

The Role of Information Technology in Good Governance and Economic Development of Nigeria

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Abstract— Information Technology (IT) has been said to be a perfect tool for good governance and economic development of any country especially in a developing country like Nigeria and has remain a catalyst of growth for developed countries. This study examines the importance of Information Technology (IT) which is the application of computer and telecommunication equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the settings of a business or other enterprise in creating good governance and economic development of a country. It was discovered on the completion of this study that information technology plays a significant role in promoting good governance and economic development in Nigeria. It was recommended that effective and efficient application of Information technology is indispensable element to good governance and Economic Development.

Keywords— information technology, governace, economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Good governance and economic development have been some of the challenges facing developing nations or the so-called Third World. These nations had adopted various strategies, reforms, policies, development plans and theories in alleviating or combating the problems of underdevelopment that is characterized by bad governance and economic retrogression. To some, the term economic development simply refers to achievement by poor countries of higher levels of real per capita income and improved condition of living for their people, but in a technical sense, economic development refers to a process of economic growth within an economy (UNDP 2003).

Economic development is considered as a process through which a society develops economically as its member's increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment (Rodney, 2011). He, however, argues that development should not be seen purely as an economic affair, but as an overall social process that is dependent upon the outcome of man's efforts to deal with his natural environment.

Economic development was categorized into three; first is the measurement of economic development as regards improved national income spanning a long duration of time (Jhigan, 1980). But this is not a satisfactory definition. This definition fails to take into consideration changes in the growth of the population.

If a rise in the real national income is accompanied by faster growth in population, there will be no economic development. Two - an increase in per capita income of the economy over a long period of time. Most Economists agree on the definition of economic

development in terms of an increase in per capita real income or output.

So, Economic development is a process where the real capital income of a country increases over a long period of time (Meier, 1964).

The relationship between those who are governed and those who govern is referred to as governance. Politically, it is the relationship between citizens and the government and this involves three requirements: (1) to know the present state, (2) to know its destination, and (3) to know the level of progress recorded in the journey.

This perception is akin to gap analysis. Also, there are three areas of decision making involved: who is being governed, who is governing and what resources/assets are to be deployed in the process. Governance as a term is larger than government and it is a decision-making way and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented (UNESCAP, 2009). Also, it is the use of structures of authority, institutions and even collaboration in resources allocation and coordination or control activity in the economy or society (Bell, 2002).

As posited in a comprehensive policy document, UNDP (1997), good governance is characterized by participation, the rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency, transparency (built on the free flow of information), responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, accountability and strategic vision. This implies that, a functional government with stable institutions is good governance.

Although Poor governance threatens not only the countries sociopolitical sustainability but also

environmental and economic sustainability, good governance is not the sole determinant of sustainable development but it sure makes a difference. According to Easterly (2006), poorly governed countries are poor countries and that good governance tends to come together in packages so it is hard to tell which factor causes economic development.

Advances in Information technology provide beneficial effects on governance, as the increased performance and availability at a reduced cost of microelectronics, fibre optics, voice and video compression, fast-packet switching and high-density storage technology could be utilized to make public administration more efficient at a very reduced cost. Also, technology convergence due to digitalization, wideband transmission, compression technologies, and standards development lends support for the low-cost provision of public services such as health care and education, while democratic governance pursuit is encouraged by a nation's access to a much greater diversity of communication sources and network designs. This is expedited by communication functions and services unbundling due to the emergence of competing technologies, the dispersal of intelligence through diverse communication networks, the demands of enormous users, and the establishment of competitive markets.

Similarly, increased mobility and portability arising from distributed intelligence and innovations in wireless technologies such as satellite receivers, cellular telephony, radio paging, private branch exchange equipment, and local area and wide area networks also offer an abundant environment for nurturing good governance (Robin and Uta, 1998).

Information Technology promotes good governance in three basic ways: (1) by increasing transparency, information, and accountability; (2) by facilitating accurate decision-making and public participation; and (3) by enhancing the efficient delivery of public goods and services. This is to say that information about government operations is a basic requirement in fostering transparency in governance. The rights and privileges of citizens can be easily communicated to them by civil societies as well as government with the aid of Information technology. Government websites allow the citizens to send their reactions and feedback on issues that affect them. For example, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment website provides the public with a seamless data collection process geared towards service delivery and information-driven support to build a better playing field for commerce in Nigeria, entries where the consumers, exporters, and business people are allowed to ask

questions, provide suggestions, and file complaints. More informed citizenry is fostered when government is running transparently.

