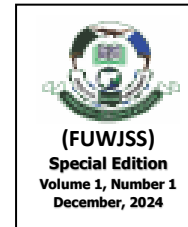


E-GOVERNANCE, RESTRUCTURING AND GOVERNMENT-CITIZENS INTERACTION IN NIGERIA

David Kehinde Adejuwon & Akeem Amodu
Department of Politics and International Relations
Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria
Email: *adekennytee@gmail.com*



Aderonke Majekodunmi
Department of Political Science
University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
Email: *ronky66@hotmail.com*

Abstract

This study examines the integration of e-governance and restructuring in strengthening the interaction between the Nigerian government and its citizens. The study explores the interplay between e-governance and restructuring, assessing how digital technologies support the decentralization of governance and enhance government-citizen interactions. This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model. Data emerged from secondary data sources. The study findings underscore the need for comprehensive policies that promote digital inclusion, strengthen institutional capacities, and enhance citizen engagement to leverage the full potential of e-governance and restructuring in Nigeria. The study concludes that citizens' involvement through e-governance is a key tool for breaking the old governance conundrum, improving efficiency, and promoting the modernization of national governance systems and capacities. The study recommends that to fully realize the potential of e-governance, Nigeria must invest in robust digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Also, building capacity at all levels of governance and a comprehensive legal and policy framework is essential to support both e-governance and restructuring.

Keywords: Citizen Participation, Decentralization, E-Governance, Citizen Interaction, Restructuring

Introduction

Governments throughout the world are grappling with the problem of transformation and the necessity to reinvent government systems in order to provide efficient and cost-effective services, information, and knowledge using information and communication technology. E-government has emerged as an important area of research in information systems, as well as a key area of development for governments throughout the world. E-government provides a huge incentive to move forward into the twenty-first century with higher quality, more cost-effective government services and a stronger interaction between citizens and the government (Odumu, 2019).

E-governance and restructuring play pivotal roles in transforming the relationship between the government and citizens in Nigeria. E-Governance, through the adoption of digital technologies, offers a platform for more efficient public service delivery, transparency, and enhanced communication channels between citizens and the government (Suresh, Amandeep, Mahima & Zeeshan, 2021).. By digitizing public services, citizens can access government information and services with greater ease, reducing bureaucracy and improving accountability. Restructuring, on the other hand, seeks to decentralize political and administrative power, allowing more autonomy at regional levels. In Nigeria, where governance challenges such as corruption, inefficiency, and poor service delivery are prevalent, restructuring offers an opportunity to shift power closer to the people, fostering a more inclusive governance model (Nwokolo, 2020; Yaqub, 2016). The combination of e-governance with restructuring efforts has the potential to improve government-citizen interactions, enhance democratic participation, and promote sustainable development.

The implementation of e-governance has emerged as a critical instrument for improving government-citizen engagement in Nigeria. E-governance signals the beginning of a massive wave of technical innovation as well as government reinvention. E-governance refers to the use of digital technologies like the internet and mobile devices to facilitate interactions between the government and its population (Kawabata & Camargo, 2023). These technologies have the potential to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, and accountability in government (Medupe & Ajuwon, 2020). It provides a huge push to

go forward in the twenty-first century, as well as a viable path for overcoming these barriers and promoting openness, accountability, and inclusion in governance processes (Bassey, Uchendu & Ewa, 2023; Monga, 2008).

In recent years, Nigeria has made tremendous progress in implementing e-governance projects to improve governmental service delivery and citizen involvement. In Nigeria, where traditional government services may be inconvenient and inefficient, e-governance has the potential to expedite procedures, minimise bureaucratic bottlenecks, and enable individuals to actively engage in decision-making (Dada et al., 2020). According to Walsham and Sahay (2005), e-government has and continues to get global attention due to its capacity to make governments more efficient and effective, hence transforming relationships with citizens, corporations, and government agencies. For Nigeria, a country with a fast rising population and a wide range of socioeconomic difficulties, using digital technology to improve government-to-citizens (G2C) interactions represents a tremendous potential for increasing efficiency, transparency, and inclusion. All governments seeking to recover and maintain the much-needed popular legitimacy are increasingly embracing the digital revolution to improve their performance (Adah, 2015; Davies, 2015).

It is vital to emphasise that Nigeria's potential for digital governance is mostly untapped, even though ICT is seen to have significant potential for successful service delivery in the public sector (Ehiane, Adejuwon, & Goyayi, 2019; Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2015). Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and greatest economy confronts unique problems in establishing efficient government-citizen communication and collaboration. The impact of ICT on public officials in Nigeria is heavily contaminated by the failure to provide effective and efficient services to members of society as envisioned. This study focuses on the following research questions, (i) what is the current state of e-governance initiatives in Nigeria, and how effective are they in improving service delivery and transparency in government operations?, (ii) How does the restructuring of governance frameworks in Nigeria influence the relationship between government institutions and citizens?, (iii) What challenges and barriers hinder the effective implementation of e-governance initiatives in Nigeria,

particularly in rural and underserved areas?, and (iv) How can government-citizen interactions be enhanced through digital platforms in Nigeria?. No doubt, these research questions will help in exploration of the relationship between e-governance, restructuring, and government-citizen interaction in Nigeria, addressing key issues and identifying future directions.

