 2015). Furthermore, practically all respondents agreed that ICT has always positively impacted political leaders and public office holders' responsibility at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

The results of the respondents' comments during the interview session, on the other hand, verified it. In the selected local governments' area, Alabi and Alebelewe's responses caught the fact that there is a link between the use of ICT and governance transparency. Furthermore, data from Nassar (2005), Adesola (2012), and Fukuyama (2013) all corroborated the quantitative and qualitative test results. For example, Adesola (2012) states that ICT enhances openness in local governance, whereas Nassar (2005) discovers

that ICT facilitates democratic governance by allowing citizens to participate in governance in large numbers utilising any of the ICT tools available. As a result of all of these evaluations, it can be argued that ICT is substantially associated or related to transparency in municipal governance.

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THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
AND THE QUEST FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG POLITICAL LEADERS
AND PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between ICT use and political leaders and public office holders' accountability in the local government in Southwestern Nigeria. In Southwestern Nigeria, there significantly appears to be little or no attempt to investigate the role of ICT usage and its impact on political leaders and public office holders' accountability. At the same time, in considering this as the starting point for this topic, the study utilised primary data collected through a mixed approach method of surveying local council ICT officers, registered voters, local community and youth leaders, and key interviews with officers of ICT non-governmental organisations. In the quantitative design, 418 respondents were administered the questionnaire, and 18 key informants were purposefully interviewed. The data were analysed via SPSS; tables were utilised for correlation co-efficient analysis, and content analysis was used to present the interview responses. The results revealed a positive correlation of +0.576 between ICT use and political leaders and public office holders' accountability in local governance. The study finds that using appropriate ICT tools in rural communities will improve local governance.

Key words: ICT, local governance, accountability, e-governance and Southwestern Nigeria

ZASTOSOWANIE TECHNOLOGII TELEINFORMATYCZNYCH
ORAZ KWESTIA ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚCI SPOŁECZNEJ
PRZYWÓDCÓW POLITYCZNYCH I URZĘDNIKÓW PUBLICZNYCH
W SAMORZĄDACH LOKALNYCH W NIGERII

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia analizę związku zastosowania technologii teleinformatycznych (ICT) z odpowiedzialnością społeczną przywódców politycznych oraz urzędników publicznych w samorządach lokalnych w Południowo-Zachodniej Nigerii. W Południowo-Zachodniej Nigerii wyraźnie widać, że

istnieje niewiele lub brak jest prób zbadania roli zastosowania technologii teleinformatycznych oraz ich wpływu na odpowiedzialność społeczną przywódców politycznych i urzędników publicznych. Jednocześnie, uwzględniając to jako punkt wyjścia dla tego zagadnienia, do analizy wykorzystano dane pierwotne zgromadzone z zastosowaniem metody podejścia mieszanego w badaniu obejmującym teleinformatyków w samorządach lokalnych, wyborców, przywódców społeczności lokalnych i młodzieżowych oraz teleinformatyków w organizacjach pozarządowych. Zgodnie z ilościowym założeniem, ankiety skierowano do 418 respondentów, a z 18 informatorami celowo przeprowadzono wywiady. Dane zostały poddane analizie z zastosowaniem oprogramowania SPSS, zestawienia wykorzystano do analizy współczynnika korelacji, a analiza zawartości posłużyła do prezentacji odpowiedzi udzielonych w wywiadach. Wyniki pokazały dodatnią korelację +0,576 między zastosowaniem technologii teleinformatycznych a odpowiedzialnością społeczną przywódców politycznych i urzędników publicznych w samorządach lokalnych. Z badania wynika, że prawidłowe zastosowanie narzędzi teleinformatycznych w społecznościach wiejskich podniesie jakość zarządzania lokalnego.

Słowa kluczowe: ICT (technologie teleinformatyczne), samorzady lokalne, odpowiedzialność społeczna, e-zarządzanie, Południowo-Zachodnia Nigeria

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