KAYODE WAKILI OLAWOYIN

Department of Political Science and International Relations, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

X-raying Citizenship Participation through the Lens of ICT: Quest for Democratic Governance and Development in Nigeria

The study looks at citizen participation through the lens of information and communication technology. The questionnaire was administered using a mixed approach method on local council ICT officers, registered voters, local non-governmental community and youth leaders, and key informant interviews with officers of ICT organisations. For the quantitative design, a questionnaire was given to 418 respondents, and 18 essential informants were purposefully interviewed. The data were analysed with SPSS; tables were used for correlation co-efficient analysis, and content analysis presented the interview responses. ICT and public participation in municipal governance had a positive correlation of +0.629, according to the findings. The study finds that ICT tools will improve local governance in rural areas for long-term democratic good governance and development.

Keywords: ICT, Citizens Participation, Good Governance, Local Governance, Democratic Governance and Development.

Introduction

Many intellectual efforts on governance studies have reverberating over the years. Thus, making the democratic governance in Nigeria, as well as most other African and third-world countries, rife with inappreciable and high levels of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, which are visible in so many areas of human endeavour (Misuraca 2007; Nasser, Gage & John 2005; Olowu 2004; Mundy & Sultan 2001). Poor service delivery and supply of public goods are examples of the consequent effect, as are obstacles to not only openness, but also accountability in public affairs, municipal public institutions, and, ultimately, many 'states' underdevelopment statuses (see Onimode 2000; Yagboyaju 2004; Yagboyaju 2011). Other empirical studies (Onuoha 2005; Kukah 2012; Akinlo 2015; Adeyeye 2016 and Aransi 2017) claim that official corruption, high-handedness and insensitivity of political leaders and public office holders, lack of citizens' participation and engagement (sin qua non to democratic sustainability), and other factors have hampered progressive governance not only in Nigeria but across the African continent, making sustainable democratic and developmental aspirations impossible.

Meanwhile, the relevance of information and communication technology (hereafter, ICT) in

governance processes and integration toward the promotion of global socio-political and economic development cannot be overstated. With the continual flow of information, increased human rights, and poverty reduction,have promote socio-eceonomic and political culture of most developed countries. (see Kwami 2013; Adesola 2012; Adibe & Orji 2012; and Kajogbola 2004 amongst others). Investing in e-government service delivery is warranted, of course, because it allows for more citizen participation, ease, and cost savings—all of which have long been elusive in the service delivery of many African countries. In one case, mobile technology to increase citizen participation and civil society engagement in decision-making has become a more relevant and novel occurrence in recent years. ICT-enabled mobile phones and applications are widely welcomed not just by governments, but also by NGOs as a powerful weapon for citizen engagement in politico-social debates due to their ease of use, cost-effectiveness, and availability.

These days, ICT has aided e-governance in a variety of ways. For example, it has served as an administrative tool for delivering transparency and efficiency and effectiveness to local government administrations and acquiescently completing transactions. Meanwhile, it could be demonstrated to be quite effective at eliminating corruption and a valuable instrument for that goal, especially in developing nations where studies have shown that corruption perception index values are still very high, particularly in Nigeria. Kenya's Electronic Graft Management (EGM) plan, according to Iwasokun, referenced in Nasser, Gage, and John (2005), is proof of effective ICT use to combat corruption. The EGM initiative used this internet infrastructure to provide a corruption reporting facility in six towns, with guarantees for user anonymity, reports confidently sent to EGM centres for further processing and analysis, and follow-up by relevant authorities failsafe.

Furthermore, ICT advances service delivery, allowing citizens to obtain cheaper, faster, and more efficient services. Electronic services, which use ICT to provide information and conduct transactions, have the advantage of allowing citizens to obtain information and conduct transactions 24 hours a day, seven days a week, especially for some essential grassroots administrative transactions, such as tenement rate collections, local permit requests, rate and tax file collection and submission, and motor vehicle licencing requests. All of these things invariably improve public participation as well as solid grassroots governance. However, the extent to which ICT can improve citizen involvement and good governance in the Nigerian setting, particularly at the local level, is questionable, given the literature's abundance of examples of political apathy and bad governance at the local level. This dreadful scenario influenced the study's decision to look into the relationship between ICT use and public participation in local administration in the Nigerian Southwest.

