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Electronic Public Service Delivery and Citizens' Trust in the Nigerian Government

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Abstract- **Public service delivery is significant and central to building trust in the government. In the era of the internet, innovations in ICTs have reshaped the mode of interaction between governments and the citizens, thereby affecting the delivery of public services. As ICTs are providing opportunities for effective delivery of public services to the citizens, an expected outcome is an improvement of trust in government by the same citizens, especially in a country like Nigeria with a history of weak citizens' trust in government. Using an online survey conducted with 13,743 users of electronic public services in Nigeria, the study found that electronic public service delivery had a significant positive effect on public trust in Nigeria. The study recommended the need for improvements in some areas of electronic delivery of public services as a build-up to the observed achievements.**

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I. Introduction

The idea of a social contract that connects the people to the state through legitimacy requires that social services be delivered effectively and efficiently. In essence, the overall image of any government depends on the goodwill, legitimacy and trust it earns from the citizens. Many developing countries appear to have failed in their mandate of effective and efficient service delivery as well as ensuring prudence in public spending. These failures have culminated in sour relationships between the citizens and their governments, as trust keeps declining in the relationships. For instance, Babalola, (2012) held that Nigerians distrust in their government had been a long fairy tale, accumulated over the years by the indifferent manner with which public goods and services are delivered. However, the trust deficit is not limited to Nigeria or the developing countries as surveys have shown that even the developed world battles with a persistent decline in public trust (Moti, 2007 & 2013).

Distrust poses a serious challenge to the working of governments (Iroghama, 2012). In an attempt to reverse the trust deficiency, Governments strive to reinvent their operations and procedure in service delivery and public engagement. This quest manifests in the contemporary increasing migration to electronic public service delivery by governments. Citizens as well look forward to a flexible, efficient, and transparent administration as well as an increasing range of services that are internet-oriented (Wirtz & Daiser, 2015). If well implemented, Parent, Vandebeek, and Gemino (2005) posited that e-government – electronic delivery of public services - is a powerful tool for improving the internal efficiency of the government and the quality of service delivery as well as enhancing public participation. A new paradigm in changing the attitudes and perceptions of the citizens towards government can be facilitated through the adoption of e-Government as it has the potential of bridging the wide gap between the citizens and the government. Similarly, e-government creates access to government data, which will, in turn, promote transparency and consequently lead to trust-building in the government by the citizens and the government. Trust, if genuinely present, can promote public participation, prompt compliance with government directives by the citizens, and as well inspire patriotism in the citizens.

A successful e-government project can promote transparency, accountability, and development. In return for timely, effective and efficient social services, the people pay taxes promptly; abide by state laws and offer themselves as and when necessary to the service of the state. The interchange of these mutual responsibilities does not just facilitate a harmonious co-existence between the state and the citizens but, it also helps in building citizen's trust in the government. In a more elaborate dimension, it raises social capital by boosting the overall levels of trust in the government.

Since the adoption of e-government in 2001, the Nigerian government, both at national and state levels, has put many services online. At the national level, such services include business registration, obtaining national identity cards, drug authentication, obtaining driver's licence, public examination registration, and payment of taxes, among others. Whether or not this effort has generated a significant level of trust in the government by the citizens remains an unanswered question. The answer to the question constitutes the focus of this study.

II. E-Government

The term e-government can be described as a summation of 'government' and 'ICT'. e-Government focuses on using the internet to transform the operations, structures, and, most importantly, the culture of governance (Alshehri, & Drew, 2010). Former

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Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, cited in Adeyeye and Aladesanmi (2011) e-Government as "the use of information & communication technologies, to improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of governance through implementing data warehousing and integrated decision support system to manage the modern economy for the benefit of the governed."

The European Commission (2003) conceives e-government as the use of computer-related technologies in public administration with organizational change and new skills in a bid to improve public services, strengthen support for public policies, and promote democratic processes. Similar to the European Commission's view is the perception of Denhardt and Denhardt (2009), who described e-government as a tool for service delivery; the use of "all the information and communication technology platforms and applications in the public sector or the use of the internet for delivering government information and services to citizens." Strengthening this perspective, Adah (2015) described e-Government as a two-way information sharing process that entails the application of ICTs in service delivery while ensuring unfettered access to such services to citizens. Practically, e-government signals the adoption of a new leadership approach, a new mechanism for policy formulation, an ingenious way for service delivery, new ways of listening, and responding to needs of the public as well as new ways of organizing and delivering good governance. Dhamodharam and Saminathan (2011) termed e-government as the "government's use of ICT tools, particularly web-based internet applications, to enhance the access to and delivery of government information and service to citizens, businesses, and arms of government." In the words of Jalali and Khorasani (2012), the concept of e-government stands for electronic service delivery and information exchange both within the public organizations and outside them (Inter-Governmental), which are performed using various technical tools. In this mix, a mutual relationship between government and citizens, non-profit organizations, business persons, employees, and the government itself is enhanced.

Concisely, a common understanding in these is that e-government refers to the application of ICTs, principally web-based platforms, to provide cheaper, effective, convenient, and faster access to government services.

a) Public/Political Trust

The ease with which trust is used in everyday discussions notwithstanding, no succinctly acceptable definition of the construct currently exists among researchers (Romano, 2003). However, trust implies a three-part relationship involving at least two actors and an act: a person may trust specific individuals or institutions to do specific things (Guinnane, 2005). The term is conceptualized as a multifaceted term with varied features that are considered relevant in defining it.

Trust can be defined as the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on shared norms, on the part of other members of that community (Iroghama, 2012). In a slightly different perspective, Lewicki and Bunker (1995) defined trust as a state involving confident, positive expectation about another's motives concerning oneself in situations involving risk. Lewicki and Bunker sees trust as a "subjective assessment of another's influence in terms of the extent of one's perceptions" of the quality and significance of another's impact on "one's outcomes in a given situation, such that one's expectation of, openness to, and inclination toward such influence provide a sense of control over the potential outcomes of the situation". Nonetheless, trust is conditional, incremental, and symmetrical. Simply put, it is the confidence reposed in others, indicating that they will do the right thing.

"Trust appeared with humanity and the development of social interaction. Almost every aspect of a person's life is based on one or another way in trust" (Colesca, 2009). Trust is a concept drawn from an array of disciplines that is influenced by both measurable and non-measurable factors. Jalali and Khorasani (2012) buttressed that trust appeared in the everyday life of the people. Therefore, it is a very robust concept, covering a wide range of relationships. According to Eigeman (2007), trust is a key element in the relationship between voters and elected representatives that forms part of the representative legitimacy and the political system. He opines that "if one desires a solid basis for making and enforcing rules for citizens and society, trust is essential." Trust is the first responsibility of the political administration, which it must strive to gain to maintain a sustainable position of the government as a carrier of public authority. In the OECD (2000), perspective, 'public' trust is the expectation of citizens from a government to function in the interest of the citizens with fairness and to manage and distribute public resources properly without prejudice. Thus, a fair, reliable, and equitable public service provision inspires public trust and creates a favorable environment for citizens and the economy to prosper.

Plato initiated the earliest form of discussion on the concept of political trust. The classical political philosopher garnered his argument in the dialogue of *Protagoras* during the debate over the city of Mytilene in The *Peloponnesian* War. The central point of the argument was whether some degree of public trust is good for a society, especially democratic societies, and what impact does the presence and absence of public trust have in the communities. Mara (2001) noted that

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Thucydides' treatment of the *Mytilenean* debate shows that for democratic societies to prosper and be sustained, it needs public trust where participants can deliberate, discuss issues and make decisions of common interest together and openly. From Price's (2006) point of argument, in his work on Trust in Plato's Republic, the description of the ideal state by Plato is built on public trust. Although, the public trust here is a one-way channel of trust where citizens are expected to trust and accept their leaders' or rulers' commands and dictates without questions. A quick validity to the argument of Plato was further entrenched in the work of Hobbes, the *Leviathan* on why there should be public trust. Hobbes asserted that every society needs a sovereign (ruler), which will act as the state to which all citizens and subjects must give absolute trust to him. Absolute trust and power that is accorded to him by the citizens will allow him to make justice, punish and threaten potential enemies of the state (Wolff (2006).

However, Hobbes' position was challenged by Locke's viewpoint in his *Second Treatise Civil Government,* where he posits that absolute power and trust in a sovereign is more dangerous than living in the state of nature, where life is brutish, nasty and short. He further argued that though, every society is in dire need of a sovereign yet, absolute powers and trust cannot be placed on a single institution, rather constitutional. It is constitutional in the sense that there are limits to the powers of the sovereign and which is based on the principle of trust (social contract). Therefore, when this principle is breached, the powers can be withdrawn (Wolff 2006). In this light, it can be argued that Hobbes' rationale for forming a constitutional government is based on trust between the citizen and the government in a two-way manner.

Trust expressed when policies of the government are rolled out or executed is known as political trust [public]. According to Easton (1965), trust in government can be specific or diffuse. Specific trust highlights the level of citizens' confidence and satisfaction with a government or political institution based on the overall performance of the administration in its policies, governance style, corruption fighting and fair allocation and distribution of the public goods. Diffuse trust occurs when citizens express support and satisfaction for a particular government regime or administration irrespective of performance, otherwise known as blind trust. Bourne (2010a) simplified political trust as a collection of individuals' evaluation of the government's performance and the political sphere. Sequel to the above, the submission of Albesher (2015) holds as he opined that trust in the government is explained as a group or individual perceptions regarding the perceived and expectations of the ability, benevolence, and integrity of the government agency delivering the service, which generates the agency's trustworthiness.

b) Differentials in Public Trust

Cheema (2006) sub-classified trust in government into four categories- goodwill, competence, procedural, and performance trusts. A government that practices inclusiveness and participation in its policy and programs is set to enjoy a goodwill trust from the citizens. Competency trust is earned by carrying out programs, policies, and fulfilling mandates irrespective of citizens' believe or not. It deals mostly with the speed and accuracy of carrying out the tasks. Procedural trust occurs when citizens perceive the government institution as an institution that follows the rules, guidelines, and state protocols. While a good overall achievement in all the above three variants mentioned earlier in terms of output, outcome, and impact of policy-making and programs invention set by a government institution is used in performance trust.

Trust in government is multifaceted and in multi-level dimensions as institutions within the government do not enjoy the same levels of trust. Citizens' expectations are quite different in advancing trust in government institutions. The trust citizens have for the parliament is quite different to the military and that of the paramilitary is different to that of the judiciary. The basic knowledge of the citizens about their environment makes them establish trust or mistrust in the institutions concerned. Maintenance of law and order establishes the basis for trust in the military and the paramilitary. Therefore, if law and order are established with a low level of social disorder, trust in the military will be high. While the parliamentarians' trust is established on making right laws and policies for their constituents which serve as the basis for establishing trust. Concisely, Tolbert & Mossberger (2006) identified trust differentials: *Process-Based Trust and Institutional-Based Trust*

c) Determinants of Political Trust

Trust in government institutions has been declining overtime (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). There are varying reasons why citizens do or do not advance trust in their government institutions. These vary from geographical sub-region, economic performance, leadership style, observance of ethics, rules and regulations, charisma and institutional/ organizational credibility, performance, as well as policy-making and implementation that contributes to the life of the citizenry (Bourne 2010b; Blinder, 2000; Norris, 1999; Hetherington, 1998). Although the institution does not matter in determining the trust of citizens on all occasions, rather the demographic characteristics of citizens do matter as well. Thomas (1998) presents this argument in explaining the different ways by which citizen trust in public institutions is shaped.

A critical assessment of the economy is an important step in determining the level of trust citizens have in their government. An ever-improving economic

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performance without a recession is the expectation of the citizens (Mansbridge, 1997), which governments view as an impossible achievement. Tax and its reciprocity become a basis for the citizens' launch of trust for their government, as citizens believe that tax paid should be commensurate with the level of public goods provision. Therefore, anything short of this feat shows an ineffective and inefficient government in managing the economy (Bok, 1997). Therefore, the ability of the government in tackling financial crisis is inherent in determining what level of trust the citizens are going to have in the government. It indicates that the time required for the government to react and solve economic problems determines what level of trust the government is set to earn. Moreover, political economy literature has indicated that well-to-do economies with high income that translates in the better welfare of the citizens and a lesser gap of inequality enjoy a higher level of trust than poorer countries (Blind, 2006; Alesina & Vacziarg, 2000).

Corruption management is another factor in determining the level of trust citizens have for their governments in corruption-ridden countries. Hazan (2006) opined that corruption [management] stands a yardstick used by citizens in accessing the level of confidence in socio-political institutions. It is not enough for public officials to claim they are fighting corruption; they should not appear corrupt as well. It can also be put, as "officials are liable not just for their behavior but also for how their conduct appears to the public." Corruption Management Bodies' performance is responsible for determining the level of trust to be garnered by the government. However, more often than not, they serve in the interest of the highest level of government or the party in power in a democratic setting (Moti, 2013).

The quantity and quality of social capital available in the society also affect the trust citizens have in their government. Social and demographic indices like age, literacy, and income level all contribute to what level of trust a society bequest its government (Christensen & Laegreid, 2003). In the developing nations, the older generation tends to be "tolerant with corrupt but democratic" regimes while the middle class gets frustrated with corrupt administrations, which serve as a basis for distrust. The income level of members of the society also shapes what political trust will look like. As lower and middle income, groups tend to display a lower level of trust than the high-income group. Clientelism is believed to be the sole source of getting rich as higher-income groups pursue wealth from the government rather than creating wealth for the lower-income groups (Lozano, 2002).

Colesca (2009), while reaffirming the trust determinants, held that trust-building is a cumulative process where the level of trust in the initial levels influences that of the later stages while affecting the institutionalization of longer-term trust relationships. In this context, several factors that alter trust-building are:

i. *Pre-interactional factors*

a. *Individual behavioral features:* history, identity, culture, experiences, credibility, fairness, competency, honesty, propensity to trust, general intention to use e-services.

b. *Institutional features:* organizational reputation, performance, innovativeness, prestige, and the perceived trustworthiness of the institution.

c. *Technological features:* public-key encryption, interface design, and integrity.

ii. Interactional factors

a. Service features like reliability, timeliness, quality, and universality.

b. Transactional delivery features like applicability, utility, accuracy, privacy, interactivity.

c. Information content features like timeliness, completeness, reliability, conciseness, and accuracy.

III. Governance and Public Trust in Nigeria

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

The return to civil rule in 1999 was a gentle balm for Nigerians as everyone looks forward to a better and prosperous Nigeria only to be disappointed afterward through incessant increments in the price of petroleum products and endemic political corruption. The first civilian administration (1999- 2007) recorded an increase in the price of petroleum products five times. Every occasion is supported by a promise to enhance the quality of lives and infrastructural development, but all ended up with empty results (Salami & Ayoola, 2010). Voters also evidenced the absence of public trust in the Nigerian government in the 2007 general election where electoral fraud was glaring, the results were contested in

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many fora, and this led to protests. Many independent observers called for the cancellation of the result as well as a quick electoral reform (Iroghama, 2012). On January 1, 2012, the government subsidies on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) were removed, and this led to an increase in the petrol pump price by up to 91.65%. Nigerians took to the streets in protest of the development that grounded economic activities of the country for weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-Government appears to offer a panacea to the government's inefficiency, the absence of transparency, and it will facilitate an increase in the level of interaction between the government and the citizens (Dhamodharam & Saminathan, 2011; West, 2005). In many countries, e-government is fast replacing the traditional and conventional bureaucratic mode of public service operation, though much faster in some than others. In the Sub-Saharan African countries (where Nigeria belongs), the rate is quite slow but steady as most of the public bureaucracies "are still hierarchical and lack accountability and transparency" (Ngulube, 2007). The emergence of information technology in Nigeria serves as a new paradigm shift in the manner, process and pattern of communication between, within and outside the public sector.

IV. E-Government - Trust Relation

Over the past decades, public trust in government has been on a decline in the developed (and developing) world. Reversing such a decline of trust has become an vital goal of modern government in countries around the world (Moti, 2007; Sang & Sunhyuk, 2012). Coincidentally, since the 90s, ICTs have impacted society in many ways, principally due to the advent of the Internet (Colesca, 2009). Governments embrace this swift wave as countries around the world began to recognize the relevance of e-Government in providing a good governance to its citizens and businesses (Srivastava & Teo, 2005). Governments have started to accept the invaluable opportunities offered by ICT to fit with citizens' demands, and have thus incorporated it in public service delivery in what is popularly termed e-Government (Colesca). Thus, governments now commit huge investment in the Internet and have predominantly adopted the mantra of service efficiency (Parent, Vandabeek & Gemino, 2005).

e-government is now emerging as a dynamic tool that can potentially enhance the people's perspective, reverse the declining trust in government, and play a significant role in promoting social service delivery quality as well as being one of the tools for

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developing the level of social participation (Jalali & Khorasani, 2012). Collaboratively, Subhash (2007) also held that a well-planned e-government strategy could build a more efficient, accountable, and transparent government. He further noted that if key stakeholders were incorporated in the planning, e-government applications could rejuvenate citizen's trust in government, by enhancing service delivery, promoting transparency, prevent corruption while empowering citizens through participation in governance.

Al-Hakim (2007) explained that the growing concerns that led to the widespread global e-government acceptance are Innovation, Information Society, Globalization, and Democracy. By democracy, the author buttressed that it revolves around the relationship between the government and the citizens. In such a relationship, fairness, transparency, accountability, and trust are invaluable. e-government, therefore, helps in the institutionalization of democratic values and the promotion of good governance. Today, one of the principal challenges of governments, especially in developing countries, is the absence of public trust, otherwise conceptualized as the crisis of public trust, and one of the ways for overcoming such crisis is becoming electronic (Jalali & Khorasani, 2012). Collaboratively, Tolbert & Mossberger (2006) held that the digital government had attracted attention as one way of improving citizen interactions with government and a possible remedy to the dilemma that citizens' apathy and distrust pose for democracy.

However, it can be argued that people's trust in government is a foundation, which strengthens every state in the world (Jalali & Khorasani, 2012) as a high level of trust forms a critical factor for implementing a successful e-government program (Al-Hakim 2007). Citizens' trust, leading to the acceptance of government and its actions, has two dimensions: trust that the government possesses the managerial and technical resources necessary to implement policies and the extent of openness/transparency displayed in its conduct.

In order to alter citizen's perception, the government must institutionalise the goal-centric and citizen-centric features. For the government to achieve this, it should first acquaint itself with the needs of the citizens and provide such needs in an efficient and effective way and do so technologically (Lim, Masrom & Din, 2013).

V. Methodology

Concerning data collection, the study made use of online users of eight (8) purposively selected Federal Agencies in Nigeria, namely: the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). Others are the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). Their selection is based on the ground that they constitute the leading online public service delivery agencies in Nigeria. In the administration of the online survey, the respondents were reached on three (3) Facebook platforms through a hyperlink. The platforms are Facebook Audience-Access Service, sorted on the bases of Nationality (Nigerians), Educational Status (Higher Education), and Profession (Graduates, Self-employed, Elite, and Artisans); followers of all Federal Universities on Facebook and followers of the selected agencies on Facebook. A significant number of these social media users are believed to have interacted with the government electronically. The survey was available online to respondents for four (4) weeks. Data collected were analyzed to determine the extent of public trust that the e-government initiative has succeeded in building in Nigeria, taking recent developments into cognizance.

VI. Findings and Discussion

a) Socio-Demographic Features of the Respondents

As presented in the Table 1, 5624 (40.9%) of the respondents are between 20 - 40 years, 8117 (59.1%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 41-60 years. This indicates that totality of the respondents are considerably matured and at their service age of 20-60 years, and this feature of respondents engendered very detailed and reliable responses for this study.

Table 1 also showed that 3179 (23.1%) of the respondents are female, while 10564 (76.9%) are male. Since it is not a gender-based study added to the fact that respondents consciously chose to respond to the survey, no bias can be inferred. Rather, the distribution is an indication that both male and female Nigerians patronize the government online. More remarkably, the total respondents have attained the tertiary level of education in their respective disciplines. The above implies that total respondents have relatively required academic level and exposure for providing reliable answers to the questions.

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

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Table 1: Socio-Demographic Details

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
21-40 years	5624	40.9
41-60 years	8117	59.1
Below 20 years	2	.0
Total	13743	100.0
Sex		
Female	3179	23.1
Male	10564	76.9
Total	13743	100.0
Academic Qualification		
Tertiary	13743	100.0
Profession		
Civil/Public Servant	7524	54.7
Private Worker	3394	24.6
Self-Employed	1032	7.8
Students	1784	12.9
Unemployed	9	.0
Total	13743	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The effect of e-Government on Public Trust in the Nigerian Government is measured using Likert-scale ratings. Respondents were asked to respond to the effect of e-Government on Public Trust in the Nigerian Government from the assertions made by the researcher. As presented in Table 2, 7423 (54.0%) of the respondents established that the reliability of the information provided to them through e-governance is moderate. This is a revelation that e-governance has been relatively reliable in the provision of required information by the citizenry. Also, they believed that the government would always do the right thing through electronic service delivery. This is evidenced in the 7685 (55.9%) reacted with a moderate level to this assertion.

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Field Survey, 2020

b) Test of Hypothesis

A hypothesis is tested on the effect of e-government services on public trust in Nigeria. The statistical tool used is one sample *t*-test with an alpha level of 5% (i.e., 0.05). The *t*-test result was generated from the variables listed in table 2.

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

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis

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

Table 4: One-Sample *t*-test

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

Using a test value of 60, a *t*-obtained of -4.73 with 2 degrees of freedom is significant at a 95% confidence level. This is much far away from *t* critical value of -4.303. There is a 0% chance of obtaining an insignificant positive effect on public trust by error. At any level of the three (3) areas of public trust assessed, significant positive effect was somewhat lower at an average of -57.86 than the set standard. Since probability value (0.000) is lesser than alpha level (0.05), this study rejected H_0; and accepted H_1. This, therefore, implies acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that e-government implementations had (t = -4.73, $p < 0.05$) significant effect on public trust in Nigeria. However, the practical significance is relatively clinical because the $t_{obtained}$ -4.73 is greater than $t_{critical\ value}$ -4.303 under 2 degrees of freedom at a 5% significance level. This

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difference further implies that significant effect existed between service delivery and public confidence with a practical difference from the null value.

VII. Recommendation and Conclusion

Nigeria is a country with a long history of cynicism in which the citizenry exhibited serious doubt in most actions of the government. Many factors, not within the focus of this study, could have been responsible for the situation. However, it has been partly established in the literature that online delivery of public services is capable of engendering transparency and subsequently promoting trust in a nation's government. This study investigated how the online delivery of public services (e-government) has impacted public trust in the Nigerian government. This was done using an electronic survey conducted with users of online government services. Stemming from the findings, the study concluded that the significant positive relationship established between electronic public service delivery and trust in government could catalyze promotion of trust in the Nigerian government. It, therefore, recommends that electronic delivery of services in the country should be improved upon and extended to other areas not currently covered to earn further trust from the citizens.

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