Conceptualizing E-Governance

The concept of e-governance, like other concepts, has been conceptualised differently by different researchers, reflecting their beliefs, personal quirks, and societal contexts. The use of ICTs in government structures is not new, but the concept of e-government gained popularity in the 1990s when it was recognised as a policy strategy to improve service delivery and reduce costs, as well as to simplify administrative procedures, increase citizen participation, and increase transparency and accountability of government activities (Fountain, 2006; Bhatnagar 2003).

E-governance is a comprehensive vision of the use of information and communication technology in government businesses with the primary goal of increasing involvement in the state and improving the connection between the government and citizens (Jegede, Adodo & Dada, 2018). E-governance arose as a result of the revolution in information and communication technology, which manifests itself in digital technologies such as personal computers, the internet, mobile phones, and various electronic apps (Danfulani, 2013). Mario et al. (2009) noticed that the recognition that e-governance received motivated researchers to shift their emphasis to a sophisticated and effective appraisal of the roles that such services may play in improving the delivery of government services. Various researchers have given different definitions of e-governance. Sunday (2014) defines e-governance as the use of information and communication technology by various government entities to improve accountability, raise awareness, and promote openness in the conduct of government operations.

E-governance refers to the government's use of technology to carry out its many obligations (Holzer & Schwester, 2011). E-governance, a new trend in state administration, entails using ICT in governmental

operations to increase efficiency, accountability, and openness in the management of public affairs (Ojo, 2014). E-governance is the use of information and communication technology by the public sector to improve information and service delivery, increase citizen engagement in decision-making, and make government more responsible, transparent, and effective (Richard & Eme, 2015).

E-governance refers to the digital coding, processing, storage, and distribution of data related to three key aspects of governing societies: the representation and regulation of social actors, the delivery of public services, and the generation and dissemination of official information (Coleman, 2008). The government's usage of e-governance is beneficial in terms of delivering information to citizens on how to offer public services. It also helps to streamline and unify procedures in the public sector (Abasilim & Edet, 2015). E-governance projects may be divided into four categories: government-to-citizen (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), government-to-government (G2G), and government-to-employee (G2E) interactions (Ndou, 2004).

From the foregoing definitions, e-governance is essentially the use of ICTs in government business processes. To put it another way, it is a shift away from the traditional method of carrying out government activities, which is primarily hierarchical, linear, and one-way, and towards the use of the internet, which allows the public to seek information at their leisure and without relying on government.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It is a theoretical framework that describes how consumers adopt and use technology. Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw developed it in 1989 to improve prediction, explanation, and user acceptance of computer technology (Ogbeide & Adjaino, 2019).

TAM is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which states that an individual's behaviour is driven by their intention to do the behaviour, which is in turn influenced by their attitude towards the behaviour and subjective standards around it. TAM predicts that increasing perceptions of utility and ease of use will lead to increased intention to utilise a system (Davis et al. 1989). TAM maintains that

user acceptance or rejection of the system has a fundamental impact on attitude towards usage and, as a result, actual use.

While TAM is a reliable and extensively used model, it has received criticism. Some contend that TAM oversimplifies the complicated process of technological acceptance by focusing solely on two primary constructs: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Greenfield & Rohde, 2009). Critics argue that TAM frequently fails to consider the larger social, organisational, and cultural circumstances that impact technology adoption.

Technology adoption is a dynamic process, and TAM's static nature may not reflect consumers' changing attitudes and behaviours over time. TAM is largely concerned with individual ideas and attitudes, leaving out the larger organisational and societal settings that might have a substantial influence on technological acceptance (Ajibade, Ibietan, & Ayelabola, 2017). TAM posits that user beliefs (perceived utility and ease of use) are largely consistent over time. In actuality, user perceptions might shift dynamically as a result of technological experience, growing requirements, or changes in the external environment.

Despite these issues, TAM remains a core paradigm for understanding and predicting technology adoption, and it is constantly evolving via study and modification. The idea applies to the practice of e-governance in the Nigerian public sector. The Technology Acceptance Model is significant to the Nigerian public service because it describes how self-efficacy, perceived cost, technological infrastructure, power supply, and internet facilities all contribute to the adoption of e-governance. The Technology acceptability Model can help explain the acceptability, use, relevance, and efficacy of new technologies in information exchange among citizens.

