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CHAPTER 3

Digital Communication and Good Governance in Nigeria

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The advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has significantly transformed humanity by preserving experiences, disseminating knowledge, facilitating communication and networking, and automating tasks through artificial intelligence. These technologies not only boost productivity but also enhance transparency and governance, fostering social prosperity, and empowering individuals (Maiti & Awasthi, 2020). The widespread adoption of ICTs facilitates efficient knowledge

transfer and supports comprehensive client databases (Mushtaq & Bruneau, 2019; cited in Shahbaz et al, 2023). Kocsis (2020) argues that a robust information infrastructure can provide universal access to online resources, bridge the digital divide, and create employment opportunities.

In Africa, numerous initiatives relating to ICTs focus on developing e-government strategies, safeguarding citizen rights against cybercrime, ensuring child safety, and improving internal government ICT infrastructure and governance (ICA, 2018; cited in Mutsagondo, 2021). Over the past two decades, the liberalization of the ICT sector in Africa has contributed to notable economic growth. Although Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has historically lagged behind the global digital landscape, recent years have witnessed significant improvements in ICT access and utilization. Evans (2019; cited by Ndoya & Asongu, 2024) highlights that the digital revolution in SSA is progressing rapidly, prompting a shift in focus from merely addressing the digital divide to realizing the digital dividend in terms of economic growth, poverty alleviation, and income equality. This chapter delves into the opportunities and challenges associated with enhancing governance in Nigeria through the utilization of digital communication. By examining these factors, this chapter seeks to identify pathways for leveraging digital technology to improve governance outcomes and ensuring that digital communication contribute positively to the nation's development.

E-Governance: A Critical Review

The adoption of digital government maintains significant prospects for enabling better socially inclusive and sustainable societies worldwide. In addition to e-government and e-democracy, the ideas of open government and transparency symbolize new paradigms that underscore access to data and its reuse, stimulating interoperability and invention (Hansson et al, 2015; cited in Aroon, James & Marc, 2022). In the open

government paradigm, technology is secondary; the emphasis is on the interoperability, vulnerability, and participatory dimensions that technology might improve, as well as on fundamentally transforming how governments perform. Citizens are coming to be proactive stakeholders in public service delivery rather than inactive recipients. Likewise, the open government paradigm and enhanced citizen participation simply impact public confidence in government (Moon, 2018).

From a public significance framework, e-government creates importance in several distinct areas. Public value theory discusses how transparency, accountability, efficiency, and openness build public value (Nabatchi, 2018; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2019). It is crucial to underline that Calista and Melitski (2007; cited in Aroon, James & Marc, 2022) maintain that the enactment of technological inventions develops importance through two specific viewpoints. The first viewpoint is administrative, aiming to undertake progress in the delivery of existing public services in terms of quality and quantity. Moreover, a second procedure for building public value is through techniques that enhance democratic governance by engaging citizens, boosting transparency, and improving confidence in government. Also, a third category for public value emanates from the information systems literature, embodied by the client or end-user who participates in the system on behalf of themselves, their households, or any organisational unions they may have, varying from corporate appeals to non-profit organisations (MacLean & Titah, 2021). Certainly, public value is initiated through these viewpoints and is incredibly relevant as ICTs mature.

Earlier e-government maturational analyses clarify a focus on Web 1.0 applications equipping fixed content online, which then expanded to transactional services. As technology and communication devices progressed, the public sector improved citizen engagement and transparency through the help of mobile

technologies, smart technologies, and new media. It is worth pointing out that citizen usage of mobile and smart technologies is growing larger, as are different forms of governance such as e-governance, smart governance, and universal government. The primary priority of smart cities and nations is advancing public value through using ICTs and internet-enabled devices like cameras and detectors to improve the quality of life (Manoharan & Mossey, 2019). Nevertheless, these advances demand multiple channels of communication and participatory tools for citizens. Many local governments are also employing new media to unite and engage with their citizens through policy methods. Governments are looking beyond conventional web services towards a further advancement of e-government called "we-government." Today, there is also a widely identified idea of Government 2.0, which is different from Web 1.0. Government 2.0 is considered "a more open, social, communicative, interactive, and user-centred interpretation of e-government."