The above shows that the increased ability of government agencies and citizens to interact provides a favourable setting where more accurate and appropriate decisions can be made (Yuljose, 2000). The quantity of paper used by the government is reduced greatly by using database and updated information systems. As their processes and documents become automated, the administrative maintenance cost is reduced. Transaction time with the bureaucracy is shortened, efficient service provision which entails having the right services delivered to the right people at the right time becomes more enhanced.

The benefit of the IT revolution is the opportunity now open to Nigerian businesses to access a wider global market through e-commerce. As e-commerce opens up the Nigerian market to foreign enterprises, the relatively affluent Nigerian consumer with access to the Internet is given much greater choice with regard to desired products and services. Contrary to the situation in advanced countries where transport and communications systems for delivery of goods and services are very established, this basic infrastructure is practically non-existent in some parts of Nigeria. Where they are available, they are generally slow and expensive. The communications and information delivery capability of IT products and related services serves all sectors of society. Other sectors such as education, health, social policy, commerce, government, banks, trading, communications, science and technology have all benefited (Gidado, 1999).

Available resources relating to different aspects of usage and application are interlinked and can be accessed. In most cases, these links also direct users to other source of relevant information on the subject of choice. There is no gainsaying that there is complementary relationship between IT and economic development. IT networks opens up opportunities that enable participation across the globe in a seamless and most versatile way. This is because, the platform provided by IT removes some of the hindrance to collaboration such as the need to travel abroad to meet with collaborators physically, the waiting period to get mails across to partners and the need to harmonize ideas from different part of the world which was greatly affected by time differences in the pre-IT days.

Nigeria's economic growth (even down to the grassroots) is today enhanced by the availability of ITs that make immediate interaction with contacts possible,

provide smooth access to support services and make access to customers a reality.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria as the giant of African has been striving hard to continue playing a leadership role in Africa with a view to ensuring the sustainability of this medal. The fact that information technology is widely regarded as an invaluable intervention of this modern time, because of its attributes such as accuracy, high speed performance, reliability and capability have made it possible for its applicability to all human endeavours including governance and economic development. This is an indication of the urgent need to pay more prominent attention to the involvement of Information Technology in governance and economic development in Nigerian.

This study is specifically set out to consider comprehensively the function of information technology as a catalyst for good governance and economic development. It also examines the implication and challenges of Information Technology on the development of the Nigeria economy.

Research Questions

This study provides answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent does Information Technology improve good governance and economic development?
2. How efficient is the Information Technology in performing its role as a catalyst to good governance and Economic Development in Nigeria?
3. What are the constraints to effective utilisation of Information Technology as an instrument in improving good governance and economic development?

RESEARCH METHOD

As the study specifically focuses on the assessment of the position of Information Technology as a catalyst for Good Governance and Economic Development in Nigeria, a descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This research design entails collection of relevant data about the problem under investigation, with the aim of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determining the relationships that exist between the identified variables in the study. Based on the scope of study, the study was carried out in Funtua Local Government Area of Lagos state and Katsina Local Government of Katsina state. A structured and faced validated questionnaire titled Information Technology as a catalyst for Good Governance and Economic Development Questionnaire was designed for the study. The questionnaires were administered to forty members of staff in each of the two sampled Local Government Area, making a total of eight (80) questionnaire administered and returned.

RESULTS

Table 1: To what extent does Information Technology improve good governance and economic development?

Question Number	Total Responses	Favourable		Unfavourable		Neutral	
		Fig	%	Fig	%	Fig	%
1	80	70	87.5	6	7.5	4	5
2	80	73	91.3	3	3.7	4	5
3	80	72	90	4	5	4	5
4	80	70	87.5	4	5	6	7.5
Total	320	285	356.3	17	21.2	18	22.5
Average	80	71	89	4.25	5.3	4.5	5.62

Source: Survey, 2021

Table 2: How efficient is the Information Technology in performing its role as a catalyst to good governance and Economic Development in Nigeria?