Understanding how citizens accept and use electronic government services is essential for using TAM in government-citizen relations. This can include a variety of digital activities such as online tax filing, obtaining government information, requesting permissions, or taking part in digital democracy projects. When applying the Technology Acceptance Model to government-citizen interactions, it becomes clear how important perceived utility and simplicity of use are in the uptake of e-government services. Governments may improve the efficacy and

reach of their digital services by addressing these elements through better user experience, education, trust-building, and accessibility, resulting in greater governance and more public happiness.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design focusing on secondary data. Secondary data from journals, newspapers, textbooks, internet sources, etc. were used to quantify trends in public service usage, citizen engagement, and perceptions of governance. By synthesizing existing literature and reports, the study to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in Nigerian governance, ultimately informing policy recommendations and future research directions.

An Overview of E-Governance Landscape in Nigeria

E-governance is a critical component of Nigeria's government modernization. It establishes a common framework and direction for the public sector and fosters collaboration within and among public sector organisations and institutions, between government and the business community, and between government and the citizens it serves in the implementation of government policies (Beluchi & Inienger, 2020). E-government is more than simply using ICT systems to change government to online service delivery; it is a complete reorganisation of the public sector via the use of ICT (Hunnius & Schuppan, 2013). According to Adeyemo (2011), e-governance benefits citizens by making it easier to communicate with the government using electronic devices.

Digital governance is the use of information technology in government operations to improve the delivery of public services to citizens and other individual and organisational users. It is the use of electronic methods in government interactions with citizens and companies, as well as internal government activities, to simplify and strengthen democratic, government, and commercial elements of governance (Abramson, 2003). The underlying potential of e-government activities to accomplish the desired results is access to a deeper knowledge of the difficulties that governments encounter (Almarabeh & AbuAli, 2010).

Nigeria is recognised as Africa's behemoth in the world system; this is due to its large population, not necessarily to its advancement in information technology. However, Nigeria, like all other countries in the world, is seeking to reach a point where e-governance is the norm. It has established a goal of growing its ICT framework to the point where it can send and receive information from one area of society to another. Thus, Aneke (2013) remarked that Nigeria has used a variety of ways to develop its ICT industry, making Nigeria's telecommunications and ICT sector the fastest expanding market on the African continent.

E-governance implementation in Nigeria encompassed all levels of government, as well as all agencies, parastatals, and organisations. In 2001, Nigeria's federal government declared ICT a national priority. This resulted in the development and implementation of an information and communication technology policy. The ministerial committee on ICT policy harmonisation produced a draft of National ICT policy in 2012, along with other policy proposals and reports (Akinola, 2017).

E-governance has emerged as an essential political instrument for evaluating government performance in many affluent countries. In reality, the use of information and communication technology in government companies to promote the government's role in service delivery, public administration, and active participatory democracy is gaining traction in the worldwide community (Heeks, 2002). According to UNESCO (2005), e-governance is concerned with the adoption of new leadership styles, new methods of making policy and investment decisions, new ways of providing education to citizens, new ways of listening and attending to citizens, and new ways of organising and delivering information and services. According to the United Nations E-Governance Survey Report (2022), Nigeria ranks 140 out of 193 nations in terms of e-governance status, with a value of 0.4525 in 2022. Nigeria has made headway in implementing e-governance efforts in a variety of areas, including education, healthcare, finance, and public administration. Government organisations have created online platforms and digital services to let individuals access information and conduct transactions. Since 2001, the Nigerian government has taken notable measures to bring the country on track in terms of ICT growth and governance. The Nigerian

government launched its National Information Technology Policy in March 2001, and subsequent implementation began with the establishment of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) to oversee ICT development, as well as the introduction of the National e-Government Masterplan (Omeire & Omeire, 2014).

The Nigerian government has implemented e-government initiatives such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to promote accountability and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of payroll administration for its Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Other measures have been implemented in practically every area, including health, industry, banking, education, oil and gas, politics, and government. This is demonstrated by advancements such as e-passport biometrics, driving licences, Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), Permanent Voter Cards, Card Readers, e-recruitment websites, and so on. The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has created a digital identity system to speed up the process of getting national identification cards.

Before 2011, numerous agencies were in charge of various areas of ICT development in Nigeria. However, in 2011, Nigeria established a new Ministry of Communications Technology at the federal level. The ministry is responsible for coordinating ICT development and driving the country's e-government strategy. According to the United Nations E-Governance Survey Report (2022), Nigeria ranks 140th among 193 nations in terms of e-governance. The many assessments and analyses of the three primary factors for measuring the state and character of e-governance demonstrate that Nigeria's e-governance level is still in its infancy. Nigeria is Africa's fastest expanding information and communication technology sector, however, the country remains ranked low in terms of e-government service delivery to residents (Yusuf & Yusuf, 2016). According to Adeyemo (2013), despite Nigeria's poor worldwide rankings, government officials at all levels are still working harder to promote the expansion of e-governance.