In Southwestern Nigeria, we believe that effective use of ICT is critical to tackling problems of bad local government and citizen participation in politics. As a result, the article investigates the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on citizen participation in grassroots governance in Southwestern Nigeria. This is in order to advance knowledge on the relationship between ICT and local government in Southwestern Nigeria. This article is divided into four sections. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks are covered in the following parts. The methodology, empirical data analysis, findings, debate, and conclusion are all included in this part.

Conceptualising Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Governance, and Good Governance

In this study, ICT is defined as a group of related technologies defined by their functional usage in communication and information access, of which the internet is an embodiment that enables information sharing across political boundaries; it is a collection of activities facilitated by electronic means, including information processing, transmission, manipulation, distortion, and display. Technology is use to disseminate, segment, gather, and communicate information via computers and connected networks. ICT includes mobile technology, social media, e-platforms, and mobile applications. The internet is a worldwide computer network that can be optimised both technically and functionally in this study. However, in the context of its function in local governance in Southwest Nigeria, it is viewed as a network for people who use computers, mobile technology, and social media to access large amounts of information, revolutionising information access for individuals and businesses.

The term ICT, according to Chisenga (2006) broadens the definition by adding that "it includes rapidly evolving telecommunication technologies (such as telephony, cable, satellite, TV and radio, computer-mediated conferencing, video conferencing), as well as digital technologies" (e.g. Information networks/Internet, intranets and extranets, computers, World Wide Web) and applications software. New Communication Technologies (NCTs) and/or New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs) are also terms interchangeable with ICT, to talk about hardware, communication gadgets, equipment or facilities that have restructured, improved, eased and exchanged ideas and various kinds of information among people within or across distant boundaries/frontiers" (Akpomuvie 2010).

According to Nwodu (2003) in K.W. Olawoyin and K.O. Lamidi (2019) ICT is a generic name for "numerous communication hardware adopted in ensuring instant dissemination of information and social values across the globe". It includes personal information processing systems, mobile phones, and the internet, as well as image technology, electronic mail, cable television, and digital broadcasts. Web-enabled, stand-alone, and many other networks fall within the ICT category, but so do technologies. Corroborating the aforesaid, Kajogbola (2004) further emphasises that ICT provides inexpensive but speedy and convenient communication means for the citizenry. The adoption of technologies (ICT) by many countries in different sectors of their economy has culminated in a positive and direct impact on the organisations' efficiency, productivity and service delivery. ICT usage improves services and promotes sustainable grassroots development not only in governance but in any organisation; thus, today's business environment witnesses so many changes (Halison 2011). Teaching, learning, and research are facilitated in an academic setting, and information distribution is accelerated.

Essentially, description of governance as either good or bad, according to Adesola (2012) in K. W. Olawoyin and K. O. Lamidi (2019), entails considerate knowledge of the essence of the political entity, which is not only entrenched in the constitution but also a function of the state's goals, ideals and the nature of current political opprobrium confronting such state or political entity. According to Amoako (2003), governance is a "process that is employed to achieve the noble end of the state, one of which is through the art of governing people within a given terri-

tory or a state". Consisting of two essential aspects of the state, namely the state structure and legislative procedures and those of the executive and judicial and administrative bodies at all levels of government. Significantly, governance is based on a functioning state. Governance is defined as the control of activities by all means necessary to achieve a set of desired objectives. In a political sense, the government is a more complicated undertaking.

Also, Adeyeye (2016) in K. W. Olawoyin and K. O. Lamidi (2019) explains that "the word 'governance' is as old as 'government', and the issue revolving around it is an increasingly crucial phenomenon in all sectors and at all organisational levels—social, economic, cultural, administrative and political". The etymology of both words are traceable to the 14th-century French words, "*governance"* and "*government"*. Initially, the connotations were considered to be similar and interchangeable, with each referring to acts and/or how governance is conducted. However, by the 16th century, the government had come to signify "a method by which something is governed," and by the early 18th century, it had come to mean "a governing power." Furthermore, according to ILyIN (2013) referenced in Adeyeye (Ibid), the phrase governance became marginalised over time, and by the 19th century, it had become an incipient of archaism.

In a similar view, Kauzya (2000) in K.W Olawoyin and K.O. Lamidi (2019) It was also pointed out that the term "governance" comes from the Greek language and means "steering": "… A ship, for example, is more than just about staying afloat and moving forward, backward, or sideways. It is the awareness and comprehension of the direction and confirmation that the ship is always sailing in that direction. A skipper may only claim competent seamanship for everyone on board and those waiting for it to arrive when the ship arrives where it is anticipated".

As a result, 'governance' is an act of steering a people's development as a multifaceted compound situation of institutions, systems, structures, processes, procedures, practises, relationships, and leadership behaviour in the exercise of political, social, economic, and managerial or administrative authority in the running of either private or public affairs. The exercise of this authority in the interest of the governed, their livelihood, and participation as the driving force can thus be referred to as "Good Governance".

In the intervening time, 'governance' in Okot-Uma (2004) expression is conceived from Lasswell's traditional definition of politics as who gets what, when and how, and perhaps how much better still. As a result, the Estonian notion of governance comes to mind, which may have a lot to do with the authoritatively allotted and dispersion of values in society, according to Estonian conceptualisation, which is primarily political. Similarly, the World Bank (WB) cited in Odunuga (2003) "view governance as, how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". The process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources; the form of a political regime; and the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions are the three critical aspects of governance, according to the World Bank.

Correspondingly, the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) cited in Odunuga (2003) perceived governance and government as being synonymous. As a result, it sees governance as a complex set of processes, methods, relationships, and institutions through which individuals and groups exercise their legal rights, express their interests, fulfil their commitments and obligations, and resolve their differences.

Scholars have agreed that all these attributes or elements are effective instruments of governance as they provide the necessary anchor and justifications for legal and moral to the government (Lipchak 2002; Okot-Uma 2004). Thus, governance includes decision-making processes, policy formulation and implementation capacity, institutional and structural arrangements, personnel development, information flows cum style and nature of political leadership within a political system. Similarly, UNESCAP (2010), cited in Nwelih and Ukohoha (2012) and World Bank (2005), identified eight (8) major characteristics of good governance: It is participatory, consensus-oriented, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, accountable, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Assurances that corruption is minimised, minority viewpoints are considered, and the voices of societies most vulnerable are heard in decision-making processes. It is also relevant to society's current and future requirements. As a result, it is critical to explain the aspects of good governance outlined by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (2010).

Theoretical Framework

The Karl W. Deutsch Communication Theory is used in this research. The idea focuses on government in general (albeit this research focuses on local government), the electorate, and politicians as decision-making bodies based on multiple information flow. That is, information flowing from the masses, media, and groups (ethnic, religious, pressure group, or professionals— Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities, (ASUU) The Nigeria Union of Teachers, (NUT) National Union of Local Government Employees, (NULGE) Market Women Association, pressure groups, political parties, local government officials, and so on) are all channels or means through which information flows, and serve as the foundation of grassroots governance. Communication theory places a strong focus on 'change .' It is the flow of information that causes the appropriate receiver to change. That is, the decision to participate in political processes or not, and whether or not to be patriotic, based on previous political experiences and exposure of electorates in the study area, which has been marked by violence, rigging, electoral fraud, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, and other sharp practises by the political class, in tandem with poor local service delivery by public-office holders.

According to Deutsch's communication theory, government or politics directs and coordinates human activity toward achieving predetermined goals, and the decision is seen as the essential mechanism through which these processes materialise. It should be noted that, in contrast to the neutral effects of a decision, communication theory is primarily concerned with the process by which decisions are produced. This, however, implies that this theory places a greater focus and value on information flows and coordination than on the information's final destination. As a result, it can be claimed that this theory is primarily concerned with problems of dynamics and information flow, which connects steering with a movement that serves as the fundamental unit of analysis.

This theory is helpful in evaluating the functions of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for local administration in Southwestern Nigeria. The promotion and

understanding of ICT in Nigeria, which emphasises information, communication, and technology, will encourage effective citizen participation in political processes and expose public office-holder activities at the grassroots. Fundamentally, increasing accountability improves political communication, which fosters or promotes excellent local governance through the use of ICT (e-governance, mobile technology, and social media).

This underscores the fact that the idea of ICT to engender good local governance was borne out of the quest or demands and needs from various groups, elites and media and so on, as well as for political development and democratic consolidation in the study area. The internet, primarily through social media, allows citizens to have adequate access to information that can enhance their participation in politics and, at the same time, promote good local service delivery. For instance, the theory holds that every electorate is a decision-maker who makes or takes a decision on available information.

Linking this to how the electorate participates in the politics of their local populace in Southwestern states, the theory could be used to describe voters' behaviour in terms of their voting decision. For instance, voters decide on whom to support or vote for based on available information about the candidates; if there is no adequate information, they may not participate in the election, and this, in the long run, will lead to political apathy. On the other hand, the citizens must keep abreast of adequate information and should constantly engage local public office holders to hold them accountable in office. All these depend on the process and steering (flows) of information in a political system; if there is no room for adequate flows of information reaching the public on political events within the local populace, there will be little or no accountability in service delivery, little or no information about the electoral system and this to a more significant extent will affect the good local governance, specifically the southwestern states and the country at large.

Lastly, the interactive communication opportunity that the Internet (ICT) provides makes it an essential tool for political communication emphasised by Karl W. Deutsch. This, to a large extent, will help to stimulate political participation through unhindered political communication, transparency, accountability (through various e-platforms such as e-payment for the collection of taxes and e-administration) and good local governance for sustainability and development.

Methodology

This study relied on primary data gathered through key informant interviews and questionnaire distribution among elected political office holders, local party officials, NULGE, and executive members of ICT-oriented Non-Governmental Organisations. The study golas and significance of the study is to ascertain how ICT tools can be use improve local governance in rural areas for long-term democratic good governance and development. The reserch adopted descriptive design which involves the systematic collection, presentation,and analysis of data he in order to elicit information on the connection between information and communications technology (ICT) and governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria, based on their expertise and knowledge on the usage of New Technology within the governace space at the grassroots level

in the study area, 460 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the category of the above mentioned respondents. However, 418 copies of the questionnaire were recovered from the field, accounting for 90.8 per cent of the total number of questionnaires distributed. Additional data was gathered through the use of in-dept interview with 18 key informant taken from ICT officers of non-government organisations (Revoder, Tracker, and BudgIT) who have a thorough awareness of the topic at hand. The questionnaire was administered using a mixed approach method on local council ICT officers, registered voters, local non-governmental community and youth leaders, and key informant interviews with officers of ICT organisations. Appropriate sampling technique was adopted in the course of the research work with the opportunities to select respondents for the sudy of this resech work by choosing purposeful and judgmental sampling. The data were analysed with SPSS; tables were used for correlation co-efficient analysis, and content analysis presented the interview responses. The hypotensis of the resaech was tested using Spearman's correlation coefficient with the statistical tool utilised in the analysis of the data. 5% (i.e. 0.05).which indicated that ICT and public participation in municipal governance had a positive correlation of +0.629, according to the findings.

The hypotensis was tested using correlation analysis between the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. According to Table 3, Spearman's correlation coefficient was positive (+0.629), significant at $p<0.05$. The positive coefficient indicated an approximate sixty-three (63%) positive influence between the ICT and citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. The null hypothesis was rejected since the probability value (0.000) was less than the alpha level (0.05), and the study indicated that ICT has a substantial influence on citizens' participation in government at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria ($r = 0.629$, $p < 0.05$). As a result of the Spearman coefficient, three-fifths of the changes in citizen participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria are linked to ICT platforms' functions. The positive link also demonstrated that the more the influence of ICT tools, the more incredible citizens' participation in governance in Southwestern Nigeria's local areas.

Influence of ICT on Citizens' Participation in Governance at the Local Level in Southwestern Nigeria

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered in the evaluation of the respondent's idea/knowledge about the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. The Table reveals the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents, as well as the mean and standard deviation of each of the assertions set out to achieve this objective. Its responses/values were organised using the Likert scale of measurements: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

On the first assertion in Table 2, an aggregate of 357 representing 85.9% of the respondents agreed that the use of ICT has significantly influenced more citizens participating in the political process at the local level. However, about 52 (12.4%) of the respondents expressed disagreement with the same assertion ($\overline{X} = 3.14$, SD = 0.906). It could be inferred from this outcome that ICT

Table 1: Evaluation of the Respondent's Idea/Knowledge about the Influence of ICT on Citizens' Participation in Governance at the Local Level in Southwestern Nigeria

