INVESTIGATING THE ICT USAGE ON TRANSPARENCY IN THE GOVERNANCE PROCESSES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This article discusses the nexus between ICT and transparency in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. There appears to be little or no attempt at investigating the role of ICT usage in transparency in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. This article takes this as a point of departure. The article relies on primary data sourced through mixed approach method of administering of questionnaire on local council ICT officers, registered voters, local community and youth leaders and key informant interview of officers of ICT non-governmental organisations. For the Quantitative design, 418 respondents were administered with questionnaire while 18 key informants were purposively interviewed. Data were analysed using SPSS; correlation co-efficient analysis using tables, while the interview responses were presented using content analysis. Results showed a positive correlation of +0.421 between ICT and transparency in local governance. The study concludes that local governance will better be enhanced through relevant ICT tools in rural communities..

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many scholarly Studies and inquiries on the impact of ICT, particularly with respect to promoting good local governance in Nigeria, are engendered mainly by incessant cases of lack of transparency in public affairs and institutions, poor citizens' participation, outright poor service delivery and provision of public goods, low participation in governance and decision-making process. And most especially, the level of infrastructural decadence at the local level.

Flowing from this, literature have shown that, despite the allocation from Federal Government and Internally Generated Revenues (henceforth, IGRs) potentials of several grassroots governments, there has not been much to be presented as evidences and expected outcome on local development, largely due to corruption and bad governance. In addition, electoral malpractices and *apathetic* political behaviour (lack of participation) of the local populace, non-accountability and transparency of grassroots political leaders and public-office holders has thus made

good local governance and developmental aspirations of the local populace to become

a mirage. The introduction of and adoption of ICT to governance and electoral system in Nigeria have thus provoked studies aimed at reversing poor participation — indifference political attitude, electoral frauds, and lack of transparency and accountability of both public officials and political leaders in local governance.

However, while several studies have investigated the impact of ICT as a tool that could enhance good governance at national and regional levels of government and its executable roles (Kwami, 2013; Adesola, 2012; Iwasokun, Alese, Thompson & Aranuwa, 2011; Misuraca, 2007; Nasser, Gage & John, 2005; Olowu, 2004; Mundy & Sultan, 2001; Agere, 2000), they have not been able to show the extent of the impact of ICT on citizens' participation in local politics and elections, local administration, on disclosing effectiveness in service delivery, transparency, accountability or otherwise of local public and political office holders, as well as the implication of ICT for good governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

Governance at the Local Level

Fundamentally, an appropriate working understanding of what governance stand for could be described in this study as "a multifaceted compound situation of a systems, institutions, structures, processes, procedures, practices, relationships, and leadership behaviour in the exercise of social, political, economic, and managerial or administrative authority in the running of public or private affairs". Be that as it may, it will then accompany an understanding of "local governance" to denote the exercise of authority at the local community level. We, however, need to bear in mind that not every governance excersised at the local level would constitute local governance. It is therefore equally conceivable to have central governance or even foreign governance at local level. The essential and determinants factor with which to consider whether or not governance is local is the extent of the involvements of the local populace in the steering (i.e. determining the direction) in consonance to their local needs, priorities, and their problems. It is on this basis that governance ceases to be a matter of government only; it becomes a position of multiple inter-linkages and relationships in which different and various actors in the public and private sectors as well as civil

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society at local, national and international levels play different roles sometimes mutually conflicting and sometimes mutually reinforcing and complementary, particularly with aligned purpose in satisfying the interests of the local community. It may be true, according to Klugman (1994), cited in Kauziya (2000), that "local governments act more in accordance with the needs and priorities of local communities than would higher authorities". Thus, the higher authorities in accomplishing their share of the job and effort in accordance to the needs and priorities of the local community need to prioritise close partnership with the local governments.