When considered from a global and relative standpoint, the adoption of e-government, both at the federal and local levels, has varied extensively. A 2015 analysis of global cities (Holzer & Manoharan, 2016) revealed those cities are at various phases of e-government adoption considering their website privacy and safety, usability, content, services, and citizen and social engagement. Regardless, it should be believed that some cities and local governments may not be able to maintain their performance over time, as studies have shown that some late adopters may catch up with the early adopters in e-government performance. Besides, the failure rates of e-government tasks remain high. It is therefore crucial to constantly monitor and measure the performance of e-government on a global scale. Such studies can emphasise best practices in different proportions of e-government and enable cities to understand and embrace new innovative practices. This is greatly essential for local governments that operate with little resources and

budgetary limitations. The Global E-Government Survey project estimates the performance of digital governance in large cities worldwide. This longitudinal study, performed bi-annually since 2003, assesses the cities' official websites and rates them on a global ranking.

Cyber Governance in Africa

Africa has just launched an ambitious plan for digital transformation. Coming after the approval of the 2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration (A.U. STC-CICT, 2019), the African Union Commission (AUC) took on the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa in February 2020, which was thereafter pursued by the European Union Digital Roadmap the same year. The European Union emphasised digital transformation as a critical pillar of its engagement and partnership with Africa, concentrating on improving the continent's digital adaptation and fortifying the global rules-based declaration and the multilateral system (European Union Commission, 2020).

In recent years, cyber governance has gone up to the forefront of diplomatic and political plans in both bilateral and multilateral gatherings. The discourse on cyber governance has made it in both formal and informal talks, with regional and global diplomatic initiatives calling attention to its significance. It is noteworthy to bring out that the promotion of safety and peace in the cyber setting can be greatly enhanced by embracing relevant policies and building cooperative measures, which can contribute to strong cyber governance. For adequate cyber governance, partnership is critical; in the context of borderless cyberspace, collaborative methods engender shared responsibility among states (Mueller, 2020).

Also, the seventh key movement in the United Nations Roadmap for Digital Cooperation emphasises facilitating trust and safety in the digital setting, pointing up the necessity for cooperation

(Meyer, 2020). The just released 2021 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) Report reaffirms that “an open, secure, steady, available, and serene ICT setting is important for all and needs adequate cooperation among States to decrease risks to international stability and safety.” The UN Open-Ended Working Group's (OEWG) final report, which further validated the discoveries of the GGE reports, urges states to work together with other states in carrying out accountable state behaviour in cyberspace.

Regardless, the debate about governance and partnership in Africa for security and stability in cyberspace has been greatly unexplored (Microsoft, 2021). Africa's preparedness for cyber governance puts forward multiple questions regarding the significance of African governance mechanisms to ensure cyber strength in the region (Schlehahn, 2020). Also, there are concerns about the willingness of African states to control cyberspace through appropriate policies that meet global standards. The disparities in digital abilities and political systems present considerable challenges for the implementation of principles of accountable state behaviour in cyberspace by African states.

Moreover, concerns exist regarding African leaders' viewpoint and strategy regarding digital sovereignty, alongside the reality that digital partnerships could suggest digital dependency given the varying digital capacities. The digital shift offers Africa immense possibilities. However, an effective and efficient digital shift in Africa can only happen within a trusted, secure, and resilient cyberspace. Thus, it is essential to examine cyber governance and the agenda for digital transformation in Africa concerning peace and security.

Current State of Digital Communication in Nigeria

Digital communication in Nigeria has made significant strides in recent years, driven largely by the rapid expansion of mobile

technology and internet access. As of 2022, over half of the population uses the internet, with mobile devices serving as the primary means of communication for many (UN, 2022). This has facilitated greater connectivity, allowing individuals to access information and services that were previously limited. Social media platforms have also gained immense popularity, becoming vital tools for communication, information dissemination, and civic engagement, particularly among the youth.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist in Nigeria's digital communication landscape. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent Internet connectivity, and high data costs hinder widespread access, especially in rural areas. Moreover, concerns about cyber security and digital literacy continue to affect user confidence (Nabatchi, 2018). While urban centres enjoy better connectivity, the disparity in access creates a digital divide that limits the potential benefits of digital communication for all citizens. These challenges can impede effective governance and the full realization of digital initiatives.

Assessment of digital communication usage in Nigeria reveals a mixed picture. On one hand, government efforts to implement e-governance initiatives and enhance service delivery through online platforms show promise. On the other hand, the potential for digital communication to foster transparency and accountability is often undermined by issues such as corruption and bureaucratic inertia (Hussain, 2014). However, while Nigeria is attempting to make progress in leveraging digital communication for governance, addressing infrastructure deficits and enhancing digital literacy are crucial for maximizing its opportunities. It is against the above backdrop that this chapter, using secondary data and previous empirical studies discusses **the** research themes focusing on new media as a catalyst for good governance in Africa as well as the visibility and impact of such scholarly articles on new media's contribution to good

governance in Africa.

African countries with increased e-government growth index (EGDI)

According to the United Nations E-Government Survey (2022), the subsequent table emphasises the key outcomes for the 16 African countries with increased e-government growth index (EGDI) values in 2022.

Table 1: Countries in Africa with the highest EGDI values

Country	Rating class	EGDI rank	Subregion	OSI value	HCI value	TII value	EGDI (2022)	EGDI (2020)
South Africa	HV	65	Southern Africa	0.7487	0.7733	0.6850	0.7357	0.6891
<i>Mauritius</i>	HV	75	Eastern Africa	0.6282	0.7733	0.7588	0.7201	0.7196
<i>Seychelles</i>	H3	85	Eastern Africa	0.4424	0.7758	0.8198	0.6793	0.6920
Tunisia	H3	88	Northern Africa	0.6031	0.6911	0.6646	0.6530	0.6526
Morocco	H2	101	Northern Africa	0.4721	0.6350	0.6676	0.5915	0.5729
Egypt	H2	103	Northern Africa	0.5730	0.6375	0.5579	0.5895	0.5527
Ghana	H2	106	Western Africa	0.5361	0.6176	0.5934	0.5824	0.5960
<i>Cabo Verde</i>	H2	110	Western Africa	0.4965	0.6507	0.5507	0.5660	0.5604
Algeria	H2	112	Northern Africa	0.3743	0.6956	0.6133	0.5611	0.5173
Kenya	H2	113	Eastern Africa	0.6821	0.5641	0.4305	0.5589	0.5326
Gabon	H2	116	Middle Africa	0.3578	0.6706	0.6279	0.5521	0.5401
Botswana	H1	118	Southern Africa	0.2740	0.6932	0.6814	0.5495	0.5383
<i>Rwanda*</i>	H1	119	Eastern Africa	0.7935	0.5322	0.3209	0.5489	0.4789
<i>Côte d'Ivoire*</i>	H1	120	Western Africa	0.5467	0.5748	0.5186	0.5467	0.4457
Namibia	H1	121	Southern Africa	0.4316	0.6516	0.5133	0.5322	0.5747
<i>Zambia*</i>	H1	131	Eastern Africa	0.4414	0.6744	0.3909	0.5022	0.4242

Source: 2020 and 2022 United Nations E-Government Surveys.

Note: Countries in Italics are LDCs, LLDCs or SIDS.

* Countries that moved from the middle to the high EGDI group in 2022.

The EGDI nations, categorised into HV, H3, H2, and H1 rating categories, belong to the high EGDI group. As in the earlier two surveys, only four countries (Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tunisia) rank among the top 100 globally, with EGDI significances surpassing the global standard of 0.6102. South Africa leads the region with an EGDI value of 0.7357, positioning it in the highest (HV) rating class. Mauritius follows in the HV class,

with Seychelles and Tunisia in the H3 class. Mauritius has Africa's highest TII value (0.7588) and a notably high HCI value (0.7733), demonstrating a strong prospect for increasing its overall e-government growth through enhanced online services. Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, and Zambia, despite EGDI's importance below the global standard, joined the high EGDI group for the first time in 2022.

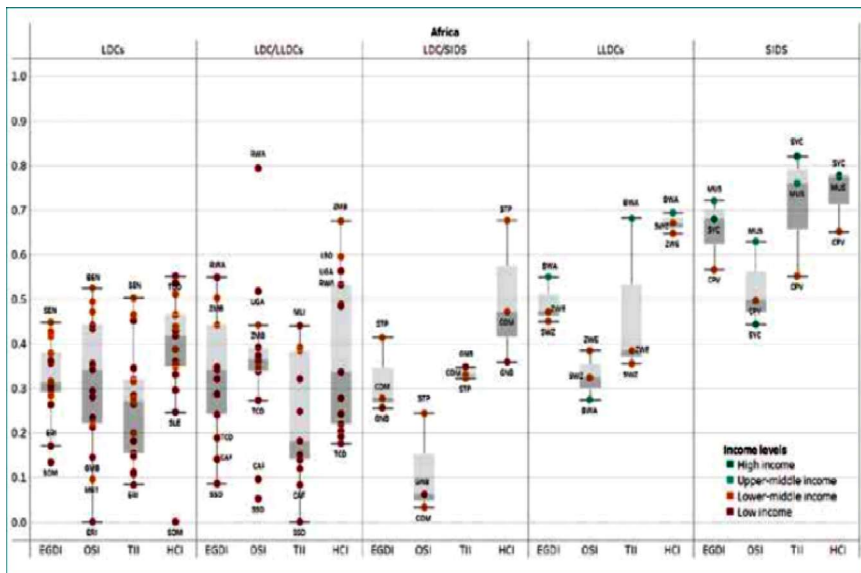
Among these 16 countries, 14 are classified as upper-middle-income or lower-middle-income nations; only Seychelles is high-income, while Rwanda is low-income. Rwanda notably has a very high OSI value (0.7935) despite reasonable human capital development (HCI value of 0.5322) and underdeveloped telecommunications infrastructure (TII value of 0.3209), highlighting considerable investments in online services growth. This positions Rwanda to contend with top countries in this part. The digitalization trends in Africa are commonly positive. Limited broadband subscriptions have surged by 48 per cent since 2020, growing from 1.80 to 2.67 per 100 residents. The 2022 survey reveals that 33 per cent of the region's citizens use the Internet, 42.8 per cent are active mobile broadband subscribers and 83.7 per cent have mobile cellular telephone subscriptions. Nonetheless, these indicators still drop below international standards, and mobile broadband subscription costs close to gross national income per capita are greatly increased in Africa, worsening the digital divide.

Africa goes on to face challenges in e-government evolution due to inadequate investment. Low-income and lower-middle-income nations comprise 85 per cent of the region, with two-thirds of these nations being LDCs, LLDCs, and/or SIDS. Africa hosts 39 of the 91 countries in particular conditions worldwide, with the lowest EGDI and subindex importance among these groups. For example, the average EGDI value for this group is 0.3233. Botswana, an LLDC, has the highest TII value (0.6814) but the

lowest OSI value (0.2740). The SIDS in Africa has an average EGDI value of 0.3872, with Mauritius having the highest OSI value and Seychelles retaining the top TII value.

The regional average EGDI value for Africa is 0.4054, significantly below the global average of 0.6102. Approximately two-thirds of African countries (59 per cent) fall within the middle EGDI range, and nearly a third (30 per cent) are in the high EGDI category. While no African country is in the very high EGDI group, the declining trend of African countries in low and middle EGDI groups is motivating.

Table 2 Countries in Special Situations in Africa, 2022



Source: 2022 United Nations E-Government Survey.

Notes: Countries in special situations include least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing States (SIDS).

Research Themes Addressed by Scholarly Articles on New Media as a Catalyst of Good Governance

The research of academic publications shows key themes such as “Right” with 24 happenings, come next by “Information” (16), “Facebook” (14), “Twitter” (13), “Reforms” (11), “Challenge” (10), “Effect” (10), “Growth” (10), and “Initiative” (10). Further noteworthy themes comprise “New media tool” (8), “New media user” (8), “Benefit” (7), “Democratic governance” (7), and “Good governance practices” (7).