S/N	Assertions	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Strongly Disagree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	No Response f (%)	Descriptive Statistics	
							Mean Value	Standard Deviation
I.	The use of ICT has significantly influenced more citizens to participate in the political process at the local level.	157 (37.6)	202 (48.3)	26 (6.2)	26 (6.2)	7 (1.7)	3.14	0.906
ii.	The use of mobile communication, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Have influenced the massive involvement of voters.	152 (36.4)	225 (53.8)	20 (4.8)	14 (3.3)	7 (1.7)	3.20	0.811
iii.	Voters and citizens tend to be more familiar and closer to the political leaders and recognise their leaders through ICT.	128 (30.6)	189 (45.2)	58 (13.9)	36 (8.6)	7 (1.7)	2.94	0.969
iv.	ICT has enhanced proper scrutiny and counting of votes after the election.	121 (28.9)	205 (49.0)	48 (11.5)	33 (7.9)	11 (2.6)	2.94	0.977
v.	In southwestern Nigeria, citizens' participation and involvement in the decision-making process in the governance of their localities has been enhanced by the ICT.	110 (26.3)	203 (48.6)	56 (13.4)	38 (9.1)	11 (2.6)	2.87	0.991
vi.	Electoral frauds and the indifferent attitude of the masses towards political participation can be checked by a well-thought-out ICTs platform in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria.	113 (27.0)	226 (54.1)	40 (9.6)	31 (7.4)	8 (1.9)	2.97	0.914
vii.	Effective use of ICT in politics, government and public institutions are faced with poor funding.	148 (35.4)	190 (45.5)	46 (11.0)	23 (5.5)	11 (2.6)	3.06	0.959
viii.	Citizens can become politically active and involved (participatory) more in politics through ICT in the local governance of Southwestern Nigeria.	118 (28.2)	213 (51.0)	46 (11.0)	32 (7.7)	9 (2.2)	2.95	0.945

Source: Field Survey, 2018

use has been widely observed as an avenue for citizens' awareness and involvement in the political process at the local level.

The second assertion was, however, set out to confirm the stated findings above; it was asserted that the use of mobile communication, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,

etc. Have influenced the massive involvement of voters. Reacting to this, 128 (30.6%) and 189 (45.2%) strongly agreed and ordinarily agreed, respectively to this assertion ($\overline{X}$ =3.20, SD = 0.811). This, however, is empirical justification for the proclaimed increase in the level of citizens' awareness and voters' education as well as participation at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

Also, voters and citizens tend to be more familiar and closer to political leaders and recognise their leaders through ICT. In respect to this third assertion, an aggregate of 317 (75.8%) respondents fell in agreement with this statement ($\overline{X}$ =2.94, SD = 0.969). It thus interprets that using ICT tools is a veritable means for politicians to draw voters more closely with them. However, respondents were asked to agree or disagree on whether the ICT enhanced proper scrutiny and counting of votes after the election. In their response to this fourth assertion, 121 (28.9%) respondents strongly agreed, and 205 (49.0%) respondents agreed, while 48 (11.5%) respondents ordinarily disagreed, and 33 (7.9%) respondents strongly disagreed. However, about 11 representing 2.6% of the respondents did not react to this assertion ($\overline{X}$ =2.94, SD = 0.977). The interpretation of this distribution revealed that more respondents still tended towards an agreement with this assertion.

On the fifth variable of the Table above, an aggregate of 313 (74.9%) agreed that in Southwestern Nigeria, ICT had enhanced citizens' participation and involvement in the decision-making process in the governance of their localities. Nonetheless, 94 (22.5%) of the respondents though, disagreed with the assertion ($\overline{X}$=2.87, SD = 0.991). This data distribution implies that ICT is an observation instrument for enhancing civic participation in the decision-making process. Existing studies have claimed that electoral frauds and the indifferent attitude of the masses towards political participation can be checked by well thought out ICTs platform in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. Reacting to this sixth predisposition, a summation of 339, representing 81.1% of the respondents, concurred with this position. This is evidenced by the strength of the mean value, which tended towards agreement than disagreement ($\overline{X}$ =2.97, SD = 0.914).

The seventh assertion stated that effective use of ICT in politics, government and public institutions are faced with poor funding. Responding to this assertion, three (3) categories of data distribution were observed: 80.9% of the respondents fell in the agreement category, about 16.5% of the respondents maintained an opposite position to the assertion, while just 11 (2.6%) of the respondents were indifferent ($\overline{X}$ =3.06, SD = 0.959). The above results connote that poor finance impedes the practical usage of ICT in local governance. Also, on the eighth assertion, it was thus revealed that citizens could become politically active and involved (participate) more in politics through ICT in local governance of Southwestern Nigeria. It was therefore revealed by the descriptive survey that a majority of 331 (79.2%) respondents unanimously agreed to this assertion ($\overline{X}$ = 2.95, SD = 0.945). It could be inferred that, although only the usage of ICT cannot enhance active political participation, it can engender more activeness and reactiveness in the citizens towards the political space and governance at the local level.

Equally, results from the interview aptly confirmed the quantitative results, specifically in the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. For most respondents, ICT has a tremendous influence on citizens' participation in governance at the local government level. Of more revealing was the belief, by respondents, that more

often than not, the use of ICT has made more local youth who ordinarily may not have an interest in governance now develop a genuine interest in governance at the local government level. However, some few respondents believe that ICT has no real influence on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

A look at this kind of response from the respondents suggests that their response was borne out of the higher illiteracy level of the grassroots, considering the low rate of ICT use in some rural local governments. In line with the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level, the submission of one of the respondents, a Director of Budget and Planning, in one of the selected states in the Study Area was spectacularly more revealing. For him:

The 2017 service delivery with the use of ICT was more effective than in 1999 due to more citizen participation because day in day out, there is an improvement in the service delivery via ICT usage. For example, as we are in Ile-Ife, now, we can easily send a message via the internet to other local governments in Osun state through the use of ICT and perhaps mobile communications through mobile phone, Short Messages System SMS, WhatsApp to mention but a few, this was minimal and not possible to some extent before in 1999. These invariably allow us to have a strong 'say' in the local level governance in Southwestern Nigeria. (Key Informant Response 2018)

A critical look at the respondent's submission above shows that in the true sense, ICT has had no small influence on the participation of citizens in local governance. This is because the people can report poor service delivery, lack of accountability, corruption and many other traits of bad governance using just a mobile phone. The use of Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook, ICT tools or platforms have engaged no small amount of people in governance, including local governance. This view had earlier been affirmed by Ajayi and Adesote (2015), Odalonu (2015) and Makinde, Hassan and Olaiya, (2016). They revealed that the continuous use of ICT tools (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) At the local level had encouraged more citizens to be involved and participate in governance.

Similarly, in a bid to show the connection between ICT and citizens' participation in local governance, A respondent who represented one of the Chairmen of the selected Local Government in Southwestern Nigeria equally submits that, *"we are in a global village, the use of ICT has helped us to reach people and to know their view and opinions concerning a particular government policy and action"* (Key Informant Response 2018).

This view was further affirmed by another interviewee, a President of Community Development Association in one of the selected states, who averred that:

In the past, information was complicated, but now that we have social media, information is easily accessible to us all 24 hours a day and seven days a week seamlessly. From here, you can pass information through social media on current political issues, and someone in London can hear you within a second. In fact, with the use of these social media, Nigeria political culture has changed such that in the past, the campaign was usually done from one place to another, candidates and political parties will be going from one place to another. But now on media, you can just post who you are, the position you are vying for, the reason you are vying for that position and your manifesto. Somebody in London and Abeokuta can be reading at the same time. This is one of the advantages of ICT via social media in influencing political discussion and election in Nigeria (Key Informant Response 2018).

The initial assertion shows that through social media, which is an ICT tool or platform, more people have been engaged in governance, especially local governance. For instance, people through relevant ICT tools participate in governance by sending short messages through their mobile phones to the appropriate authority, while some have been engaged in holding public officers more accountable for their duties. The fear of being photo-shot by citizens has made many government workers and even local governments deliver on good governance. This goes to show that ICT use has had a significant influence on 'citizens' participation in governance.

Corroborating this view, the Confidential Secretary for the ruling Political Party, All Progressive Congress (APC) in one of the selected states affirmed that: The use of mobile communication and social media has influenced the massive involvement of voters in political discussions and elections in Ogun state. For instance, using electronic media in the electioneering process, people get first-hand information regarding party politics. Today, there are impromptu meetings involving the APC caucus, and as the confidential secretary, I have to use the What app platform to communicate the message to the concerned members. And before you know it, members arrive at the party state secretariat for the meeting. That is the power of ICT in political participation (Key Informant Response 2018).

A thorough analysis of the above (from the respondents mentioned above) on the influence of ICT on citizens' participation shows that ICT has had a strong influence on the participation of citizens in governance. Furthermore, of note are the revelations of these respondents on how the use of ICT by citizens' awakens slumbering government from sleep and make government deliver on their promises which in the long run enhance good governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

However, it is also observed that the views of the respondents can aver to be entirely consistent with results of findings in Adesola (2012), Adeyeye (2016), Nwelih and Ukohoha (2012) and Kwami, (2013), which showed that there is a strong link between ICT usage and widespread participation of citizens in governance, including local government level. The submission of one of the respondents, a Deputy Director (Software and Applications) Science and Technology Ministry, in one of the selected states, representing the commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, specifically buttressed the findings found in Kwami (2013) and Adeyeye (2016). For him, the influence of ICT on citizens participation in governance is not limited to only voting, engaging in decision pieces of machinery of government, but includes public criticism of government policies, participating in governance through representation, holding public officers accountable, advocating for effective and efficient service delivery at the local level and participating in all government activities. In conjunction with the influence of ICT on citizens' participation, while stating further, the correspondent specifically argued that: Social media has changed the dimension of election and voting processes because people can now express their political views on social media. Even people go to the extent of posting election results from their polling units on social media, so they play a kind of intermediary role and give people first-hand information. So the use of social media has changed the electioneering process at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria (Key Informant Response 2018).

From the submission above, it can be inferred that more citizens get involved in governance at the local level through the social media platform of an ICT. Social media form an integral part

of an ICT deployed by citizens in the assessment of governance both at the higher and lower level of governments in Nigeria. The youth now uses social media to evaluate government programmes and rate government performance in terms of good governance. By so doing, the youth participate in governance at all levels of government.

In a similar vein, another respondent's submission was also very revealing, as he pointedly argued that: Politicians can use the use of mobile communication to campaign to the people; through it, they tell the public the program they have for them, their program, their manifesto, their campaign point, so that people can come to see them one on one and ask questions about them and I think with that it can influence their chances in the election. When people hear what they have for them and know these people mean business, definitely with that, they can work for them (Key Informant Response 2018).

While a respondent, NULGE Chairman in one of the selected states, believes that social media encourage citizens' participation in governance, he believes that mobile phone allows politicians to campaign to the citizens, who in turn assess the validity of their promises on the mobile phone. As citizens were able to see and make contributions by asking questions on the spot from politicians for clearer clarifications on proposed promises, they were more engaged in governance using mobile phones.

However, despite the enormous responses supporting the nexus between ICT and citizens' participation in governance at the local level, very few of them believed that ICT has no influence on citizens participation in governance and that even when it does, Nigerian politicians do not allow the peoples' views count let alone their participation in governance at the local level. Few other respondents criticise poor access to the use of ICT at the local rural level as stumbling blocks to citizens' participation in governance.

The response of one of the respondents, the Head of Administration Department in one of the selected local governments, clearly shows that poor access to ICT prevents citizens' involvement in governance. He specifically reveals how rural local governments in Ogun State were technically denied the right to participate in governance at the local level as a result of poor access to social media and poor internet services. While some have access to mobile phones, they lack the requisite skills and knowledge to operate them; it is only used for receiving and making calls. This, according to him, is peculiar to rural farmers and artisans in Ipokia Local government area. More importantly, the submission of a Women Leader of the leading political party in one of the selected states confirms the fear expressed by the earlier position of the previous respondents. For her: In Ife-East Local Government, especially in rural areas, mobile phones are now standard, but the majority of the phones are not internet-connected; I mean there are no data to operate them, and the use of social media is not in vogue here in Iyanfoworogi. This limits our participation in governance, and most times, we do not even know government policies and programmes, so how do we participate in local governance? There is low use of ICT, and this invariably affects participation in governance (Key Informant Response 2018).

An analysis of the Head of Administration Department and of a Women Leader's response shows that even though ICT encourages citizens' participation in governance, its non-existent or poor usage discourages citizens' participation in governance, especially in rural local government. This position had also been upheld in some studies' results (Decalo 1994; Amoako 2003;

Okot-Uma et al. 2004). Specifically, Decalo notes that: "In the absence of global budgetary generosity, the bulk of Africa may be turned loose to drift their way, returning to political turmoil, authoritarianism, and military rule once the international craze for democracy fades".

Considering all the responses by respondents during the interview session and findings from empirical works, it can be reasonably be inferred that ICT had a significant influence on citizen participation in governance at the grassroots level in Southwestern Nigeria. The result was further confirmed by that of the quantitative results as eighty-six per cent (86%) of respondents administered with a questionnaire believed that ICT has had a more significant influence on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Nigeria Southwest.