Despite these attempts, e-governance adoption in Nigeria is unequal, with rural and marginalised people having limited access to digital technology. Furthermore, there are worries regarding the

security and privacy of digital platforms, as well as government organisations' ability to efficiently implement e-governance programmes.

Restructuring and Institutional Reforms in Nigeria

Institutions affect the economy through the creation of an environment necessary for prosperity and development. All countries desirous of making progress would invariably require comprehensive reforms of its institutions. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001), have noted that when a country fails to reform its institutions in response to emerging global realities, that country invariably stagnates; with consequential macro-economic consequences. Institutional reforms are, therefore, attempts by those in authority to change the rules in response to prevailing circumstances. Institutional reforms entail striving towards connected initiatives with the goal of enhancing an institution's output and influence on stakeholders (Vaibha, 2017). Institutional reform is the process of examining and restructuring state institutions to ensure that they uphold the rule of law, protect human rights, and are answerable to their citizens. (Institutional Reform by International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2022). For Acemoglu et.al, (2013) institutional reform is a structure of actions, ways of execution, crisis management and vital interaction principles with other entities.

Successful institutional restructuring and reforms are essentially predicated on strong national institutions that can support the methodical, systematic and progressive implementation of policies. These institutional government reforms are instrumental in promoting change and development (Ofor-Douglas, 2020). Unfortunately, most developing countries are notorious for their lack of strong institutions that can power the structures upon which stable and progressive nations depend for their accelerated national developmental home and respect abroad. According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2013), such institutional drift could determine how societies react to economic and political institutional changes.

Restructuring is now on the agenda of public sectors in third world countries like Nigeria. Restructuring in Nigeria has the potential to significantly influence institutional reforms by reshaping the political,

economic, and administrative frameworks that govern the country. The debate around restructuring often revolves around the redistribution of power and resources between the federal government and regional or state governments, a shift that could lead to more localized and efficient governance (Akindele, 2020). This reallocation could enhance the effectiveness of institutions at the subnational level, ensuring that decisions are made closer to the people and are more reflective of local needs and contexts (Nowotny, 2012).

A restructured Nigeria could lead to judicial reforms, including the devolution of some judicial powers to states. This would encourage the establishment of more efficient legal systems that address regional issues more effectively, improving access to justice. Decentralizing governance might foster stronger democratic institutions at the state level. Citizens could have more direct influence over their local governments, promoting greater political accountability and enhancing democratic participation.

Despite the potential benefits, restructuring could face challenges such as the uneven development of institutional capacities across states, resistance from powerful interests benefiting from the current system, and potential conflicts over resource allocation and revenue sharing. Restructuring has the potential to catalyze institutional reforms in Nigeria, creating a more responsive, accountable, and efficient governance structure. However, for it to succeed, it will require careful planning, a commitment to capacity building, and a focus on ensuring equitable development across all regions.

Initiatives for Enhancing Government-Citizen Interactions

Citizens' interaction refers to citizen engagement in government programmes aimed at improving citizen contact with e-government services, which some observers believe is the fundamental purpose of e-government (Reddick, 2010). E-governance is a concept that defines how a country's government interacts with its population. The development of information and communication technology has made government operations more accessible to the governed, while the traditional barrier of distance has been overcome through modern communication methods (Obi, Uzor, & Chukwurah, 2020). The Nigerian government has taken significant measures to get the country

on track in terms of e-governance (Ehiane, Adejuwon, & Goyayi, 2019). Though e-governance implementation in Nigeria differs by level of government and agency, there has been an attempt to provide a unifying, national framework for ICT use in governance.

E-government aims to enhance citizen and corporate access to government information and services, improve the quality of service provided by government agencies, and enable citizens to actively participate in democratic institutions and processes (Chaudhary & Kumari, 2021). Nigerian government offices are progressively offering online services, including passport applications and tax payments. These digital platforms allow residents to easily access government services, decreasing the need for actual trips to government offices. For example, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) provides an online gateway for residents to renew driver's licences and car registrations. The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC)'s online platform for driver's licence renewal and car registration has greatly decreased the time and effort necessary to complete these tasks. Citizens may now renew their driver's licences and car registrations from the convenience of their own homes, removing the need to visit FRSC offices in person. This has increased customer satisfaction while reducing congestion at FRSC offices.

E-governance allows real-time feedback channels, allowing citizens to report difficulties, make comments, and file complaints with government entities. These feedback mechanisms, which include online forms and mobile applications, allow individuals to engage in governance and hold government officials responsible for their activities. Social media platforms have also developed as effective tool for individuals to express their thoughts and interact with government officials (Fatile, 2012). The National Identity Management Commission's (NIMC) digital identity system has simplified the process of getting national identification cards for Nigerian residents. By digitising identification records and biometric data, the NIMC decreased bureaucracy and increased the efficiency of identity verification operations. Millions of Nigerians now have better access to government services and financial inclusion thanks to the digital identity system.

Digital technology may improve governance transparency and accountability by allowing individuals to access government data and information. Open data portals, budget tracking tools, and online dashboards allow individuals to follow government expenditures, and project implementation, and hold authorities responsible for their activities. The Treasury Single Account (TSA) project, which consolidates government finances into a single account, seeks to increase financial transparency and reduce corruption. The TSA project has consolidated government finances into a single account, hence increasing financial transparency and accountability. The TSA has decreased the potential for corruption and leakage by centralising government money and removing many government agency accounts. The effort also improved cash management and the government's capacity to plan and budget more effectively.

Challenges to effective implementation of e-governance and restructuring in Nigeria

While e-governance and restructuring offer immense potential for improving governance and enhancing citizen interaction in Nigeria, several significant challenges need to be addressed for these initiatives to succeed. These challenges span technological, infrastructural, political, and social dimensions, and overcoming them will be critical to achieving effective and inclusive governance.

One of the primary challenges to e-governance in Nigeria is the digital divide. Many rural and underserved areas lack access to the internet, reliable electricity, and other critical ICT infrastructure. This limits the ability of citizens in these areas to engage with digital government platforms, exacerbating regional disparities and creating a two-tiered system of governance where only urban or well-connected citizens benefit from e-governance.

Despite increasing internet penetration, a large portion of the Nigerian population still lacks the skills needed to navigate digital platforms effectively. Low levels of digital literacy, particularly among older citizens and those in rural areas, create barriers to the widespread adoption of e-governance. Citizens may not know how to access online services or may be skeptical of the security and privacy of digital systems. The growing reliance on digital platforms for governance

raises concerns about data privacy and cybersecurity. Nigeria has faced numerous cyberattacks, and without adequate protections, the personal information of citizens and the security of government systems are at risk. Lack of trust in the security of e-governance platforms could deter citizens from using them, weakening the potential of these systems to improve government-citizen interaction (Garuba & Aminu, 2020).

Restructuring faces significant political challenges, particularly from those who benefit from the current centralized system. Redistribution of power and resources from the federal government to the states may encounter resistance from political elites who fear losing control or influence (Rajasekar & Al-Raei, 2013). This resistance can slow the restructuring process, making it difficult to implement reforms that decentralize governance and empower regional authorities.

Both e-governance and restructuring are intended to combat corruption and inefficiency, but these issues can also hinder their implementation. In Nigeria, corruption is deeply entrenched within public institutions, and efforts to digitalize services or redistribute power can be met with sabotage or manipulation by those seeking to maintain the status quo. Additionally, the slow pace of bureaucratic reform can obstruct the adoption of e-governance systems, preventing their full deployment.

The success of both e-governance and restructuring depends on strong legal and policy frameworks that regulate the use of digital technologies and guide the redistribution of power. In Nigeria, policy inconsistencies, outdated laws, and lack of enforcement can hinder progress. There is also a need for legislation that protects digital rights, ensures data security, and clearly outlines the responsibilities of regional and state governments in a restructured system.

Implementing e-governance and restructuring initiatives requires significant financial investment. Building digital infrastructure, training government employees, and reforming institutions are all costly endeavors, and Nigeria's current economic challenges, including fluctuating oil revenues and inflation, may limit the resources available for these reforms. Furthermore, under a restructured system, states may struggle to manage their own finances effectively, leading to potential inefficiencies. E-governance and restructuring require coordination between different levels of government, as well as

collaboration with the private sector and civil society organizations. In Nigeria, the lack of coordination between federal, state, and local governments can create fragmentation and inefficiency in implementing these reforms. This also extends to technical and administrative cooperation across agencies, which is necessary for effective e-governance.

While e-governance aims to increase citizen participation, many Nigerians remain disengaged from the political process due to distrust in the government and dissatisfaction with past governance outcomes. Without a strong culture of civic engagement, e-governance platforms may not achieve their goal of fostering greater participation and accountability. Similarly, restructuring efforts that are not inclusive of citizens' voices may fail to address the concerns of marginalized groups. The challenges to e-governance, restructuring, and citizen interactions in Nigeria are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Overcoming these challenges will require strong political will, substantial financial investments, and coordinated efforts across multiple sectors. Addressing the digital divide, improving cybersecurity, tackling corruption, and fostering citizen engagement are critical steps toward creating an effective and inclusive governance system that benefits all Nigerians.

Future Directions of E-Governance, Restructuring and Government-Citizens Interaction in Nigeria

As Nigeria continues to explore the potentials of e-governance and restructuring, several key future directions can guide the development of more effective government-citizen interactions. These directions focus on enhancing digital inclusivity, fostering greater citizen participation, and creating a governance model that is adaptable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of its diverse population.

The future of governance in Nigeria depends on adopting digital technology and utilising e-governance to develop a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable government. Nigeria should realise the full potential of e-governance to enhance citizens' lives and accelerate socioeconomic development by capitalising on emerging technology, investing in capacity building, and encouraging cooperation and partnerships. To achieve nationwide digital inclusion, the government

must continue to invest in broadband access, ICT facilities, and mobile networks. This would ensure that every Nigerian has access to digital services, reducing the urban-rural divide and making government services more accessible to all citizens.

A key aspect of e-governance is the establishment of secure, unified digital identities for citizens. Future reforms should prioritize creating a comprehensive and secure digital identity system that allows citizens to interact with government services securely and efficiently. Additionally, ensuring robust data protection and cybersecurity measures will be crucial to maintaining trust in digital platforms and protecting citizens' privacy. E-governance can contribute to greater openness in government operations by giving individuals access to information on public finances, policies, and programmes. This improved openness has the potential to eliminate corruption and promote accountability (Bertot et al., 2010).

Going forward, e-governance can be enhanced by developing more inclusive digital platforms that enable citizens to actively participate in governance beyond traditional voting. Digital platforms could allow for real-time feedback on policies, online consultations, and participatory budgeting, giving citizens a voice in decision-making processes. This would foster a more engaged and informed citizenry, strengthening democracy in Nigeria.

The future of e-governance in Nigeria could see the integration of artificial intelligence and data analytics to improve decision-making and service delivery. AI tools can be used to analyze data on citizen needs, automate routine government tasks, and predict trends in public service demands. This would help the government respond more proactively to citizens' needs and improve the efficiency of public administration.

A forward-looking approach to e-governance and restructuring would involve increased collaboration between the government, the private sector, and civil society organizations. The private sector can contribute technological innovation and investment, while civil society can ensure that government reforms remain citizen-centered and equitable. Public-private partnerships will be essential in building sustainable digital ecosystems and fostering innovation in governance.

E-governance platforms should be adapted to enhance Nigeria's ability to manage crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, and security threats. Digital tools that enable rapid dissemination of information, virtual service delivery, and efficient resource management will be critical to improving the government's ability to respond to future emergencies.

The future of e-governance and restructuring in Nigeria promises to bring about more dynamic, inclusive, and efficient government-citizen interactions. However, achieving these goals will require sustained investment in infrastructure, legal reforms, capacity building, and efforts to foster citizen trust in digital systems. If successfully implemented, these future directions could reshape Nigeria's governance landscape, promoting greater transparency, accountability, and democratic participation across all levels of society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the digital age, public involvement through e-governance is a key tool for breaking the old governance conundrum, improving efficiency, and promoting the modernization of national governance systems and capacities. E-government is fundamentally changing the way individuals interact with their federal and state governments. E-government has enormous potential for realising the ideal of a government of, by, and for the people. These norms and frameworks define, describe, and categorise governance.

E-governance has the potential to improve governance in Nigeria by improving interactions between the government and its citizens. Using digital technology, the government may increase transparency, accountability, and service delivery, increasing trust and civic involvement. While great progress has been achieved in implementing e-governance programmes, there are still hurdles in closing the digital gap, resolving cybersecurity issues, and altering the legal and regulatory frameworks. Success examples like the NIMC's digital identification system, the FRSC's online portal, and the TSA project exemplify how e-governance may improve service delivery and public involvement.

E-governance and restructuring present transformative opportunities for improving government-citizen interactions in Nigeria

by offering a pathway to more efficient, transparent, and responsive governance. E-governance, by leveraging digital technologies, can break down bureaucratic barriers, improve public service delivery, and empower citizens with easier access to government information and services. It also promotes accountability and reduces opportunities for corruption, creating a more trust-based relationship between the government and the public. Restructuring, through the decentralization brings governance closer to the people, allowing governments to tailor services to the needs of the people and improve responsiveness. This decentralization fosters a governance model that is more adaptable to local needs and more inclusive of Nigeria's diverse populations. Together, e-governance and restructuring can create a synergistic effect that enhances citizen participation in governance, increases government accountability, and ultimately strengthens democracy in Nigeria.

However, realizing the full potential of these initiatives will require addressing several challenges, including digital inclusion, infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and institutional capacity building. Furthermore, the success of both e-governance and restructuring will depend on strong political will, clear legal frameworks, and the active participation of citizens and civil society organizations.

To fully realize the potential of e-governance, Nigeria must invest in robust digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This will ensure equal access to e-services for all citizens, bridging the digital divide. Both government officials and citizens require training in the use of digital platforms. Building capacity at all levels of governance and promoting digital literacy among citizens will facilitate the effective use of e-governance tools.

A comprehensive legal and policy framework is essential to support both e-governance and restructuring. This includes creating laws that protect citizens' digital rights, ensure data privacy, and safeguard against cybersecurity threats. For restructuring to be effective, regional and local institutions must be empowered with adequate financial resources and skilled personnel. This requires reforms that ensure fiscal federalism and build the capacity of state and local governments to deliver quality services.

Raising public awareness about the benefits of e-governance and restructuring is key to ensuring citizen participation. Civic education campaigns should inform citizens about their rights and how to engage with government services digitally. The government should collaborate with private sector actors and civil society organizations to expand the reach of digital platforms, foster innovation, and ensure that reforms reflect citizens' needs and preferences. Finally, integrating e-governance with restructuring represents a critical step toward a more citizen-centric and democratic Nigeria. By embracing these reforms, the Nigerian government can improve its responsiveness, enhance trust with its citizens, and pave the way for sustainable development and good governance in the years to come.

References

- Abasilim, U.D & Edet, L. I. (2015). E-governance and its implementation challenges in the Nigerian public service. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Administration.* 7(1), 44-51.
- Abramson, M. (2003). *E-government: A progress report*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc
- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S & Robinson, J.A. (2001). The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation. *American Economic Review*, 91,3
- Acemoglu, D. & Robinson J. A. (2013). *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. London: Profile Books
- Adah, B. A. (2015). The status and nature of e-governance in Nigeria. Paper presented at the Second Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria (CUCEN 2015), June 10-12, 2015, Covenant University Canaanland, Ota Ogun State, Nigeria.
- Adeyemo, A. B. (2011). E-government implementation in Nigeria: An assessment of Nigeria's e-government ranking. *Journal of Internet and Information System.* 2 (1), pp. 11-19.
- Adeyemo, A. B. (2013) E-government implementation in Nigeria: An assessment of Nigeria's global e-government ranking. *Journal of Internet and Information System*, 2 (1), pp11-19.
- Afegbua, S.I & Adejuwon, K.D. (2015). Ombudsman and ethical dilemma in Nigerian public administration: from rising expectations to dashed hopes. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 3(7), 98-114.

- Ajibade, O, Ibietan, J & Ayelabola, O. (2017). E-Governance Implementation and Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Application. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*. 7(4), 165-174
- Akindele T.T. (2020). Institutional Reform and Corruption on Economic Growth of Nigeria. *Proceedings of the 18th International RAIS Conference, August 17-18, 2020 008att, Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies*.
- Akinola, A.A. (2017). E-governance and citizen participation in Nigeria. *The Beam: Journal of Arts & Science*. 11, 1-11.
- Almarabeh, T. & Abu Ali, A. (2010) A General Framework for E-Government: Definition Maturity Challenges, Opportunities, and Success. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 39, 29-42.
- Aneke, F (2013) Talking communications in Nigeria. Retrieved on July 23, 2024 from www.dynamicexport.com.au.
- Baridam, D.M, Don-Baridam, L.Q & Usoro, M. (2022) Institutional Restructuring and Reforms for National Development. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*. 10(5), 1-12
- Bassey, M.F, Uchendu, I.F & Ewa, E.I. (2023). E-Governance and public accountability in Federal Inland Revenue Service, Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*. 8(6),18-33.
- Beluchi, C.N & Inienger, C.C. (2020). E-governance and service delivery in Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Abuja. *International Journal of Recent Research in Commerce Economics and Management*. 7(2), 51-65.
- Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. (2010). Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies. *Government Information Quarterly*, 27(3), 264-271.
- Bhatnagar, S. (2003). Access to information: E-Government. In: Hodess, Inowlocki, Wolfe (eds.) *Global Corruption Report*. London: Profile Books Ltd.
- Chaudhary, M.K & Kumari, D. (2021). E-Government in India: Theory, convention, and expansion. *Webology*. 18(4), 122-129.
- Coleman, S. (2008). Foundation of Digital Government. in Chen, H., Brandt, L., Gregg, V. et al (eds), *Digital Government: E-Government Research, Case Studies, and Implementation*, New York. Springer Science.
- Dada, D. O., Balogun, F. R., & Adeleke, O. A. (2020), E-Governance and Public Administration in Nigeria: An Assessment of Progress,

- Challenges, and Opportunities. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 6(6), 133-144.
- Danfulani, J (2013) E-governance: A weapon for the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Published by saharareport.com.
- Davies, R. (2015). e-Government: Using technology to improve public services and democratic participation. *European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)*. 1-28
- Davis, D., Bagozzi, P., & Warshaw, R. (1989). User acceptance of computer technology: A comparison of two theoretical models. *Management Science*, 35(8), 982-1003.
- Ehiane, S.O, Adejuwon, K.D & Goyayi, M.L. (2019). Revolutionising public service delivery through digital governance: Assessing the Government to Citizens (G2C) scenario in Nigeria. *AFFRIKA: Journal of Politics, Economics and Society*. 9(1), 5-21
- Fatile, J.O. (2012) Electronic governance: Myth or opportunity for Nigerian Public Administration? *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(9).122-140.
- Fountain, J. (2006). Central Issues in the Political Development of the Virtual State. In: Castells, M., Cardoso, G. (eds.). *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy*. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press.
- Garuba, R.O & Aminu, D.B. (2020). E-governance and digital economy policy performance in Nigeria. *Icheke Journal of the Faculty of Humanities*. 18(2), 1-20
- Greenfield, G., & Rohde, F. (2009). Technology acceptance: Not all organisations or workers may be the same. *International Journal of Accounting Information Systems*, 10(4), 263-272.
- Heeks, R. (2002). *E-governance in Africa: Promise and practise*. Manchester: Institute for Development policy and Management. University of Manchester.
- Holzer, M. and Schwester, R. W. (2011). *Public administration: An introduction*. New York. M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Kawabata, M. K., & Camargo, A. S. (2023). E-government innovation initiatives in public administration: A systematic literature review and a research agenda. *Administration & Society*, 55(9), 1758-1790.
- Mario, S et al (2009). E-governance in transition economies. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology*.
- Medupe, R., & Ajuwon, O. (2020), E-Governance and Public Administration in Nigeria: An Exploration of Citizens' Perspectives. *Records Management Journal*, 30(3), 245-263.

- Monga, A. (2008). E-government in India: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Administration & Governance*, 3(2), 52-61.
- Ndou, V. (2004). E-government for developing countries: Opportunities and challenges. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 18(1), 1-24.
- Nowotny, T. (2012). *State Institutions: The Framework for Economic Restructuring and Reform*. Nowotny is Political Advisor to the Chief Economist of the EBRD, London.
- Nwokolo, A.O. (2020). Restructuring as a Clue to Unleashing Nigeria's Potentials and Prosperity. *UJAH*. 21(3), 173-195.
- Obi, H.O, Uzor, O.A & Chukwurah, D.C. (2020). E-Governance and Service Delivery in the Nigeria Civil Service. *World Journal of Innovative Research*. 9(3), 49-59.
- Odumu, W.O. (2019). Adoption of E-government in Nigeria to enhance Government–Citizen Communication and Participation of the Grassroots/Local councils. *IDOSR Journal of Experimental Sciences* 4(1) 30-45,
- Ofor-Douglas, S. (2022). Gains and Setbacks Related with Institutional Governance Reforms in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 5(1), 184-196
- Ogbeide, D.O & Adjaino, V.O. (2019). Adoption and diffusion of e-governance innovation in Nigeria: A survey of literature. *Lapai International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*. 11(1), 39-52.
- Ojo, J.S. (2014). E-governance: An imperative for sustainable grassroots development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 6 (2), 77-89.
- Omeire, E., & Omeire, C., (2014). New wine in old wine skin: An exploration of major constraints to e-government implementation in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(14), 481-487.
- Rajasekar, J. & Al-Raei, M. (2013). An analysis of the telecommunication industry in the Sultanate of Oman using Michael Porter's competitive strategy model. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal incorporating Journal of Global Competitiveness*, 23(3), 234-259.
- Reddick, C.G. (2010). Impact of citizen relationship management (CRM) on government: Evidence from US local governments. *Journal of E-governance*, 33(2), 88-99.
- Richard, A.O & Eme, O.I. (2015). Electronic governance & administration in Nigeria: prospects and challenges. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*. 5(3), 18-26.

- Sunday, O.J.(2014).E-governance: An Imperative for Sustainable Grass root Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 6(4), 77-89.
- Suresh M, Amandeep, D, Mahima, M & Zeeshan, A.B. (2021). Future of e-Government: An integrated conceptual framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. 173,
- UNESCO (2005) E-Governance Capacity Building. Accessed online on July 23, 2024 from <http://portal.unesco.org>.
- Vaibhav, S. (2017). Institutional Reforms: A definition. Accessed online on October, 9, 2024 from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/institutional-reforms-definition-vaibhav-sharma>
- Walsham, G., & Sahay, S. (2005). Research on information systems in developing countries. *Information Technology for Development*, 12(1), 7– 24.
- Yaqub, N. (2016) What is in Restructuring in the Era of Change in Nigerian Politics. Paper presented at the International Conference, Damman, Saudi Arabia, 17th-18th December.
- Yusuf, B., & Yusuf, I. A. (2016), E-Governance Initiatives in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions: Prospects, Problems, and Policy Implications. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33(4), 1010-1027