The study may then ask: what does locality really imply in local governance? Local governance does not make reference to local government or local populations alone. It refers to a situation where whatever governance actor (an international NGO, a central government institution, a local government agency, or a private sector enterprise) does in strategically planning, implementing, maintaining, evaluating and controlling, with thrust on the needs, priorities, interests, participation, and well-being of the local populace as the central and superintendent consideration. In other words, what is local about local governance need not be the actor, but rather the needs, interests, priorities, participation, control and well-being of the local people. It thus becomes imperative to have this in mind otherwise we will remain in the structural constraints of equating local governance to local government. For the sake of a better analysis, several studies have empirically proven that not all local governments work in the interests of the local populations. As such there is tendency that several local governments may have become exploitative and dictatorial to the local populace while serving the interests of local leaders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study utilises bottom-up development approach through democratic participation theory of local government. The synergy of the bottom-up approach is the earsplitting together of systems to give rise to more complex systems. Bottom-up is a type of information based on incoming data from the environment to form a perception. In a bottom-up approach, the individually base elements of the system are

first specified in great detail; these elements are linked to form a larger subsystem, which in turn are linked, sometimes in many levels until a complete top-level system is formed. Scholars, such as Carl (1950), Staughton (1950), Gutman (1951), Haward (1952), Thompson (1952), and Jesse (1954) are proponents of this theory but the main intellectual mentor of this approach is Thompson (1952) who proclaimed it in the 1950s.

The bottom-up approach means that local actors are democratically participating in the decision-making process after the strategy and the selection of priorities are pursued in their local area. In this approach, local actors such as local institutions, economic and social interest groups, and private institutions are involved and they work together. Capacity building is an essential component of the bottom-up approach, the basis of which ICT can serve as an enabler. The shift, according to Enri (2006), from top-down to bottom-up mechanism can be seen from 1980s, which acknowledge the value of indigenous technical know-how and the ability of the poor to contribute to solutions to their own problems, and a reflection of the over-relating action, instead recognised the uniqueness of local experiences, making it sacrosanct.

Be that as it may, Sharma (2006) equally recognised that both practice and theory affect the shift, and this approach can also be described as moving toward an organic, holistic participatory approach with management, and cooperation with local institutions in recognition of local development sustainability through local good governance via ICT instrumentality. Olowu (2000) describes some issues with top-down development planning by using the Africa experience with development. Olowu (2000) states that "Past centralized effort, however well-intentioned, were marked by their failure to benefit the rural poor, further adding to the paradigm shift to favour local development planning and community participation in an effort to create development and reduce poverty, as well as to empower local people through the bottom-up mechanism through ICT's aid."

Erni (2006) further points out that the bottom-up approach focuses on how indigenous capacities are strengthened for development purpose and how local actors synergise and deploy local resources to achieve local goals. For Robinson (1997), the

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bottom-up approach sees local/rural development as community-based, and as Behere (2009) puts it, people should have the opportunity to contribute to their own fates. This demonstrates the need for careful planning and local-centric consideration, particularly in terms of local groups and demographics, as well as their active involvement and participation enabled by the e-governance and the ICT instrumentality in order for development multitudes to be broadly successful. The bottom-up approach is people-centered and its various modes of democratic participation and empowerment; it centres on how local people can be involved in the development process in terms of human resources, physical innovations and capabilities, and community capacity within their locality. Therefore, this approach is a deviation from the past apathetical political behavior to a more participatory role and involvement of the local populace.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised primary data which were obtained through key informants' interviews and administration of questionnaire among the elected political office holders, local party officials, NULGE and executive members of ICT oriented Non-Governmental Organizations. A total of 460 copies of questionnaire were administered to the above-mentioned category of respondents in order to elicit information on the nexus between information and communications technology and governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. However, 418 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from the field, thus representing 90.8% of the total questionnaires that were administered. Additional data were collected through interview of 18 people who were drawn from ICT officers of non-government organisations (Revoder, Tracker, BudgIT) who have deep understanding of the subject of discourse.

RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS

This section evaluated the impact of ICT on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with a number of assertions raised in order to generate quantitative data on this specific objective. In this regards, Table 1 revealed the frequency and

percentage distribution of respondents on each of the statements set out to evaluate the impact of ICT on transparency in the governance processes at the grassroots level. In addition, the mean value $(\overline{X})$ summarises the strength of the respondents for each of the assertions set out to achieve this objective, using a decision rule as thus: where $(\overline{X} > 2.5)$, more respondents agreed, and where $(\overline{X} < 2.5)$, more respondents disagreed.

