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E-consultation and the quest for inclusive governance in Nigeria

Samuel Oni[1]*, Aderonke A. Oni[1], Jide Ibietan[1] and Gideon Oluwatimilehin Deinde-Adedeji[1]

*Corresponding author: Samuel Oni, Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership and Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
E-mail: samuel.oni@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Abstract: Inclusive governance through public consultation is fundamental to sustainable development as reiterated in the SDG16. Citizens' consultation in the policy planning and determination enhances the quality of policy outcomes and help to build public trust in political institutions. Traditional institutions for public consultation are however, often limited thus, policy decisions are in most cases, at variance with public aspirations. The consequence is a growing public cynicism of governmental institutions. To address this democratic decline, governments across the world are now utilizing ICT tools to better consult with citizens in the public policy process. This paper which adopts a mixture of descriptive and analytical research designs engages a systematic literature review for collecting and analysing data. The aim is to investigate the adoption of ICTs as tools for public consultation to enhance inclusive governance in Nigeria. Findings reveal among others that the increase in acceptance and usage of mobile technologies in the face of the challenges of infrastructure, energy instability and low level of ICT literacy among

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samuel Oni, PhD Dr. Samuel ONI is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science & International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria. His scholastic interests are in the area of governance, legislature, e-government and conflicts studies.

Aderonke Atinuke Oni, PhD Aderonke A. Oni is a Senior lecturer in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, Covenant University. Nigeria. Her keen research interests and publications are in Technology Adoption, Acceptance and implementation which extend across areas of e-business, e-commerce, e-government, e-democracy and e-learning.

Jide Ifedayo Ibietan Jide Ibietan is an Associate Professor of Public Administration, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria. His areas of research interests include administrative theory, local government, public policy, governance and development.

Oluwatimilehin Gideon Deinde-Adedeji Oluwatimilehin Gideon Deinde-Adedeji is a faculty member in the Department of Political Science & International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria. His research interests include Public Private partnership, e-Government, and legislative studies.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Democracies around the world continue to witness growing public distrust of political institutions due to wide gap between government policies and citizens aspirations. With the limited traditional institutions of citizens' consultation in the public policy process, there is a rising discourse on the adoption of e-consultation as an additional and more accessible channel of public consultation. Our study engages literature search to interrogate the adoption of e-consultation for enhancing inclusive governance in developing countries particularly, Nigeria. The study discovered the dynamics of increasing acceptance and usage of mobile technologies in the face of mutually reinforcing socio-political and economic factors. The authors found e-consultation to be fundamental to realising bottom-up approach to policy making with the concomitance of improving the quality and legitimacy of policy outcomes and rebuilding public trust in the government.

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others, provide veritable platform for e-consultation. E-consultation brings to bear the equally important bottom-up approach in policy making by providing additional channel for greater public voice in the policy-making process. E-consultation thus poses to be cardinal to achieving sustainable development goal of just, peaceful and inclusive societies in Nigeria.

Subjects: Government; Governance; Political Philosophy; Social Democracy; Public Administration & Management; Public Policy; Political Behavior and Participation; Public Opinion; Politics & Technology

Keywords: E-consultation; public policy; inclusive governance; SDGs; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Inclusive governance through public consultation is the hallmark of democratic standard and fundamental to sustainable development. The imperative of inclusive governance is reiterated in SDGs16 which seeks to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies adjudged to enhance political stability and sustainable growth. Public consultation is now being used in all levels of government in order to increase participation of citizen in the policy-making process and as a remedy for effective policymaking and democratic legitimacy (Oni et al., 2017; Tooma, 2017). Public consultation has now become the norm of inclusive democratic governance and is seen as a means of addressing the declining public trust in government institutions and elected officials (C. Davies, 2011; Hogan et al., 2015). Consulting and involving citizens in policy-making process helps to enhance democratic legitimacy and reduce distrust and cynicism towards public governance and institutions. With the limited traditional and institutional channels for engaging citizens, Information Communication Technology (ICT) now presents viable platform for engaging citizens in the public policy process (Xiaodong et al., 2019).