Question Number	Total Responses	Efficiently Performed		Inefficiently Performed		Neutral	
		Fig	%	Fig	%	Fig	%
5	80	75	93.7	5	6.3	-	-
6	80	75	93.7	4	5	1	1.3
7	80	74	92.5	3	3.7	2	2.5
8	80	76	95	4	5	1	1.3
9	80	70	87.5	4	5	6	7.5
Total	400	370	462.4	20	25	10	12.6

Average	80	74	92.4	4	5	2	2.5
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Source: Survey, 2021

Table 3: What are the constraints to effective utilisation of Information Technology as an instrument in improving good governance and economic development?

Question Number	Total Responses	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
		Fig	%	Fig	%	Fig	%
10	80	78	97.5	2	2.5	-	-
11	80	80	100	-	-	-	-
12	80	80	100	-	-	-	-
13	80	75	93.7	5	6.3	-	-
14	80	73	91.3	3	3.7	4	5
15	80	60	75	20	25	-	-
Total	480	446	557.5	30	37.5	4	5
Average	80	74.3	92.9	5	6.2	0.6	0.8

Source: Survey, 2021

DISCUSSION

The result of the first research question which seeks to know the extent to which information technology improve good governance and economic development shows that an average of 89% were favoured, 5.3% unfavoured while 5.6% neutral. The affirmation of the question is not surprising as respondents believed without hesitation that understanding and application of Information Technology serves as a tool for improving good governance and economic development.

As clearly indicated in Table two, most of the respondents (93.7%) affirmed that Information Technology has effectively performed its lofty role as a catalyst to good governance and Economic Development in Nigeria by creating opportunities for the federal government to communicate with other arms of government and the citizen through e-mail, social network, mailing list, chat room; providing easier access to more extensive and current information. Moreover, over 93% of the local government staff declared that Information technology (IT) is being used to improve data management and data sharing, planning and decision support, service delivery, and more

Information technologies are now used at all levels of government service: local, state, national and international. Application areas affected by government mandates to improve e-government service include healthcare and safety; law enforcement, security, and justice; education; land use; and many others. Information technology is being used to increase public access to information, to provide more convenient and timely transaction services, and to increase citizen participation in the establishment of government regulations and other processes. Social, public, and legal issues (such as privacy, confidentiality, trust and

security) are evolving from governments’ new ways of doing business.

As clearly indicated in Table three, effective utilisation of Information Technology as an instrument in improving good governance and economic development in Nigeria is being hampered by lots of constraints. Such constraints include inadequate computer trained and certificated staff in most IT unit with 97.5% positive response; irregular power supply with 100% positive response; prohibitive cost of IT equipment (100%) and lack of relevant software (93.7%). Also, 91.3% of the respondents declared that poor financial support has been a serious constraint to effective utilization of Information Technology as an instrument in improving good governance and economic development in Nigeria. However, the respondents held the view that the introduction and application of Information Technology to governance contributes to high level of fraud within the system.

CONCLUSION

Good governance and Economic development are some of the majors and most compelling goals of any country in the world and consequently the Nigeria government. Information Technology has effectively performed its lofty role as a catalyst to good governance and Economic Development in Nigeria by creating opportunities for the federal government to communicate with other arms of government and the citizen with less effort and vice versa. This study has sought to appraise the role of Information Technology as a catalyst for good governance and economic development in Nigeria. The findings indicated that Information Technology have significantly impacted on governance and economic development in Nigeria. Also, if the various problems hindering effective utilisation of Information Technology are properly

ameliorated such impact would grow considerably in no time. Undoubtedly, Information Technology would become a strong instrument to good governance and economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusion the following recommendations were made:

- Government should embrace the use of Information Technology so as to have a great impact on good governance and economic development of the country.
- Adequate funds should be provided to initiate, develop, promote, review and implement Information Technology policies in governance.
- Adequate training and certification should be given to all personnel in most Information Technology unit to bring about an improvement in the utilization of Information Technology. In this period of economic recession, the price of Information Technology equipment and materials will continue to be astronomical. It becomes highly imperative for government to subsidize the price of these equipment and materials.

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