On the first assertion in Table 1, 183 (43.8%) strongly agreed and 170 (40.7%) agreed that local good governance is predicated on transparency, openness and participation. Apparently, there was still observable disagreement level of about 13% to this assertion. Meanwhile, an aggregate of 84.5% of the respondents appeared affirmative to this assertion $(\overline{X} = 3.16, SD = 0.993)$. This is rather an indication that transparency, openness and participation are three (3) main predicators of good governance indices within the study area. With respect to the second assertion, it was stated that the transparency in local revenue generation and expenditure, through a formidable ICT platform like POS and e-registration can guarantee good local service delivery in Southwestern Nigeria. It was observable in their reactions that an approximate of 82.5% respondents acknowledged the assertion, aggregating from 128 (30.6%) who strongly agreed, and 217 (51.9%) who ordinarily agreed. Meanwhile, about 11 representing 2.6% of the respondents made no response; and a summation of 63 (14.8%) of the respondents fell in the disagreement category with this assertion $(\overline{X} = 3.03, SD = 0.918)$. This is an indication that openness could be achieved in local revenue generation via the usage of ICT platforms with resultant effect on local service delivery in Nigeria at large.

In addition, respondents were asked to either agree or disagree to the third assertion on whether the transparency of political leaders in governance has been improved through ICT. In their responses, 104 (24.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed to this assertion; and 177 (42.3%) of the respondents ordinarily agreed. Meanwhile, 71 (17%) of the respondents disagreed with this assertion; and 52 (12.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This becomes statistically confirmed by the $(\overline{X} = 2.73, SD = 1.071)$ which is above mid-point 3.0. This implies that instrumentality of

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ICT tools could be used to attract the transparency attributes among modern politicians.

With regards to the fourth assertion in Table 1, 129 (30.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed; and 184 (44%) also neutrally agreed. However, 55 (13.2%) strongly disagreed and 39 (9.3%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement that the reduction in corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants' salaries have been enhanced with the introduction of e-payment, e-tax collection, and IPPIS (Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System). Though, 11 (2.6%) of the respondents did not react to this assertion. In this respect, this result showed that majority of the respondents excellently accredited this assertion ($\overline{X}$ = 2.91, SD = 1.022). This implies that introduction of e-service platforms have capacity to dislodge all forms of financial anomalies in governance processes at local level.

The fifth assertion stated that the use of ICT platform such as the newly introduced programme of IPPIS, TSA, BVN, FOI, Whistle-Blower policy and e-payments systems of the government helped to reduce leakages of local public funds. Responding to this assertion, the assumption was authorised by 131 representing 31.3% of the respondents and 203 (48.6%) of the respondents who strongly agreed and ordinarily agreed to this current phenomenon. Meanwhile, an aggregate of 79.9% respondents fell in agreement with the assumption ($\overline{X}$ = 2.98, SD = 0.989). This is rather an evident confirmation to the strength of the newly introduced financial programmes with the aid of ICT has mitigating capacities to reduce leakages of public funds into the informal economy.

The sixth assertion in Table 1 showed that 159 (38%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 194 (46.4%) of the respondents ordinarily agreed to the assertion that lack of transparency is responsible for low-development and bad governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Meanwhile, 11 (2.6%) of the respondents did not react to this assertion. However, 14 (3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 40 (9.6%) of the respondents disagreed to the assertion. From this data distribution, an approximate of 84% of the respondents fell in agreement with this assertion. The agreement level was further verified by the ($\overline{X}$ = 3.14, SD = 0.911)

which is above 3.0 mid-point. By implication, what makes governance and development to be less appreciated is supposedly caused by lack of transparency by governmental institutions at the local level.

