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E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: BUILDING A NEW PARADIGM FOR PUBLIC TRUST

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Abstract

This study investigated how the online delivery of public services (e-government) has impacted public trust in the Nigerian government. This was done using an electronic survey conducted with 13,743 users of online government services. The study found that that electronic public service delivery had (t = -4.73, p < 0.05) significant effect on public trust in Nigeria. However, the practical significance as the t $_{obtained}$ -4.73 is greater than t $_{critical\ value}$ -4.303 under 2 degree of freedom at 5% significance level. This difference further implies that significant effect existed between service delivery and public confidence with practical difference from the null value. Stemming from this finding, the study concluded that the significant positive relationship is established between electronic public service delivery and trust in government and it could catalyse the promotion of trust in the Nigerian government.

Introduction

Trust is the bedrock upon which the legitimacy of public institutions lies and it has remained a necessity for restoring and maintaining social cohesion. A number of social behaviour depends on the extent of trust the citizens reposed in their governments. Trust in government agencies and their modus operandi are therefore means of establishing a number of patriotic values which are not limited to; encouraging compliance with state rules; facilitating active cooperation between the state and relevant stakeholders and even 'co-production' between the citizens and MDAs. In essence, it legitimizes public funds raising to finance governance and social service delivery. Similarly, government's competence is predicated on her responsiveness and reliability in effectively delivering public services.

Lincoln's dictum, "government of the people, for the people, by the people", has assumed a prominent role in defining democracy and by extension good governance. Yet, the mode of governance across the world is far from this perspective (Parent, Vandebeek & Gemino, 2005). Developing countries, in particular, have failed in their mandate of effective and efficient social service delivery and ensuring prudence in public spending. These failures have culminated into a sour relationship between the citizens and their government as trust keeps declining in their relationship. In Nigeria for instance, some of the limitations in the traditional approach to governance can be attributed to bureaucratic rigidity and complexity among government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), repeated paperwork, inefficiency in task performance that usually culminate into long waiting time both for the public service users and public officials (Al-Hakim, 2007). In furtherance to this, Babalola (2012) held that Nigerians distrust in their government has been a long fairy tale, accumulated over the years by the nonchalant manner with which public goods and services are being delivered. However, the trust deficit is not limited to Nigeria or the developing countries as a myriad of surveys indicated that even the developed world is also battling with a persistent decline in public trust (Moti, 2007 & 2013). Consequently, distrust can pose a serious challenge to working with governments (Iroghama, 2012).

In a bid to reverse the poor service delivery trend and inculcate prudence in governance while recouping the trust deficiency, a service-overhauling quest began. This quest formed the contemporary scramble for e-public

service delivery adoption in governance. ICT was thus incorporated into governance in what is known as e-government. Electronic government is not just a movement that is peculiar to a particular country or continent; rather it is a worldwide phenomenon that concerns developed and developing nations (Reddick, 2010). The incorporation of ICT in governance has remained the cornerstone in savaging the incessant menace of poor social service delivery across the globe. All governments aspiring to restore and retain the much-needed popular legitimacy now embrace digital revolution to enhance their performances. A well-institutionalized e-public service delivery can guarantee four important targets of accountability, openness, accessibility and growth. In return for timely, effective and efficient social services, the people pay taxes promptly; they abide by state laws and offer themselves as and when necessary to the service of the state. The interchange of these mutual responsibilities does not just facilitate a harmonious co-existence between the state and the citizens but is also helps in building citizen's trust in the government. In a more general way, it raises social capital by increasing overall levels of trust in the society.

However, reversing the decline in public trust in governments has become a necessary task for scholars and modern governments. With the recent e-government adoption in Nigeria, it therefore became necessary to investigate whether the e-public service project has actually succeeded in reversing the decline in citizens' trust in the Nigerian government. It is within this framework that the need for this study surfaced.

Hypothesis
H_0: e-government had no significant effect on citizens' trust in the Nigerian government.

Literature review
The incorporation of ICT tools in governance has given birth to a number of new concepts in the social sciences. Prominent among these concepts were; e-government; e-governance; e-policing; e-filling; e-voting etc. Of these concepts, e-government and e-governance are often used interchangeably though there are significant differences in their meaning and audiences (Singh & Sharma, 2009). With new technology, the headaches of doing business with the government is eliminated as citizens can now do much of the work

themselves (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2009). E-Governance encompasses more concepts than e-government that only deals with enhancing social service delivery with digital tools in a bid to facilitate a change in the perception of the citizens towards their governments (Lim, Masrom & Din, 2013).