Table 3: Research Themes on New Media as a Catalyst of Good Governance

S/N	Theme Concept	Cluster	Weight Links	Weight (Total Links)	Occurrence
1	Right	2	20	22	24
2	Information	6	23	25	16
3	Facebook	10	18	26	14
4	Twitter	10	13	21	13
5	Reform	1	15	18	11
6	Challenge	4	7	10	10
7	Effect	1	13	13	10
8	Growth	7	6	9	10
9	Initiative	1	12	13	10
10	Report	5	14	19	10
11	Research	2	12	12	10
12	Strategy	8	12	16	10
13	Campaign	2	11	11	9
14	Corporate governance	4	3	10	9
15	Year	5	15	19	9
16	Impact	1	9	10	8
17	Leader	8	13	19	8
18	Quality	1	13	14	8
19	New media tool	4	11	11	8
20	New media user	5	8	10	8
21	Benefit	7	8	9	7
22	Commitment	9	8	8	7
23	Democratic governance	1	7	8	7
24	Evidence	1	9	9	7
25	Good governance practices	1	8	9	7
26	Legal governance	3	13	14	7
27	Regulation	2	8	9	7
28	Bad governance	2	6	7	6

The Future of Digital Communication in Nigeria and Developing Countries in Africa

The future of digital communication in Nigeria and other developing countries holds great potential, particularly in

enhancing governance and citizen engagement. With the increasing integration of technology in electoral processes, digital platforms can facilitate transparent voting systems, real-time results dissemination, and increased voter participation. E-governance initiatives are expected to streamline government services, making them more accessible and efficient, thereby fostering greater accountability and responsiveness to citizen needs.

Moreover, as digital literacy improves and Internet access expands, citizens will likely become more engaged in civic activities through social media and online forums. This shift could empower individuals to voice their opinions, mobilize for social change, and hold public officials accountable. The rise in the volume of publications on new media as an instrument for good governance can be ascribed to the rising claim on the topic. As noted by Mishaal and Abu-Shanab (2015), the emergence of new media and its traits developed an option for people to unite, inciting a revolution. This phenomenon attracted researchers, resulting in significant research outcomes, particularly in the years leading up to 2010. Beyond 2010, new media provide not only industries but also churches, non-profit organisations, and governments with a medium for adequate communication. Researchers were thus encouraged to inquire into the effect of new media. Osterrieder (2013) supports this perspective, pointing out that social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube complement people's lives by allowing them to share content and interact with like-minded people, thereby enabling better decision-making and facilitating good governance.

Mishaal and Abu-Shanab (2015) also emphasise that new media had an important effect on governments, particularly when they acknowledged the existence of their citizens on these platforms from 2011 onward. For example, the popularity of Facebook as a

governance tool prompted curiosity in this area. Hussain (2014) makes clear that the Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) took on Facebook as a social communication means in 2013 to improve e-government services in Northern Pakistan. However, the increasing popularity of new media also brought about vices that restricted its uptake from 2020 onwards. Kwanya et al (2021) argue that media like Facebook have become new tools for setting aside social vices such as cyberbullying. This completion has steered some users away from these platforms, leading to a decrease in their popularity for governance objectives, as recalled in the research publication themes.

Osterrieder (2013) also observes that despite the reality of a scientific society on new media and studies on adequate use within this society, some familiar explanations deter scientists from committing to new media. These include worries about being perceived as inexperienced, posting improper content, being misinterpreted, and lacking essential IT skills. However, there is a prompt shift in academic publishing through new media, with 'altmetrics' being increasingly taken on to follow online engagement with scientific content. As a result, digital literacy is becoming a crucial skill for scientists to improve their study visibility.

Conclusion

New media enable faster communication, facilitate inclusivity in participation, enhance the exchange of ideas, and spurs invention. Considerable research studies have been performed on the application of new media for good governance. It is obvious from the publications that governments across the African region are turning to new media to sustain governance in all sectors, as demonstrated by the themes in the retrieved and analyzed study. However, many experts, especially within scientific communities, often do not take new media seriously due to its perceived informality. Research papers on this topic are visible, based on

the sources and publication channels from the bibliometrics analysis, especially for respected organisations like the World Bank. However, visibility can be made better for respective scholars as well. African countries, in particular, need to demonstrate clear approaches to public engagement in new media, related to reasonable and sufficient training, to fully harness its possibility for good governance.

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