It was also asserted for respondents to react to whether the corruption, lack of transparency and election rigging have undermined democratic survival and development in Southwestern Nigeria. In this seventh reaction, an aggregate of 84.2% respondents maintained an agreement position with assertion. However, 12.7% of the respondent discredited this assertion. While, just 2.5% of the respondents did not react ($\overline{X}$ = 3.11, SD = 0.932). This is an indication that the trio of corruption, lack of transparency and election rigging were accredited as depleting factors of good governance at the local level within the study area.

In the same vein, it was opined that lack of transparency in local revenue generation processes and expenditure by the public office-holder will engender corruption on the part of public and political office holder in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. Reacting to this eighth assertion, 158 representing 37.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and 192 (45.9%) of the respondents ordinarily agreed. There was however a slight disagreement by 34 representing 8.1% of the respondents and 22 (5.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to the assertion ($\overline{\chi}$ = 3.11, SD = 0.959). This data distribution confirms the lack of transparency as a deteriorating attribute both in the processes of revenue generation and expenditure at the local level.

In addition, respondents were asked to either agree or disagree to the statement on whether transparency is part of the drivers of bad local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. Responding to this ninth assertion, 193 (46.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed to this assertion; and 162 (38.8%) of the respondents ordinarily agreed. This data distribution becomes statistically denoted by the ($\overline{X}$ = 3.22, SD = 0.935) which is above mid-point 3.0. Meanwhile, 38 (9.1%) of the respondents disagreed with this assertion; and 14 (3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This is an indication that transparency has a considerable impact on

governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. However, the ICT impulse on transparency was further subjected to hypothesize testing.

The results from quantitative data, was further confirmed by that of the qualitative data through interviews. On the impact of ICT on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Almost all respondents were of the view that in the actual sense, ICT can certainly promote transparency in the government processes. But the developments at the local level show that government processes have been marred by corruption and lack of accountability. But with the deployment of ICT tools transparency can be gradually restored to local government and governance system. Respondents expressed divergent views on the impact of ICT on transparency in government processes at the local government level. While some, particularly majority of them, were of the view that ICT has significantly improved transparency in government processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

Of more concern was the issue raised by some respondents on the abuse of ICT by politicians to deliberately cover-up their shady activities while in government. For these respondents, ICT has had no meaningful impact on transparency processes at the local level. Comparatively, more respondents among those interviewed were of the opinion that ICT had promoted transparency in the governance processes at the local level. This however confirmed some of the results in the quantitative analysis. For instance, it was found that 82% of respondents agreed that ICT has enhanced transparency in local revenue generation and expenditure, through a formidable ICT platform like POS and e-registration can guarantee good local service delivery in Southwestern Nigeria. This result is consistent with the response of one of the respondents, a Revenue Collector in one of the selected local government who averred that:

> Anyway, the only way we can make ICT work through revenue generation is to involve the stakeholders, I mean the market women, bike riders, commercial taxi drivers, and other concerns in the use of POS or transfer payments though their banks in paying their taxes and levies. Most of these women, if you can educate and orientate them on the use of those electronic payments, they quickly get

adapted to it since it will be of benefit for them to control their financial affairs without involving the other party. Moreover, the government can also introduce it in the local governments of the state, and then we can now talk of transparency. When government is transparent, it brings about efficiency, development and ensures accountability on the part of the leaders. In that case, the citizens would be involved in decision of their affairs and this would guarantee good local service delivery to the citizens[1].

In a similar vein, a Youth Leader of the leading political party in one the selected states argues that:

Transparency at local level is encouraged when you pay for some levies like marriage services, you go to the bank and pay and you come to the local government to get your certificate with the receipt issue to you in the bank and all is being registered online now through the ICT. More so, in the embassy, it is possible to know the people that have registered and to compare whether the certificate of marriage is authentic or not. This is possible because our database has been link with the embassy and it will easily show the name, date and the time you registered with us. That is e-governance and transparency compliance[2]

Considering these submissions, it is obvious that ICT can certainly restore transparency in governance processes at the grassroots. The deployment of e-payment, POS, BVN, IPPIS are all tools of ICT that can change the attitude of public officers and instill in them transparency and honesty. Evidences (Nassar 2005; Thompson 2008; Yared 2008; Iwasokun 2012; Kwami 2013) in the literature further confirmed the two aforementioned submissions of respondents at the interview session. Specifically, Kwami (2013) and Iwasokun (2012) averred that the use of ICT has been a leading source of transparency in public affairs, while Nassar (2005) and Thompson (2008) argued that ICT is a potential source of transparency in government business. The use of ICT tools like POS, CCTVs, BVN, etc.