The past two decades have witnessed an increasing use of ICTs by public institutions as new tools to better engage citizens in politics (A. A. Oni et al., 2016). ICTs are now being used to elicit inputs, ideas and contributions from citizens and/or stakeholders (e-consultation) to aid a more robust and sustainable decision-making process (Oni et al., 2015; Schulz & Newig, 2015). E-consultation has changed the relations between citizens and the political system by providing conducive access to information, opening up new channels of communication and offering means to organize collective action and formation of groups (Albrecht, 2012). This mechanism for public engagement has the potentials to open up governance structures and provide avenue for meaningful interactions with the citizens (Schulz & Newig, 2015). E-consultation has become a popular form of public participation for advancing civic engagement in governance. A number of governments worldwide employ the platform in order to incorporate citizens' views in public policy and decision-making process (Tambouris et al., 2015). The findings of Choi and Kwon (2019) show that the use of ICT has enabled citizens to participate in a more direct and collaborative manner in the political process thereby redressing the problem of political alienation in a representative democracy. Similarly, findings of Xiaodong et al. (2019) reveal that e-consultation has enabled citizens to conveniently participate in public policy implementation of. They found out that e-consultation enables government to implement bottom-up model of public policy, maximize public interest and adapt to public policies citizens' needs.

The implementation of the Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT) policy in 2000 ushered e-government into Nigeria. One of the goals of the policy is to harness the potentials of ICT for good governance in the country. The policy aimed at facilitating the immersion of ICT in the governmental process such that will enhance the delivery of quality public services to the citizens (Abasilim & Edet, 2015). Paradoxically, this development has not led to citizens' inclusiveness, which is one of the hallmarks of good governance, Nigeria. While the right to political participation is often definite in the constitution, viable and effective channels for public deliberations on policies are limited (Akinola et al., 2018; Dyaji et al., 2019). More often than not, governments

put in place centralist legislation and policies for the determination of public needs and then plan the policy actions. Thus policy decisions are, in most cases, at variance with public aspirations, hence, a negative perception by the citizens, of public governance and institutions. As observed by Gberevbie et al. (2018), public policies in Nigeria are often inconsistent with citizens' desires and aspiration because of top-down approach to decision making. As a result, citizens are yet to benefit from the numerous policies of government in the country. According to their observations, public policies in Nigeria are often made by the leadership without inputs from the people and thus, fail to reflect public demands (Gberevbie et al., 2018; Mohamad et al., 2018). One of the reasons for the overwhelming poverty in Africa, Nigeria inclusive, is that formal structures of governance reach less than half of its population while the majority of the people lack access to these formal institutions. Majority of the people therefore strive for survival through practices that do not conform to formal processes (Lennan & Ngoma, 2004; Oni et al., 2015). This situation necessitates a re-thinking of governance in a context of competing value systems while aiming at achieving equity and sustainable development.

Incidentally, while web-based public consultation mechanisms have attracted considerable scholastic interest in recent times, there remains dearth of research particularly from the perspective of the resource poor countries on online participatory governance (Etemire, 2018; Iwuoha, 2018). Moreover, as observed by Schulz and Newig (2015), research on online participatory governance still remains fragmented and largely disconnected from mainstream literature. This paper seeks to close this gap by investigating the use of the Internet and mobile technologies to enhance inclusive governance in Nigeria. It aims at interrogating the applications of ICTs for citizens' consultation in the public policy process. It also probes into the challenges that have hitherto militated against the adoption of e-consultation in Nigeria.

2. Literature review: inclusive governance and public consultation

Inclusive governance presupposes the right of all citizens, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity and religion, to meaningfully participate in the governance processes and influence policy decisions that affect them (Dias & Sudarshan, 2007). With inclusive governance, public policies and institutions are made accessible, accountable and responsive to the public. Diverse interests in a society are protected while citizens are given equal opportunities to public services (Sangita & Jyothi, 2009). Inclusive governance provides opportunities for equal participation of all stakeholders in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of public policies and enhances equality of all citizens before the law (Sangita, 2010). Inclusiveness is therefore a tenet of democratic governance and indispensable for sustainable development. Extensive consultation with the public in the processes of policy planning and determination enables those that will be ultimately impacted by policy choices to express their views for a better reflection of the policy outcomes (Lezaun & Soneryd, 2007). Public consultation in public policy-making process has therefore, been found to enhance the quality of policy outcomes and public interest in governance. It can produce more citizen preferences, improve public support and help to build public trust in their representatives.

Citizens' input may be in the form of argument in favour of a proposed legislation or against it which may result to proposing alternative ideas (Tambouris et al., 2015). As averred by Lennan and Ngoma (2004), sustainable development remains an elusive exercise unless a state is given to building and strengthening institutional capacity that allows for wide consultations with the citizen and deepens their influence in the decision that affects their lives. This assertion indicates that the value of inclusive governance lies in its ability to strengthen citizen's voices in governance and accountability of the state to the citizens. Inclusive governance therefore necessitates empowering citizens for political participation. It also requires a responsive and accountable state institutions and process that ensures power holders are answerable to the citizens. It is the process that integrates different opinions and brings decision making closer to citizens. Inclusive governance entails providing information to the citizens and consulting them on their opinion on decisions affecting them. Dialogue is then initiated based on the results of the consultation, in order to make satisfactory decisions for everybody (Dias &

Sudarshan, 2007). This process requires effective channel through which citizens access information and participate in the public policy dialogues. Citizens are then able to articulate and promote their interests in decision making. It also requires pressurizing public officials and holding them accountable for their actions (UNDP, 2010). Inclusive governance is thus, a citizen-centred approach to public policy-making process, which enables a robust consultation with the citizens.

Consultation is viewed as the method by which citizen's requests, principles, hopes and worries are taken into account in the decision-making process. The overall goal is to involve individuals or groups when designing policies so as to achieve accountability, transparency and active citizenship. As observed by Goodin and Dryzek (2006) and Jones and Einsiedel (2011), public consultation explores different processes that enables citizens impact on public policy through detailed dialogue on policy ideas before decisions on them are made. This process has now become a popular instrument used by policy makers in involving the public in different decision-making processes (Kaehne & Taylor, 2016). In public consultation, public authorities receive citizens' feedback in the policy formulation process. This is a ready two-way relationship between government and the citizens in which the issues for consultation is defined by the government. It also sets the questions and manage the process. Citizens are then invited for their contributions, views and opinions on the subject matter (Tooma, 2017).

The importance of public consultation is, perhaps, made more succinctly by Lezaun and Soneryd (2007) when they aver that seeking lay views of the public is fundamental to good governance. As they observed, it enables government to elicit valuable insights, wider information, potential solutions, diverse perspectives and values when formulating public policies or making decisions. Lezaun and Soneryd (2007) submitted that consulting the lay publics throughout the policy formulation process will not only assuage public mistrust of political representatives but also reinforce the legitimacy of political institutions. Thus, involvement of citizens enables government gain greater public acceptance which is indispensable to political stability and development. In the observation of Hogan et al. (2015), the values of public consultations lies in the need for the perspectives of the lay publics in the designing of the measures and policies for the wellbeing and human development of a country. In this regards, public consultation is seen as central to inclusive governance which leads to improved democratic results by assisting society develop and meet its political, social, economic and cultural goals. The attainment of sustainable human development requires people centred approaches. It demands healthy participation of citizens in determining decisions that affect them (Clift, 2004). The centrality of public consultation to inclusive governance is the reason every nation around the world is taking variety of measures and modalities for engaging the citizens in the decision-making process.

A popular tool for engaging citizens in the process of governance is Information Communication Technologies—ICTs (Lennan & Ngoma, 2004; Xiaodong et al., 2019). ICTs have been found to be solutions to the plight of governance across the world (Alkraiji, 2020). The past two decades have witnessed the increasing use of ICTs by public institutions as new tools to better engage citizens in politics (A. A. Oni et al., 2016). Governments across the world are now utilizing ICTs to consult with citizens in decision making process. Thus, e-consultation has become popular practice for advancing civic engagement in public policy making. It is internationally recognized as effective means for engaging citizens in the political process (Albrecht, 2012). E-consultation is the use of ICTs for interactions and deliberation between citizens and the government or its agencies with the intention of arriving at a robust decision. Oni and Okunoye (2018) define e-consultation as a form of electronic discussion, negotiation and exchange between government and citizens with the aid of the Internet. It is the use of diverse electronic forms of dialogue between democratic institutions and the public (citizens and/or stakeholders) for promoting and eliciting inputs/ideas/contributions to aid a more sustainable or robust decision (Schulz & Newig, 2015). It is also seen as constituting a system of using online platforms for citizens to engage government officials/representatives (politicians/civil or public servants) in policy deliberations with the intention of informing, and deepening citizens' influence in public policy and decisions (Tomkova, 2009). E-consultation thus exists in two spheres: vertical relations, that is, government to citizen and citizen to citizen relations.

Tomkova (2009) identifies the various types of e-consultation to include forums for questions and answers integrated within an existing government website where the public have the opportunity of posting their questions and concerns and receive feedbacks from respective authorities. Another type of e-consultation is the on-line polls where civic and public views, opinions and positions on specific public issues are solicited. E-petitions is another type of e-consultation that provides opportunity for citizens to present their grievances, complaints or requests directly to the government. E-panels on the other hand, is an advanced form of online consultation that engages a selected sample group called a panel to give and trade their perspectives through online discussions, live chat, single surveys or votes on specific issues of public interest. Editorial consultation on the other hand, involves the use of ICTs by citizens and representatives to make remarks, examine and exchange views usually in the form of direct online discourse that takes place, followed by planned, agreement based or likewise single passage proposals on focused approach reports or targeted policy documents. This form of consultation is largely used during the agenda-setting or formulation stage in the policymaking process (Tomkova, 2009). It is on this note that Oni and Okunoye (2018) aver that e-consultation is a solution to the citizens-representatives disconnection prevalent in representative democracy by providing effective mechanism for inclusive governance.

The idea of e-consultation and inclusive governance in Nigeria is viewed from the theory of deliberative democracy. This normative theory suggests ways for enhancing the quality of democratic governance and condemns political institutions that deviate from the normative standard (Chambers, 2003). According to this theory, political mechanism for citizens' participation in governance should go beyond voting to include public deliberations and discussions among equal and autonomous citizens (Setälä, 2011). The theory posits that the legitimacy of the outcome of a political decision depends on the incorporation of citizens' perspective gathered through political deliberation of equal and rational citizens (Landa & Meirowitz, 2009). In this regards, public deliberation of free and equal citizens on public issues is pivotal to democratic governance (Bohman, 1998). As observed by Dahl. (1989), political equality and opportunities of all citizens to participate in decision on issues that affect their life is the fulcrum of democracy. Democracy presupposes equal participation of citizens in public deliberation for the aggregation citizens' perspectives and interests aimed at finding widely acceptable solutions (Beitz, 1989). This normative standard and procedure is argued to produce, in principle, policy outcomes that are fair and acceptable to everyone (Bohman, 1998). Deliberative democratic theory thus anchors on inclusiveness, responsiveness, answerability and transparency of political institutions through deliberative processes of opinion and will-formation. Accordingly, deliberative democracy has direct effect on the legitimacy of policy choices and the underlying political institutions.

3. Methods and materials

This paper adopts a mixture of descriptive and analytical research designs. As construed by Burns and Grove (2009), descriptive research design provides vivid depiction of a situation as it naturally happens and enables researchers to make judgment on current practice. With descriptive design therefore, one is able to report, describe, summarize and validate the nature, activities and situation of e-consultation and inclusive governance in Nigeria. On the other hand, the analytical design enables the researcher to critically evaluate facts and information regarding the subject of the research. A Systematic review approach was used for selection and review of relevant literature. This is method of study has been used in related previous studies such as Udoh et al. (2020) and Amoo et al. (2019). This method was adopted because the goal is to synthesize available evidence in the literature on the adoption of ICTs as tools for public consultation to enhance inclusive governance in Nigeria.

Essential literature on the subject of discuss were systematically selected and reviewed in order to identify publications that are relevant and current to e-consultation and inclusive governance. In doing this, only publications from reputable peer reviewed journals, government agencies and international organizations that relate to e-consultation and inclusive governance were considered in the study. Multiple online databases of Worldbank, UNDP, NCC and some reputable journals including Sage, Scopus, EBSCO, Jstor and Web-of-Science were employed in a systematic search

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for keywords considered relevant to the subject of investigation. The search strings used include public consultation, ICT, e-consultation, inclusive governance, e-government implementation in Nigeria, ICT adoption in Nigeria, etc. Data gathered from the various publications were evaluated and compared to make replicable, valid and current description and inferences in a logical sequence.

4. Results

This study interrogates the applications of ICTs for citizens' consultation in the public policy process to enhance inclusive governance in Nigeria. The systematic review covers various applications of ICTs for inclusive governance in Nigeria. This includes publications on e-government strategies, e-government implementation, e-participation, application of ICTs for town planning, agribusinesses, transportation, e-administration with government sectors, etc. Ninety-four articles were identified and reviewed for relevance on the aim of the study and fifty-nine were subsequently selected for inclusion in the study. Empirical studies that did not specifically evaluate a technological innovation were excluded. Also, article that were not directly related to applications used in public sector for the purpose of service delivery and citizen-government interaction were excluded. Such articles include articles on ICTs adoption in tertiary institutions, secondary schools, Small and medium scale enterprises and profession bodies that are not under government establishment. Figure 1 is a bar chart showing the years of publication of the articles reviewed for the study.

Findings reveal that ICTs adoption has found relevance in various governmental sectors in Nigeria including agriculture, administration, transportation, political participation, regional planning and identity management. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of articles in the various areas of application of ICTs in governance based on literature search.

The Internet and mobile technology continue to gain wide acceptance and usage in Nigeria within the last decade. The use of ICT in the public sector in Nigeria can be traced to the implementation of the Nigerian National Information Technology (NNIT) policy in 2000 (Adeyemo, 2010). The policy aims at placing Nigeria as a key player in the Information Technology of Africa as well as using IT for solutions to social problems in sectors such as education; creation of wealth; poverty eradication; job creation; governance; health; agriculture to mention a few (Abasilim & Edet, 2015). With the policy in place, the Nigerian government and the public sector organizations are to operate at maximum efficiency by taking advantage of the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and adopting e-government in the day to day activities so as to provide better services delivery to citizens in a systematic and cost-effective manner (Abasilim & Edet, 2015).

The number of Internet users in Nigeria recorded its first highest figure in November 2015 recording 97.8million users. The number however consistently dropped from that figure to 89.9 million in March, 2017 and thereafter, started to rise consistently again to 90.12 million in

Figure 1. Years of publication of articles in the reviewed.

Source: Authors' compilation

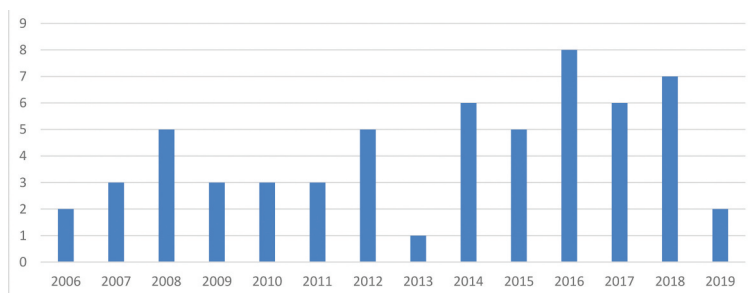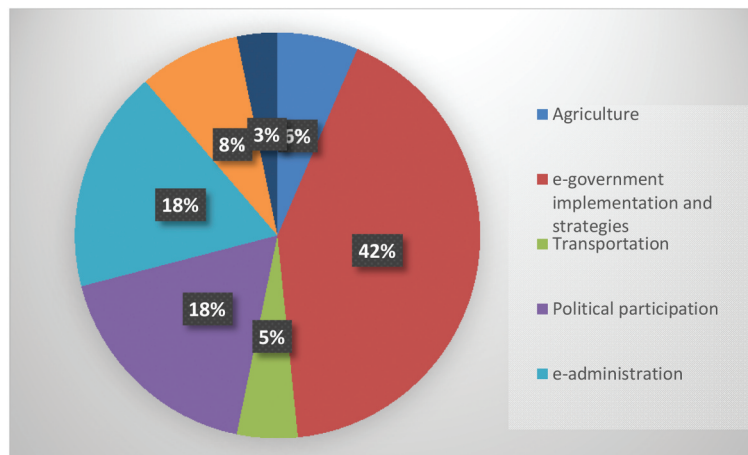cogent •• social sciences

Figure 2. Pie chart of areas application of ICTs in Nigeria from literature reviewed.

Source: Authors' compilation

April 2017. It further rose to 91.56 million and 91.59 million in May and June, 2017 respectively. The figure dropped to 91.41 million in July but has continued to grow steadily since then (Nigerian Communication Commission [NCC], 2018).

The number of Internet users in Nigeria in the first quarter of 2018 has grown to 100.9 million from 98.4 million in December 2017 (NCC, 2018) and hit 123.49 million in June 2019 with 56.4% Broadband penetration (Internet World Stats, 2019; NCC, 2019). Broadband penetration measures the extent to which the population of a particular location has access to broadband communications. This development is a significant increase which has ranked the country as one of the highest number of internet users worldwide.

In March, 2018, the number of mobile subscribers in Nigeria has reached 162 million which constitute 84% of its estimated population of 193 million (NCC, 2018). In December 2019, the number increased to over 184 million (NCC, 2019).

Among the reasons for this deepening Internet penetration is the National Broadband Plan (NBP) 2013–2018, being implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria which aims at deepening the penetration of broadband services in the country. Other factors include the low cost of smartphone, the reduction in the cost of the Internet and increasing yearning for mobility among the populace. In order to further boost access to the Internet and mobile technology, particularly in the rural communities and among those with disabilities, NITDA has created an IT Innovation hub to increase the level of electronic literacy and accessibility (NCC, 2018).

This increasing availability, accessibility, adoption and usage of the Internet and mobile technology in Nigeria have created many new channels through which citizens can express themselves and also be consulted (Onyechi, 2018). These findings are in congruence with Oni and Okunoye (2018) who aver that Public institutions now find ICTs as new tools to better engage citizens in politics. ICT is a solution to the citizens-representatives disconnection prevalent in representative democracy by providing effective channel for citizens' participation in governance (Oni et al., 2016, 2017; Onyechi, 2018).

Despite the increasing usage of the internet and mobile technology in Nigeria, the growth and thriving of e-government in the political environment of the country has been a major concern. Trained and qualified personnel remain one of the major challenges of e-government adoption in Nigeria (Azeez et al., 2012). Trained personnel are required to handle and operate its infrastructure which will promote the growth of e-government implementation. Majority of Nigerian civil servants in different positions are still not able to comprehend the technical complexity of the process of

e-government. Incidentally, the Nigerian government lacks the political will to resolve the issue of lack of trained and qualified personnel (Gberevbie et al., 2018). The equipment and social amenities such as accessibility to the Internet facilities, electronic devises and most importantly, power supply required for the growth and success of e-government are still inadequate (Tob-Ogu et al., 2018). It is important to note that despite Internet penetration in Nigeria, the country has been ranked by the Global Connectivity Index (GCI) as among the countries with low level of Internet connectivity. Adequate and stable power supply is of paramount importance to the successful implementation of e-government in the country's public sector. Electricity supply in Nigeria is however, irregular and unreliable (Azeez et al., 2012; Oni et al., 2015). There appears to be lack of genuine commitment on the part of the Nigerian government to the high cost of personnel training and procurement of equipment for implementing the e-government agenda (Oni et al., 2015). This situation is made worsened by the erroneous upheld notion among some conservative public servants that ICT adoption is capable of reducing the need for labour and hence, increases the level of unemployment in the country. The concept of e-government to some public servants depicts opportunity for the government to throw the majority of the citizens out of work hence e-government implementation is often frustrated (Abasilim & Edet, 2015; Ishaya, 2018).

5. Discussion

The sporadic growth in the adoption and usage of Internets and mobile technology in Nigeria provide veritable platform for inculcating the equally important bottom-up approach in policy making. This is because they provide additional, accessible and conducive channel for greater public voice in the policy-making process. This finding supports earlier verdict by Xiaodong et al. (2019) that e-consultation enables the implementation of bottom-up approach to policy making. It imperative to note that there are two approaches to public policy making, that is, the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. Public policy-making process in Nigeria largely follows the top-down approach in which legislations and handed down to the citizens by government authorities without wide and adequate consultation with the people for whom the decision is made and implemented upon. Thus, in most cases, policy decisions are at variance with citizen's preference and aspirations. This largely account for widespread feeling of alienation, cynicism and mistrust on government institutions and agencies. The bottom-up approach however is a citizen-centric method of policy making. The approach ensures that citizens are consulted with the purpose of inculcating their view and preferences, thus ensuring that citizens' voices count in the policy decisions.

The state of internet and mobile technology penetration and usage in Nigeria has the potential of achieving e-consultation for inclusive governance in the country. With the use of ICTs for public consultation, public institutions in Nigeria are able to increase their outreach to citizens and communities for determining their needs and preferences in public policies and services. As observed by Whyte and Macintosh (2001), e-consultation does not only open up effective communication channels through which citizens can be consulted, it also enhances the transparency of deliberation practices and capable of reversing the lack of public confidence and interest in governance which often referred to as democratic deficit. Incorporation of ICT into the policy making process therefore promises to enhance transparency, inclusiveness and ownership which are pivotal to the most desired good governance in Nigeria. In the light of this, adoption of e-consultation in Nigeria enables citizens' easy access to government information and gives equitable opportunity for those affected by a policy to be directly part of the formulation process.

Despite the continuous increase in usage and penetration of the Internet and mobile technologies in Nigeria, the effect on the governance process has not been significant (Olumoye & Govender, 2018). Apart from the use of social media application which has been giving little or no relevance to decision or policy-making, all the lofty promises and expectation of the NNIT policy have been hitherto, a mirage. Citizen's online engagement and maturity of e-government in Nigeria is still very low (Gberevbie et al., 2018). E-government maturity is the extent to which the government of a country has established its online presence (Krishnana et al., 2017).

It is imperative for any country that is genuinely committed to e-consultation implementation to have basic infrastructural facilities such as stable electricity supply, Internet access, hardware for both telecommunication and computing. These ICT tools are highly expedient for the success of e-consultation in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

This paper has interrogated the centrality of ICTs in driving public consultation considered as a hallmark of democratic standards and fundamental to realizing the Sustainable Development. Achieving SDGs16 requires strong and effective political institutions that consult the citizens and engage them in the governance process. Public consultation is thus a democratic norm for a bottom-up approach in policy making and has been found to improve the quality and legitimacy of policy outcomes. Consulting with the public is critical to assuaging the widening gap between public policy and citizens' aspiration that has become characteristic of many democracies across the world. In Nigeria with limited opportunity for citizens' involvement in the decision-making process, e-consultation is a credible tool for engaging citizens in a qualitative deliberation and dialogue that will lead to quality policy outcomes and widely accepted among citizens. The increasing diffusion, acceptance and usage of the Internet and mobile technology in the country signals the imperative of utilizing e-consultation to enhance the quality of the country's democracy. ICTs development in the country portends a veritable channel for government to interact with the citizens in order to bring their perspectives to bear in the government decision making process. This is capable of bridging the gap between citizens and institutions of governance and rebuild public trust in the government. With the use of ICTs for public consultation, public institutions in Nigeria will increase their outreach to citizens and communities for determining their needs and preferences in public policies and services. Integrating public voice in governance will enhance transparency, inclusiveness and ownership which are pivotal to good governance. E-consultation is therefore, a panacea for achieving inclusive democratic governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Author details
Samuel Oni[1]
E-mail: samuel.oni@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
Aderonke A. Oni[1]
E-mail: ronke.oni@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
Jide Ibietan[1]
E-mail: olajide.ibietan@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
Gideon Oluwatimilehin Deinde-Adedeji[1]
E-mail: oluwatimilehin.dehinde-adedeji@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
[1] Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.

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