E-Government

The concept of e-Government is now a cogent subject of discussion in public service delivery literature at least for about ten years now (Heeks, 2006; West, 2005; Garson, 2003 and Fountain, 2001). However, e-government is not constrained to the field of public administration alone, rather it is multidisciplinary in nature as it covers fields like Information System, Political Science, Information Technology and Computer Science. E-Government is still a new phenomenon where ideas are still pouring out from scholars and its practitioners. Thus, it is devoid of a standard and universal definition (Reddick, 2010).

However, the term can simply be described as summing up 'government-as-usual plus ICT'. E-Government is a clear move away from the statuesque as it is not about business as usual, instead, it redirect focus to the use of ICT to rebrand the structures and procedures of governance (Alshehri, & Drew, 2010). Adeyeye and Aladesanmi (2011) quoted the former President Obasanjo's (Rtd) when he described e-Government as "the use of information & communication technologies, to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency , and accountability of governance through implementing data warehousing and integrated decision support system to manage the modern economy for the benefit of the governed."

However, an elaborate digging into the definitions of e-Government shows that there are variations in the submissions of scholars as a number of them view e-government as an end in itself while many others see it as a means to an end. To the former, one of the cardinal duties of government is service delivery in an efficient and effective manner and e-government provides the platform to do just that. Thus, the successful implementation of e-public service delivery marks the realization of prominent objectives of the government. As such, e-government becomes a means to an end. Authors with this perspective are presented as follow;

The European Commission, (2003) posits that e-government is the use of ICT in public administration combined with structural and skills improvement in order to enhance public services, promote democratic dividends and strengthen support for public policies. Similar to the European Commission's view is the perception of Denhardt & Denhardt (2009) and Olowu (2004) who conceptualize e-government as a tool for service delivery. i.e. the adoption of "all the information and communication technology platforms and applications in the public sector or the use of the internet for delivering government information and services to citizens". To buttress this perspective, Adah (2015) described e-Government as a double-lane communication process that deals with the use of ICT to deliver public services while ensuring unfettered access of such services to citizens. Practically, e-government entails the adoption of new leadership orientation, mechanism of decisions making and investment, new ways of making social services available to citizens, a genuine way of listening and responding to needs of the public in addition to new ways of organizing and delivering public information and services. Dhamodharam & Saminathan (2011) termed e-government as the government's use of ICT tools specifically web-based internet applications to facilitate access to and delivery of public information and service to citizens, businesses and government departments. In the words of Jalali & Khorasani (2012), the idea of e-government depicts service delivery and information exchange both within the organizations (Intra-Governmental) and outside them (Inter-Governmental) that are observed using various technical tools and is seen as a mutual engagement between government and citizens, non-profit organizations, business persons, employees and the government itself is enhanced. Concisely, a common understanding in this service delivery group is that e-government refers to the application of ICTs, particularly Web-based platforms, to provide cheaper, effective, easier and faster access to government services.

E-Government to the latter is a means through which political values and mandates are being fulfilled. In this perspective, through e-public service delivery, popular participation can be engendered, transparency can be achieved and accountability enshrined. To back up the idea, Al-Hakim (2007) submitted that e-Government denotes the use of ICTs by government to improve the way public administration interacts with citizens and businesses

and to improve the efficiency of the administrative process. Similarly, Means and Schneider (2000) examined the concept from the perspective of the relationships between governments, their customers (businesses, other governments, and citizens) and suppliers by the use of the internet. More discretely, Lawson (1998) describes e-government as "transferring power to people, by operating in a one-stop, non-stop way, and doing more for less". In the view of Heichlinger (2004), citizens are focal to the idea of e-government, so he defined "e-Government as a set of activities supported by information systems with the aim of improving the relationships between government institutions and citizens." The constant mention of "government-citizen relationship" in the above definitions portrays an element of politics. To Davies (2015), e-Government refers to concerted efforts of public authorities to use information and communication technologies to better public services delivery and increase democratic participation. Conclusively, e-Government possesses the potentials to transform government to be more prudent, accountable and responsive to the citizens (Reddick, 2010).

Despite the scope disparity between the presented perspectives, there are still many common threads in their ideas and they are the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs): its ability to transform government and make it more responsive and accountable to citizens through participation and service delivery. However, this study shall adopt the perspective of the former that takes e-government as a means to an end where they defined e-government as the use of IT to deliver social services in an effective and efficient manner. Sequel to this, e-government, therefore, assumes the substitute for e-public service delivery.

Public Trust

Despite the convenience with which people discuss the concept of trust on a daily basis, not a succinctly acceptable clarification of the construct has been arrived at by the scholars (Romano, 2003). However, trust connotes a three-part engagement concerning at least two individuals and one act: a person may trust specific people or specific establishments to do specific things at a given point in time (Guinnane, 2005). The term is conceptualized as a multifaceted term with varied features that are considered relevant in defining it. Trust appeared with the humanity and the development of social interaction. Almost every aspect of a person's life is based on one or another

way in trust (Colesca, 2009). Several kinds of literature, types of research, conferences, workshops, and seminars have been conducted in defining the concept of trust (Colesca and Schoon & Cheng, 2011). Trust is a concept drawn from an array of disciplines that is influenced by both measurable and non-measurable factors. Jalali & Khorasani (2012) buttressed that trust appeared in the everyday life of the people. Therefore, trust is a very robust concept, covering a wide range of relationships.

Trust connotes the expectation that arises in a community of individuals with shared norms and honest intentions on the part of other members of that community that certain things will be taken care of or done (Iroghama, 2012). In a slightly different perspective, Lewicki & Bunker (1995) explained trust to be scenario involving confident positive expectation on the motives of others with respect to one's situations involving risk. Trust is subject to assessment of the influence of others in terms of the extent of to which one perceived that quality and significance impact will be ensured on one's outcomes in a given situation, such that one's inclination toward such influence provide a sense of assurance over the likely results of the situation. Nonetheless, trust is conditional, incremental and Symmetrical. Simply put, public trust is the confidence reposed in others (government) indicating that they will (always) do the right thing.

Trust is a key element in the relationship between voters and elected representatives and forms part of the representative legitimacy, part of the political system. If one desires a solid basis for making and enforcing rules for citizens and society, trust is essential (Eigeman, 2007). Trust is the first responsibility of the political administration. It must constantly strive to gain trust, to maintain a sustainable position of the government as a carrier of public authority. In the OECD (2000), perspective, [public] trust is the expectation of citizens from a public servant (s) to function in the interest of the public [citizens] with fairness and to manage and distribute public resources properly without prejudice. Thus, a fair, reliable and equitable public services provision inspire public trust and create a favourable environment for citizens and economy to prosper. The concept of trust in a political and public institution is quite a long tale with different notions, ideas, and concepts been generated over the years within the spheres of political science, public administration, and public policy. Various schools

of thought have emerged in laying theoretical background on the concept of trust. None of these schools possesses the monopoly of explaining what trust in government is as there is great overlap in their discussions over time.

E-Government implementation in Nigeria

The innovation in ICT and the emergence of the Internet were strong pushers in the movement from an industrial to an information age (Wirtz & Daiser, 2015). The world has assumed a global village where all nations strive to attain a significant level of electronic governance that involves the use of ICTs to deliver government services (Adah, 2015). Nigeria is regarded as the giant of Africa in the international community; this attachment emanated from her enormous population, considerately large landmass and not necessarily because of its advancement in information and communication technology. However, the need to combat rising levels of corruption, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness in the public sector led to the decision to take governance to the next level by ensuring the presence of government online. This is established in a speech of former president Obasanjo when he stressed that his administration has been centred on reorientation and reorganization of the civil service and public officials by changing the business as usual (corrupt, bureaucratic, and inefficient) default system to a transparent, efficient and productive, and participatory one. Moreover, he continued that his administration has taken a bold step to re-engineer the backroom engine to institutionalize an "effective system through computer-assisted modern processes known as e-government" (Obasanjo, 2004). In a collaborating view, a top government official in the Ministry of Science and Technology buttressed the need for e-government as a change element in the Nigerian public service. He described e-government as:

> …a hurricane that nobody, not even a President can stop. Can you see a President stopping a hurricane? He cannot. No dictator, for instance, can tell you that you cannot send an e-mail… One way to diminish [419] fraudsters are to have proper data and proper documentation which IT [introduces].

Aside the presented political vocal attention paid to the e-government project, history reveals that the application of computer in the conduct of public governance in Nigeria dated back to the year 1948 when the British colonialists installed it at the Nigerian Port Authority. Later in the 70s, the Nigerian government promulgated an indigenization decree that set apart business categories for Nigerians only and the computer business was one such area. This move allows indigenous citizens to set up businesses in the importation and sale of computers and in the long run, the number of computers in the country experienced a serious boost (UNU, 2004). In furtherance to this, by the late 1970s, the Nigerian government established the Central Computer Committee (CCC), that is charged with the responsibility of creating standards for users and vendors of computers in Nigeria and develop inputs for the national policy on computing. However, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) that was formed in 1992 was reactivated in 2000 and since then the e-government implementation framework has rolled-out several "citizen-centric projects" (Agunloye, 2007).

The National Telecommunications Act was established to serve as the regulatory framework for all ICT related issues. To realize the objectives of the National Policy, the government established the National Technology Development Agency (NITDA), which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Science, and Technology to implement the policy frameworks (NITDA, 2001). The rapid emergence and growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in everyday life of citizens has thereby pushed the Nigerian government to transform itself into an electronic government (e-government) to better serve the citizens. In furtherance to the e-government journey, Prof. Akunyili (2010) while delivering a speech at the World Congress on Information Technology in Amsterdam opined that the common characteristic of e-government is the automation of the initial paper-centred processes to enhance access to public services. More importantly, it seeks strengthen government's drive towards efficiency in governance and increased transparency in the management of resources, for national growth and development.

Sequel to the concerted effort of the government in the adoption of e-government between 2011 and 2013, mobile applications and channels

that can directly enhance poverty alleviation, gender mainstreaming, social inclusion and disaster management were designed and operationalized. More interestingly, the creation of National Service Portal in 2013 marked a significant epoch in the Nigeria e-public service delivery project. The portal offers a number of interconnection between government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Comments from unofficial quarters show that the portal has been very helpful in citizens' access to Government services in the short run while it has the potential of facilitating transparency in governance and in the end, trust in the government.

Nigeria is currently experiencing a slow but steady growth in the ICT sector. In a recent ranking by the United Nations in 2020 on e-Government implementation around the world, Nigeria was positioned 141th of the 193 United Nation Member States with the following breakdown: 0.4406 on Global Development Index, 0.4507 on Human Capital Index, 0.5176 on Online Service Index and 0.3534 on Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (UNDESA, 2020).

Public Mistrust in Nigeria

Nigerians distrust in their government has been a long fairy tale, accumulated over the years by the nonchalant manner with which public goods and services are being delivered by the past and present government administrations (Babalola, 2012). Successive administrations and regimes have always pledged their commitment to enhancing better life and infrastructural development for the Nigerian masses as a basis for introducing reforms, policies and programmes but mostly ended up achieving the opposite. A simple glance into the trends of events that culminated into mistrust in the Nigerian government can be traced back to the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985- 1993) when the Structural Adjustment Programmes was introduced despite the disapproval both from Nigerian at home and abroad. A program that was to rejuvenate the economy but ended up throwing the masses into abject poverty (Anyawu, 1992).

The return to civil rule in 1999 was a gentle balm for Nigerians as everyone looks forward to a better and prosperous Nigeria only to be disappointed afterwards through incessant increments in the price of petroleum products, endemic political corruption etc. The first civilian administration (1999-

2007) recorded increase in the price of petroleum products five times. Every occasion is supported by a promise to enhance the quality of lives and infrastructural development, but all ended up with empty results (Salami & Ayoola, 2010). Voters also evidenced the dearth of public trust in the Nigerian government in the 2007 general election where electoral fraud was glaring, the results were contested in many fora, and this led to protests. Many independent observers called for the cancellation of the result as well as a quick electoral reform (Iroghama, 2012). On January 1, 2012, the government subsidies on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) was removed and this led to an increase in the petrol pump price by up to 91.65%. Nigerians took to the streets in protest of the development that grounded economic activities of the country for about weeks.