In furtherance of this view is one of the respondents' submission that "*ICT have helped to restore honesty and transparency in governance, especially at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.*[2] But this view was highly criticised by some respondents who revealed that in spite of ICT tools at the local government level, some politicians are

still not transparent and honest in their dealings with the citizens. Most Nigerian politicians have integrity problems and may find it very difficult to be transparent and honest. While some respondents blamed it on how or process of gaining control of government or power at the local level, others blamed it on greediness and selfish interest of the politicians at the local level. For this group of respondents, ICT, if well utilised and adopted, has the potentials of promoting transparency and integrity at local level in Southwestern, Nigeria.

Corroborating this view were Odalonu (2015), and Ajayi and Adesote (2015) who argued that ICT, though has good intentions, but the way it is abused and operated in some local government level, show that most politicians still remains and display dishonest characters in spite of ICT use at the local level. During the interview session, issues like local good governance is predicated on transparency, openness and participation came up prominently, and responses were provided by respondents. Almost all respondents shared the view that good governance at the local government level is predicated on transparency, openness, accountability and participation. This is expressed and confirmed in the quantitative results as 84 percent of respondents strongly agreed that local good governance is hinged on transparency, openness and participation of citizens in governance.

Similarly, evidences (Catherine 2016; Yanina & Anita 2016) from the literature also confirmed both (quantitative and qualitative) results. Specifically, Catherine (2016) avers that:

> *The essence of local governance is allowing citizens' participation, promote transparency and instill openness in service delivery. ICT tools like BVN, e-payment, POS, and many other ones are the foundation for transparency, openness and citizens participation. This certainly will promote trust of the people on the government. It will certainly enhance grassroots development and efficient service delivery.*

A critical look at this submission shows that good governance at the local level is hinged on transparency, openness and citizens' participation. Transparency will promote trust and legitimize the government. It will make the people have trust and

faith in the government, while openness will enhance effective and efficient service delivery at the local level. Citizens' participation certainly will promote democracy at the grassroots. One other issue that was raised during interview session was the nexus between ICT and transparency of political leaders in governance. Almost all respondents, with the exception of few, believe that ICT promotes transparency of political leaders in governance if properly implemented. But few respondents had different opinions as to whether ICT promotes transparency of political leaders in governance at the local level. The submissions of the respondents, an Information Technology Officer and a Community Leader of Community Development Association in one of the selected local government in the study area were very revealing and thought provoking. For him:

> *Our political leaders especially in Ife-North Local Government are gradually becoming transparent in their governance, because of the recent introduction of e-payment, IPPIS, BVN, and e-pension scheme at the local government level. These ICT tools have systematically blocked financial loopholes and abuse of office at the local level. ICT has made our leaders more open and honest. It fosters integrity and facilitates citizens' participation in politics[4].*

Similarly, opined is a Community Leader of Community Development Association in one of the selected local government in the study area:

> *ICT tools at the local level, are watchdogs antidote that curbs political leaders from corruption and dishonest. Without ICT, good governance at the local level, cannot thrive and be successful. It has promoted good governance and curbs the abuse of resources by political leaders. Political leaders in Ife-East local government are now financially accountable, transparent and open. The use of ICT tools like BVN and IPPIS block gaps of stolen money[5]*

From these submissions, it is obvious that ICT can significantly prohibit the involvement of political leaders from corrupt practices and make them highly transparent in the conduct of governance and political processes, open and honest. It equally, promotes citizens participation in governance through public criticism, debate and reporting, using appropriate ICT tools. Results from literature reviewed (Mkandawaire 2010; