E-Governance and Digital Economy Policy Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

The impact of e-governance on economic development cannot be overemphasized globally; this is so because of advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which have widened the scope of daily activities of the people by moving governance from traditional model to a digitalized one. In Nigeria, e-governance as a policy framework has opened access to the business initiatives of the government where investors across the globe interact with the government conveniently. This has improved the attainment of the digital economy policy objective in Nigeria. It is as a result of this success recorded that this paper examined the e-governance initiative put in place by the government towards the attainment of this objective. Relying on secondary data, the study is explanatory where efforts were made to examine how digital economy success is achieved in Nigeria. The study was conducted through secondary sources. The data collected were analyzed using analytical and descriptive approaches. The results of the analysis revealed that the Nigerian government is committed to the realization of a digital economy policy objective through e-governance initiative. To consolidate on the success recorded, the paper recommends the expansion of the internet facility to every nook and cranny of Nigeria. This must also be followed up with the establishment of a digitalization monitoring committee where the issue of inter-connectivity among government agencies could be properly improved on.
Keywords: E-Governance, Digital Economy, Evaluation, Performance Objective, Nigeria

Introduction
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has improved the scope of economic activities of the people globally. It is a form of technology device applicable to the official conduct of government in line with the modern trend of public administration. According to Worrall (2011), e-governance as part of the offshoot of ICT drive is a means of achieving strategic and operational compliances in public institutions. It is a strategic option through which government decisions could be made and abide with within a short period of time. It is, therefore, an electronic framework for policies control in the public establishment.

As observed by Garuba (2014), e-governance is a modern means of advancing integration of ICT in all the processes of governance. It aims of enhancing government ability to address the needs of the people and promote accountability accordingly. E-governance is a way of exchanging information and integration of various stand-alone systems between government and citizen. Rabaiah and Vandijct (2011) notes that in public administration, e-governance assists government in making a far-reaching decision on the status of the nation’s economy and this is so because all transactions activities of the government are recorded through the ICT and cannot be unofficially deleted in order to meet up with a private gain.

Therefore, application of e-governance in public administration has assisted in reporting daily activities of the government and this cannot be cooked up to boost one’s performance in public service delivery. The most important anticipated benefits of e-government are to advance the economic interest of the country with improved efficiency, increase in transparency and accountability of government functions, convenient and faster access to government services, improved democracy, and lower costs.
of administrative services with enhance digital economic process. Garuba (2014) opines that e-governance is useful in the promotion and restoration of democratic activities in the state with the help of improvisation of the participation of the people in government by giving adequate feedback on the activities of political elites and technically influences government decision making in order to suit the interest of the people.

It also promotes transparency in business transactions within the government circle. It exits with the aim of enhancing government ability to address the needs of the people and more efficiency in the socio-economic activities process of the government. Therefore, e-governance is designed to improve internal efficiency, reducing the cost governance, and increasing revenue generation bid of the government. According to Adamai (2009), access to telecommunications is critical to the development of all aspects of a nation’s economy. Through ICT compliance, policy makers have been able to improve on enterprise networks system in order to share resources and services to better compete in the global economy and service the local communities efficiently. E-governance offers a better solution to national economic challenges by providing necessary information on how to curtail the menace which is very critical in reducing the unemployment rate in the society.

As noted by Abasilim and Edet (2015), the application of e-governance to public administration in Nigeria has become one of the contemporary reform policies put in place by the government. It is a policy framework established towards promoting transparency and accountability in the bid of having a sustainable digital economic agenda. According to Ojo (2014), Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT) established in the year 2000 for the promotion digital economy through the e-governance model has been helpful towards expanding the digitalization of the Nigerian economy. But, the sustainability of the little success recorded in the nation’s economy through e-governance has become a major concern to scholars. It
is as a result of this concern that the paper seeks to broaden our understanding by evaluating the level of the e-governance and digital economy policy objective attainment in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Paper
Sequel to the above introduction, this paper examined the major link between e-governance and the digital economy. Including how an e-governance initiative has been able to harness the digital economy policy objective in Nigeria.

Methodology
This study was explanatory where efforts were made to expose the influence of e-governance towards the attainment of digital economy objectives in Nigeria. The study was conducted through data that were obtained from secondary sources. The data collected were analyzed using analytical and descriptive approaches.

Conceptual Review
E-Governance
The term e-governance has been described in the literature as a means of making use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to carry out public service activities in the country. It is the use of the internet and other electronic devices to ensure that public services are delivered in a more convenient and less cost-effective way to the people. According to Budhiraja (2003), e-governance involves the use of electronic devices in the process of government activities towards promoting transparency, accountability and acceptable public service delivery. Ojo (2014) notes that e-governance as a new trend in the administration of the state involves actual incorporation of ICT into governmental activities in order to promote efficiency, accountability and transparency in the conduct of public affairs.
Abasilim and Edet (2015) were of the opinion that the application of e-governance by the government is useful in providing information on how to provide public services to the people. It is also useful in streamlining and integrates workflows in the public establishment. This is in a bid to effectively manage data and information, enhance public service delivery, as well as expand communication channels for the engagement and empowerment of the people. European Union (EU) also sees e-governance as a means of using ICT devices to enhance public administrative activities in the state.

It is a political strategy adopted by the government through which possible feedback can be promptly given to the public about the activities of the government in an efficient way. As a new discovery in governance, e-governance is a means of using internet technology as a platform for exchanging information, providing services, transacting with citizens and business investors. Abasilim and Edet (2015) argue that e-governance is a progressive movement from the traditional method of carrying out government businesses which is mainly a hierarchical, linear, and one-way model. But for the e-governance, the use of the internet enables the public seeks information at their own convenience and not really having to visit the office in person or when the government office is open.

It is part of administrative reform tools geared towards effective public service delivery, which is premised on the assumption that the appreciable use of ICT method in the day to day activities of the government could promote effective public service delivery. Adeyemo (2011) notes that e-governance benefits the citizens by enabling them to get connected to the government more easily using electronic devices. This results in better efficiency in public service delivery through faster dissemination of information about the activities of the government to a larger audience. It also assisted in reducing corruption cases as accountability and transparency is increased with the application of e-governance globally and
inter-departmental exchange of information and the merger of related services are enhanced through application of e-governance devices in the government establishment.

Digital Economy
The digital economy usually takes shape in the globalized world and it is an innovation that undermining conventional notions about how business and trading activities can be structured through internet services. Brenner (2015) believes that the aggressive use of data for economic activities is a means of promoting the digital economy. It is an act of using data in transferring business models, facilitating new products, providing services, and generating greater utility by ushering new management techniques for economic transformation. The digital economy is underpinned by the spread of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) across all business sectors to enhance its productivity. The concept of the digital economy as noted by scholars refers to an economy and trading activities that are based on digital computing technologies through internet connectivity. It is also regarded as an internet economy that intertwined with the traditional economy system arising from day-to-day activities of individuals, organizations, and the states.

According to Chohan (2020), the digital economy as a concept developed a result of innovation and the latest discovery in technology, digitalization and transformation of daily engagement of the people in the bid of improving business activities across the globe. The digital economy is base on online connection to the businesses and has become the backbone of trades and investments across the globe. Various attempts at categorizing the size of the impact on traditional sectors have been made through a digital economy platform. It is a concept that has to do with e-commerce that involves the transfer of goods electronically to the consumers. Therefore, it has been defined as the branch of the economy studying zero marginal cost intangible goods over the net.
Chohan (2020) claims that the digital economy also focuses on how business is being conducted and processes, this is so because of making it possible for billions of people to connect together through the internet, devices, data, and processes. It is based on the interconnectedness of people, organizations, and machines with the objective of promoting cashless transactions in the cause of economic matters and has had a substantial impact on retail sales of consumer product goods globally. Both development and exploitation of intangible assets has become a key feature of the digital economy. This investment in and development of intangibles such as software is a core contribution to value creation and economic growth for companies in the digital economy process.

Foda and Patel (2018) believe that digital economy activities have significantly reduced the cost associated with the organization and coordination of complex activities. Businesses in far away distances are increasingly conducted across the globe with effective operations on an integrated basis from a central location that may be removed geographically from both the locations in which the operations are carried out and the locations in which their suppliers or customers are located. Consequently, the digital economy as a new economic order allowed individuals, groups and organizations to expand access to remote markets and thus, provided an opportunity to provide those goods and services across the borders.

**Policy Performance**
Policy performance as a major concept in public policy analysis exists to assist the government to effectively develop a strategic plan in evaluating the performances of different policies of the government. According to Kang, Jee, and Shin (2018), policy performance is the outcomes of targeted programs and its essentialities towards improving the effectiveness of a particular policy under consideration in the state. It is a form of mechanism
that includes policy feedback, system accountability and government policy dissemination to the citizens. Policy performance seeks to promote a public sector where the policymakers are empowered by the best available evidence so that they can be able to learn from success recorded and seize the better opportunity for possible improvement.

Mayhew (2019) opines that policy performance involves the method of capturing affective dimensions, such as values, beliefs, and attitudes of the policy target group in the state. It is a form of performance evaluation where governments tend to have a biased focus on the empirical dimensions for the policy initiative. Therefore, performance policy appraisal is essential for the attainment of government policy objectives in the state. Policy performance evaluation is the basis of the policy performance management system. Performance management is the process that allows the government and individuals to measure how well the government has achieved a policy objective.

As observed by Mayhew (2019), the purpose of an effective public policy performance the system is for the government to have a clear understanding of far has the policy under consideration has been able to meet up with its target. It is a means of receiving feedback regarding how they are performing relative to expectations of the people. This is also aimed to identify development opportunities and to address performance that does not meet public expectations. A comprehensive public performance management system empowers government at all levels to have greater input to the success of the government and this enable the government to better identify and recognize its contribution to socio-economic development in the state.

Theoretical Framework
Schumpeter Theory of Economic Development
The material productive forces arise from the original factors of production while the immaterial set of productive forces are conditioned by the ‘technical facts’ and ‘facts of social organization’. As explained in the theory, the rate of growth of the output in the economic process depends upon the rate of growth of productive factors, the rate of growth of technology, and the rate of growth of the investment. The theory believed that alterations in the supply of productive factors can only bring about gradual, continuous, and slow evolution of the economic system. Therefore, the impact of technological and social change calls for spontaneous change in the channels of output flow in the economic process.

Schumpeter’s theory of economic development is part of the theory that explains the role of the digital economy in the contemporary economic activities. It is a theory that assigns the paramount responsibility of the entrepreneur to bring about innovations in the process of economic development. In his work titled “The theory of Economic Development” Schumpeter (1911) argues that the entrepreneur can control their economies because they are responsible for delivering innovation and technological change in order to reposition their investments. As postulated in the theory, Schumpeter (1911) believes that the process of production is marked by a combination of material and immaterial productive forces.

Schumpeter’s theory of economic development posited that creative destruction is the dismantling of an old economy and replacing it with a new economy through entrepreneurial innovation with a view to reducing costs of production with the aim of making profits a possible reality. The theory assumed that to make the stationary economy dynamic, changes must take place in the circular flow system. The introductions of new methods of production will definitely open up a new market with a new source of supply of raw materials. This will definitely make entrepreneur innovates to earn profits and once it has become profitable, other
entrepreneurs follow it in mass and this is what the digital economy system set to achieve.
As good as this theory to the topic under review, many critics of the theory were of the opinion that Schumpeter’s postulation is only base on the theory of business cycles and not an analysis of economic development. However, the theory has a greater influence on economic development in developing countries especially in Nigeria where the theory has been able to present a unified view of the digital economy policy through e-governance system adopted by the government for sustainable economic development.

Rationale for E-Governance and Digital Economy Policy in Nigeria
The policy on e-governance and digital economy in Nigeria can be traced to over two decades when the services rendered by defunct Nigerian Telecommunication Company (NITEL) and other media organizations called for a review. This motivated the successive administrations in Nigeria to reform and promotes the development of ICT in the country. However, these reforms tend to yield a little result in economic development in Nigeria. But, as Nigerian returned to democratic rule in 1999, the then government remodels its ICT policy objective and this made the journey of digitalization of socio, political and economic activities became positive with the establishment of Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT).

According to Nwogu (2007), the NNIT was mandated to design a sustainable policy framework for making ICT a basic tool for socio, political and economic transformation in Nigeria. This accompanied with liberalization policy of the federal government in Telecommunication an industry which allowed for GSM operations and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) services in the country. As averred by Abasilim and Edet (2015), the importance of e-governance on public service delivery cannot be overemphasized and that is why Nigerian the government under President Obasanjo decided to digitalize public administrative activities in order to
meet up with the reality of things in the new millennium. The digitalization was regarded as a major foundation for e-governance and digital economic process in Nigeria.

Awosanya (2019) claims that the essence of the policy was to make Nigeria an Information Technology (IT) a capable country in Africa and a key player in ICT globally and with the NNIT policy framework, Nigeria was able to set itself for developing sustainable communication technology structure as a means of promoting e-governance and digital economy agenda in Africa and therefore, e-governance is a Nigerian government policy framework designed purportedly for sending and receiving information conveniently in the government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in order to promote transparency in government establishments. The policy is also aimed to incorporate different technological techniques for boosting the information and communication technology sector of the government thereby making the nation’s telecommunication system one of the fastest-growing markets in Africa.

Awosanya (2019) argues that in 2011 the government also adopted various online policy frameworks to boost its e-governance and digital economy agenda. The application of mobile apps and mobile portals for public transactions was developed in order to enhance government public service delivery. This made it possible for Nigeria to design e-governance initiatives in order to improve its business activities across the globe. The initiatives also made the government boost the technical skills of ICT so as to get better in its economic process and share information to the citizens within a little space of time irrespective of the distances and geographical location of the country.

In order to justify further the reason for the digital economy policy drive of the government, Patanmi (2020) claims that re-designation of the Nigerian Ministry of Communications by Buhari’s administration to the Federal
Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy was done to position Nigeria for the gains of the digital economy and the communications an aspect of the Ministry only captured the channels towards realization of the goal. Hence, the term became inadequate in describing the essence of the new vision that embraces the content, as well as the utilization of both channel and content to achieve the government desires to digitalize its economic activities in the country.

Pantami (2020) said this is particularly significant as it enables Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is the most diverse and fastest-growing sector to mobilize other sectors and align with the economic transformation of the government. This is needed for improvement in revenue generation bid of the government while the e-governance has made it possible for information dissemination to the citizen which is part of services provided to the people in one hand and the government receiving the feedbacks on the other hand. This is to be proved to be a mode of achieving transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and openness in governance which is cost-effective to the government.

**Appraisal of E-Governance and Digital Economy Policy Performance in Nigeria**

The large population as part of the attribute of Nigeria has contributed to its relevance among the committees of the nations across the globe. In the African continent, her enormous the population has made it possible to be recognized as the giant of Africa not because in economic status or its desires to advance in ICT but because of the role of Nigeria towards sustainable development in the economy of West African States. According to Kayode and Ajadi (2016), the e-governance initiative in Nigeria became possible following successful formulation of ICT policy towards making government activities accessible to the people online in order to come to term with other countries across the globe.
The e-governance policy was part of the government proposed electronic government system as part of the preparation for 2020 vision in the country and was targeted on public sector efficiency, productivity growth, economic growth, and national competitiveness. In order to realize the mission, the government established the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and National e-government Strategy Limited (NeGST) in 2003 and 2004 respectively. As reflected in the NITDA implementation Act 2007, the implementation of e-governance activities in Nigeria was clearly stated in the Act and must be done through Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the National e-government Strategic Limited. This is solely a private entity in operation.

Kayode and Ajadi (2016) argues that the PPP approach for implementing e-governance policy in Nigeria leverages on government’s economic and civil service reform processes which involved deliberate programme for nurturing and inculcating the private sector in the e-governance development process. The adoption of PPP approach was the move of the government to use private sector as driving force for infrastructural development and wealth creation strategy. The joint involvement of two sectors was to sustain the e-governance system due to the low performance of the public sectors in the cause of managing the nation’s business enterprises.

Awosanya (2019) believes that since the implementation of e-governance and digital economy policy in Nigeria, several initiatives have been made by the government in order to fast track its success. The e-Nigeria project as part of e-governance strategy was launched in the bid of connecting different communities, states, regions, and the government institutions and this later gave rise to the National Rural Telephony projects targeted at creating awareness to the rural dwellers about the activities of the government. As observed by Kayode and Ajadi (2016), other successes recorded by the government through e-governance was Nigerian
Telemedicine initiative, Public service initiatives, State and Local governments ICT facilities loan scheme initiative.

On the aspect of digital economy policy framework, Pantami (2020) believes that much has not been done before by successive administration in Nigeria in the bid of promoting digital economy initiative in Nigeria via e-governance structure established and that is why the Buhari’s administration directed that all government-funded ICT projects must be reviewed and cleared by NITDA. The implementation of the directive according to Pantami (2020) has saved over 16.8 billion naira for the government and that the second-quarter report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2019 indicates that the nation’s digital economy initiative made impressively contribution to the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 13.85% in Nigeria.

Pantami (2020) notes that the importance and potentiality of digital economy initiative in Nigeria has promoted digital economy policy of the government and has made it possible for taxes and prices placed on goods and services to come down to avoidable rate and this has increased profits merging of the investors through the sheer increase in the volume of trading activities in Nigeria. Also, a sustainable policy has also created towards having access to the Internet, owning a bank account that can be accessed and operated digitally and online irrespective of locations of the people. This development has made it possible to develop a single portal that can be regarded as a One-Stop-Centre which links all the MDAs together in order to serve as a guide for citizens to access various e-services of the government in a transparent manner.