It is apparent that a productive society or nation is reliant on a high degree of public trust in the government and its institutions. Cynicism among Nigerians is rampant, as Nigerians do not trust the government in any respect. The Minister of Finance and the Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr Ngozi Okonjo- Iweala was quoted in the Punch Newspaper of January 8th, 2012, to have said that *I really agree on this issue of mistrust; I think it is part of the problem(s) governments faced over the years. Nigerians have not seen their governments fulfilling promises…* (Baiyewu, 2012:2). A lawyer and human right activist, Femi Falana also corroborated the minister's argument when he was quoted to have said;

> We have lost trust because what we are hearing now what the government intends to do with the funds from subsidy removal is not new. We have been told the same thing in the past. What is the guarantee that we will not hear the same thing after the deregulation of the downstream sector? (Nnodium, 2012:5).

Mistrust in Nigerian government by Nigerians caused by lack of transparency and empty promises of the past government to improve the living standards of the people persists. These factors have deemed the government unapt of which the resultant effect might threaten the fragile country's nascent democracy and sovereignty. N/Nzeako painted a clearer picture thus:

> The agonizing queues in our banks, the snail-speed delivery of mails by our postal system and the chaotic scenes at our airports have been accepted as normal ways of life. Needless to talk about the frustrating bottlenecks of the nation's bureaucracy – the missing or misplaced documents, stockpiles of files and the absence officer. Ghost workers dumped mails and financial embezzlement and mismanagement are common features of the society. These and many instances suggest how far our society stands behind the frontiers of modern civilization (Akoh, 2001:3).

What is even more disturbing is the fact that the average Nigerian citizen has long ceased to believe that he can get any useful service from any government institution unless he offers a bribe, which is now considered a normal deal in the conduct of public business.

Public trust is an important element in realizing good governance in Nigeria just like in every other nation. It is also a vital feature needed to create a conducive atmosphere for institutions to implement public policies, enshrine transparency and improve public participation. Moreover, the Nigerians placing trust in government serves as an all-important yardstick to measure the legitimacy upon which the political and administrative structure is based. Public trust is important for decision-making, public participation, and voting behaviour, adoption of professional standard and ethics as well as adherence to the laws and regulations of the state. The absence of trust has made Nigerians perceive the government as having misplaced its priorities, corrupt, inefficient, waste resources and incompetent in making and implementing policies to better the lives of Nigerians.

E-Government has therefore been proffered as a panacea to government's inefficiency, the absence of transparency and it will facilitate an increase in the level of interaction between the government and the citizens (Dhamodharam & Saminathan, 2011; West, 2005). In many countries, E-government is fast replacing the traditional and conventional bureaucratic mode of public service operation, though much faster in some than others are. In the Sub-Saharan African countries (where Nigeria belongs), the rate is quite slow

but steady as most of the public bureaucracies "are still hierarchical and lack accountability and transparency" (Ngulube, 2007). The emergence of information technology in Nigeria serves as a new paradigm shift in the manner, process and pattern of communication between, within and outside the public sector. E-government is gradually posing as a tool for enhancing the external and internal relationship between the government and the citizens through constituency participation and efficient service delivery through technology and the new media (Gartner Group, 2000).

Methodology

Despite the intense effort and spending on e-government implementation in Nigeria, has the overall level of trust between the citizens and the government improved? In answering this, primary data was collected from eight (8) purposively selected Federal Agencies in Nigeria. The agencies were: the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). In the list also is the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) and the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). Their selection was based on the ground that they constitute the foremost online public service delivery agencies in Nigeria.

In the administration of online survey, the respondents were reached on the Facebook Audience-Access Service, sorted on the bases of Nationality (Nigerians), Educational Status (Higher Education) and Profession (Graduates, Self-employed, Elite and Artisans). This was premised on the assumption that a significant number of Facebook subscribers have interacted with government agencies electronically before, since all efforts to get details of visitors to the selected agency's website yielded only a few results as only the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) had visitors' counter on their websites. The survey was made available online to respondents for a period of four (4) weeks. Data collected was analysed with a one-sample statistics *t*-test..

Data Presentation

Socio-Demographic Features of the Respondents

As presented in the Table 1, over the four weeks timeframe allotted to the online survey, 13743 responses were received. Out of these, 5624 (40.9%) of the respondents were between 20 - 40 years, while 8117 (59.1%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 41-60 years. This indicates that the respondents were considerably matured and at their service age of 20-60 years and this feat of respondents engendered very detailed and reliable responses for this study. The table equally showed that 3179 (23.1%) of the respondents were female, while 10564 (76.9%) were male. This indicated that there was a difference in the representation of the male and female in the universe of this study. However, this was incapable of skewing the findings because the research is not gender-oriented. More remarkably, the total respondents have attained the tertiary level of education in their respective disciplines. This implies that the respondents have the relatively required academic acumen and exposure for providing basic and accurate answers for the survey questions.

In addition, 54.7% of the respondents were civil/public servant from diverse government ministries, departments and agencies of federal, state and local governments; 24.6% of the respondents were from private organisations with notable interface with government services; and just 7.5% of the respondents were self-employed; while 12.9% of the respondents constituted students in numerous higher institutions of learning across the country. Just a few of the respondents were unemployed. To this end, these selective respondents were considered capable of providing comprehensive information on the e-Government Implementation in Nigeria.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Details

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-40 years	5624	40.9	40.9
41-60 years	8117	59.1	100.0
Below 20 years	2	.0	**100.0**
Total	**13743**	**100.0**	
Sex			
Female	3179	23.1	23.1

Male	10564	76.9	100.0
Total	**13743**	**100.0**	
Academic Qualification			
Tertiary	13743		
Profession			
Civil/Public Servant	7524	54.7	54.7
Private Worker	3394	24.6	79.3
Self-Employed	1032	7.8	87.1
Students	1784	12.9	100.0
Unemployed	9	.0	**100.0**
Total	**13743**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

**Effect of e-Government implementation
on Public Trust in Nigeria**

In establishing the link between e-government and public trust in Nigeria, a number of indicators were adopted and they were; reliability, confidence, recommendation, transparency, and feedback. As presented in Table 2, 7423 (54.0%) of the respondents established that reliability of information provided to them through e-governance is moderate. This is a revelation that e-governance has been obediently reliable in the provision of required information to the citizenry. In addition, they believed that government would always do the right thing through e-governance in service delivery. This is evidenced in the 7685 (55.9%) reacted with moderate rating to this assertion.

It was equally established on the table that there is a direct positive relationship between the government and the populace made possible by e-service delivery, consequent upon 9178 (66.8%) respondents that asserted that there is moderate improvement on their interaction with government on services delivery. However, inferences from people's responses showed that they have confidence in the quality of services rendered to them through e-public service delivery with 8290 (60.3%) of respondents established that the confidence is moderate as there has not being any report of suspicious act through the use of e-public service delivery system.

Furthermore, possibility for recommending e-public service to other citizens who have not used the system to transact with the government was used to measure the effect of e-Government on public trust in the Nigerian government. In their response, 7194 (52.3%) of the respondents admitted that there is high possibility for recommending e-public service to other people, owing to the conveniences enjoyed and its effectiveness in transaction online service. Also, to understand the effect of e-Government on public trust in the Nigerian government, assertion were made to investigate the extent of government online transparency, 6717 representing (48.9%) of the respondents acknowledged that the extent of government online transparency is moderate when compare with the traditional methods of services delivered by government.

It was also observed from the findings that people pay taxes/fees willingly without any pressure mounted on them by the government officials since the proportion of the taxes/fees will be charged with the original payment of services in the course of transaction, with moderate acknowledgement of the assertion by 7501 (54.6%) of the respondents. In addition, to ascertain the trust in the Nigerian government, respondents were asked if willingly they will give feedback to the government on her e-services delivery, 6708 (48.8%) of respondents declared their willingness to give feedback to the government. However, 8111 representing (59.0 %) of the respondents also disclosed their willingness to collaborate with government on e-public service delivery project.

Table 2: Effect of e-Government on Public Trust in the Nigerian Government

S/N	Trust in the Nigerian Government	High f (%)	Low f (%)	Moderate f (%)	No Response f (%)
i.	Reliability of information provided to you	5844 (42.5)	410 (3.0)	7423 (54.0)	- (-)
ii.	Belief that the government will always do the right thing	1251 (9.1)	4741 (34.5)	7685 (55.9)	- (-)
iii.	Improvement on your interaction with government	2432 (17.7)	2067 (15.0)	9178 (66.8)	- (-)
iv.	Confidence in quality of services rendered to you	3533 (25.7)	1854 (13.5)	8290 (60.3)	- (-)
v.	Possibility that you will recommend e-public services to others	7194 (52.3)	1184 (8.6)	5299 (38.6)	- (-)
vi.	Extent of government online transparency	3839 (27.9)	3120 (22.7)	6717 (48.9)	1 (.0)
vii.	Your willingness to pay due taxes/fees to the government without any pressure on you	4893 (35.6)	1282 (9.3)	7501 (54.6)	1 (.0)
viii.	Your willingness to give feedback to the government on her e-services	4636 (33.7)	2332 (17.0)	6708 (48.8)	1 (.0)
ix	Your willingness to partner with government on e-public service delivery project	8111 (59.0)	773 (5.6)	4792 (34.9)	1 (.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Data Analysis and Discussion

The statistical tool used in the analysis of the data is one sample statistics t-test. The alpha level used in the analysis is 5% (i.e. 0.05). This hypothesis is tested on the effect of e-government on public trust in the study area. The t-test result was generated from variables 26 – 28 set out in the questionnaire for this purpose (See, Appendix I).

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis

H_0: e-government services have no significant effect on public trust in Nigeria.

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Grand Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Effect	3	2.14	0.903	0.066

Table 4: One-Sample t-test

	Test Value = 60					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	t_{cv}	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Effect	-4.73	-4.303	2	.000	-57.86	-58.05	-57.78

Using a test value of 60, a t obtained of -4.73 with 2 degree of freedom is significant at 95% confidence level. This is much far away from t critical value of -4.303. There is 0% chance of obtaining an insignificant positive effect on public trust by error. At any level of the three (3) areas of public trust assessed, significant positive effect were somewhat lower at an average of -57.86 than the set standard. Since probability value (0.000) is lesser than alpha level (0.05), this study rejected H_o; and accepted H_i. This therefore implies an acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that e-government

implementations have (t = -4.73, p < 0.05) significant effect on public trust in Nigeria. However, the practical significance is relatively clinical because the $t_{obtained}$ -4.73 is greater than $t_{critical\ value}$ -4.303 under 2 degree of freedom at 5% significance level. This difference further implies that significant effect existed between service delivery and public confidence with practical difference from the null value.

The study also looked into the effect of e-government on public trust in the Nigerian government by engaging variables like reliability of public information, improvement in the relationship of citizens with the state, confidence, service recommendation and transparency.

In the end, the study found that e-government implementations have (t = -4.73, p < 0.05) significant effect on public trust in Nigeria. One of the cardinal essence of government is to deliver public goods while protecting lives and properties of her citizens. Service delivery has therefore remained a solid platform upon which government performance is rated. It is therefore not a mirage that a significant relationship exists between e-government implementation and public trust in Nigeria. In the submissions of Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006; Moti, 2007; Sang & Sunhyuk, 2012; and Parent, Vandabeek & Gemino, 2005, the trust level in the government has been on the decline as public service delivery has similarly continued to deteriorate over the years. These scholars linked service delivery to public trust and confidence by concluding that a symbiotic relationship exists between the duos. That is, when service delivery is efficient and effective, public trust and confidence is boosted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria is a country with a long history of cynicism in which the citizenry exhibited serious doubt in most actions of the government. Many factors, not within the focus of this study, could have been responsible for the situation. However, it has been partly established in the literature that online delivery of public services is capable of engendering transparency and subsequently promoting trust in a nation's government. This study investigated how the online delivery of public services (e-government) has impacted public trust in the Nigerian government. This was done using an electronic survey

conducted with users of online government services. Stemming from the findings, the study concluded that the significant positive relationship is established between electronic public service delivery and trust in government could catalyse promotion of trust in the Nigerian government. Although a considerate improvement is now surfacing in the extent of trust Nigerians have in their government as a direct fallout of the e-government effort, yet the government needs to reinforce this positive scenario by ensuring that service quality is improved upon. This can be achieved by imitating the international best practices in this regard. Through periodic trainings and ICT tool update, a better trust level can be attained.

It, therefore, recommends that electronic delivery of services in the country should be improved upon and extended to other areas not currently covered to earn further trust from the citizens.

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