Test of Hypothesis

This section deals with the hypothesis analysis/interpretation of this study. Spearman's correlation coefficient is the statistical tool utilised in the analysis of the data. 5% (i.e. 0.05). is the level of significance was used in the analysis in this study

Table 2: Correlation analysis between Influence of ICT on Citizens' Participation in Governance at the Local Level in Southwestern Nigeria

Hypothesis				
In Southwestern Nigeria, ICT has no substantial impact on citizen participation in local governance.	Correlation coefficient (r)	Df	p-value	N
	+0.629	1	0.000	418

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 above presents the correlation analysis between the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. According to Table 3, Spearman's correlation coefficient was positive (+0.629), significant at $p<0.05$. The positive coefficient indicated an approximate sixty-three (63%) positive influence between the ICT and citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. The null hypothesis was rejected since the probability value (0.000) was less than the alpha level (0.05), and the study indicated that ICT has a substantial influence on citizens' participation in government at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria ($r = 0.629$, $p < 0.05$). As a result of the Spearman coefficient, three-fifths of the changes in citizen participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria are linked to ICT platforms' functions. The positive link also demonstrated that the more the influence of ICT tools, the more incredible citizens' participation in governance in Southwestern Nigeria's local areas.

Study's Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in further depth in this section. It synchronises and triangulates quantitative and qualitative data with comparable empirical findings from other research works on the study's topic. It did, however, point out a point of disagreement between the conclusions of this study and previous empirical results. The study's goal and assumptions were tested using data obtained from the field in a questionnaire and an in-depth interview with critical respondents, as indicated in the introduction section. The study's findings must be discussed further when the hypothesis has been tested and approved.

The study begins with the study objective, which was confirmed or achieved with the data from the field to examine the influence of ICT on citizens' participation in governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. During the research, especially during the interview session, almost all respondents shared the view that ICT has a strong influence on citizens' participation in governance at the local level. For these groups of respondents, the use of mobile technology like mobile phones, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Have all contributed to improved citizens' participation in governance. In addition to this, results of the quantitative analysis confirmed and correspond to that of the qualitative data as 85% of respondents agreed that ICT has immensely contributed to citizens' participation in governance at the local level (see item 1 of Table 2). These results were also supported by data available in the literature where academic scholars aptly corroborated respondents' views from the field. Thus, the first goal was readily accomplished using data acquired through interviews and questionnaires, and this correlates to the first research hypothesis that ICT has increased residents' participation in local administration in Southwestern Nigeria. Given the correlation between the first objective and the hypothesis, this hypothesis is trustworthy and dependable. Specifically, empirical works of Odunuga (2003), Nassar (2005), Iwasokun (2012) and Thompson (2008) aptly supported both the first objective and the hypothesis, respectively.

Conclusion

Our discussion on the x-ray of the role/impact of ICT on citizen participation in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria with its attendance implication for sustainable democratic governance and development, so far, is quite revealing. The breadth of ICT's positive influence on strong grassroots governance, based on practical and unrestricted public participation, openness, accountability, and effective local service delivery, is a big revelation. The results of the data analysis for this study, which was assessed and analysed using Spearman's correlation coefficient to look for a significant link between the factor and the outcome variables at 0.05 levels of significance, further validated this position. P-values of less than or equal to 0.05 indicate that the independent variable (ICT) is significantly related to the outcome variable (good local governance) based on unrestricted citizen participation, with the resultant effect on long-term democratic governance through effective service delivery to the local population.

Flowing from the aforesaid and based on the empirical analysis of this research, the study, therefore stongly recommended as follows:

- ICT has a strong influence on citizens' participation in governance at the local level. The use of mobile technology like mobile phones, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Have all contributed to improved citizens' participation in governance.
- That ICT has impact on sustaining democratic governance and Development .The breadth of ICT's positive influence on strong grassroots governance, based on practical and unrestricted public participation, openness, accountability, and effective local service delivery, is a big revelation.
- That the use of ICT has influence and promote participant political culture among the people at the local level. Voters and citizens tend to be more farmiliar and closer to the political leaders and recognizes their leaddres through ICT.
- That the use of ICT has positively influence citizens' participation and involvement in the decision-making process in the governance of their localities.
- That unrestricted citizen participation have the resultant effect on long-term democratic governance through effective service delivery to the local population.
- That the use of ICT has reduces electoral violent, malporactise and vote ringing and promote proper sorting and counting of votes after the election.

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