Factors Hindering E-Governance Policy Efficiency in Nigeria
Scholars have advance different arguments about the benefits attracted to e-governance policy initiative in Nigeria especially in the area of economic, social development, education, security, and health. The policy has
graciously improved accountability, awareness, and transparency in the administration of the state. However, many scholars observe that many challenges are still facing e-governance policy initiatives in Nigeria despite success recorded. Those factors include:

a. **Lack of Citizen-Centered Approach:** As noted by Abasilim and Edet (2015), despite the noticeable objective of e-governance towards ensuring that public sector organizations provide essential services to the people at avoidable rate. The Nigerian ICT sector in its day to day activities seems not to fare well in this aspect especially with limited accessibility of the majority of Nigerian in rural areas to internet services while those in the urban areas also paid higher for the internet subscription with poor services rendered by the internet service providers.

b. **Absence of Team Work among Government Agencies:** This also contributed to the inefficiency attributed to e-governance initiative in Nigeria. The absence of teamwork among government agencies where every ministry has its own web page without many linkages between them made it less interactive to investors. As argued by Awosanya (2019), this hinders the ability of the government agencies to share information among the MDAs which can make them more productive in the cause of implementation of government policy in Nigeria.

c. **Lack of Maintenance Culture:** The lack of maintenance culture on telecommunication facilities is also hindered the effective implementation of the e-governance initiative in Nigeria. According to Kayode and Ajadi (2016), the lack of continuity in the implementation of government policy on e-governance by successive administrations made it possible for the neglect of many telecommunication facilities in Nigeria. But if there has been proper maintenance culture, this has assists the government’s ability to expand the internet services to all nocks and crannies of Nigeria.
d. **Bureaucratic Frustration of the Initiative:** As averred by Ojo (2014), the e-governance initiative has been frustrated by some top civil servants in the over-bloated Nigerian public service whose members see the e-governance initiative as a deliberate attempt by the government to throw the majority of them out of jobs. They always make their positions in the public service to frustrate the effective implementation of the policy in the country.

e. **State of Power Supply in the Country:** Akomaye (2015) believes that the issue of epileptic and irregular power supply has posed a considerable challenge to the realization of e-governance objectives in Nigeria. This is a current picture of what exists in most of the government establishments made them operate on generators and sometimes the generators lack the capacity to power adequately the ICT facilities towards advancing the government desires of implementing e-governance initiative successfully.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This article reviewed the performances of e-governance and digital economy policy in Nigeria where it was revealed that the focus of e-governance revolves in the effective utilization of ICT to disseminate information from the government to all the MDAs and the general public in order to promote transparency and accountability in the public service delivery which if successively achieved can assist the speedy economic development in the country. According to Akomaye (2015), there are disparities in the implementation process of e-governance globally. These differences are identified based on the analysis of the three parameters of measuring the level of preparedness of nations in utilizing e-governance services which include, online service delivery, telecommunication infrastructure, and human capital development.
In Nigeria, attainment of the golden objective of e-governance and digital economy objective to appreciable level was as a result of the level of preparation of the government through the establishment of different agencies towards the promotion of e-governance which in turn facilitated the speedy process of digital economy of the country where many jobs have been created through Global Services of the Mobile network, improvement in revenue generations of the government and the citizens and openness of access to investors. The article also raveled that through the e-governance initiative, the idea has improved the nation’s political atmosphere where there is an improvement in the mode of interactions between the government and the citizens. This has transformed the government to a model best applicable to the globalized society.

However, the evaluation of the e-governance and digital economy policy in Nigeria shows that despite the achievement recorded in the attainment of the policy objective, there are still some certain issues that are hindering sustainability of the success recorded to an international standard. One of the problems is the fact that the primary objective of making it citizen-centered approach has been difficult to achieve because of the failure of the government to put machinery in place towards providing internet services to the people at avoidable rates. Also, the absence of team work among government agencies where every ministry has its own web page without many linkages between them made it less interactive to investors.

This as noted by Awosanya (2019) hinders the sharing of information among government MDAs. The government, therefore, needs to be more proactive in redressing these challenges by providing more access to internet facilities in all nock and crannies of Nigeria with total subsidue on the subscription of data as has been done in some developed countries. This should also be followed by setting up a special monitoring and evaluation committee where the inter-connectivity issues among government agencies would be addressed. The government also needs to improve on
maintenance culture of the internet, this could be achieved by making fund available to MDAs for maintenance purposes so that the little success recorded in the attainment of e-governance and digital economy policy objective can be consolidated on in Nigeria.

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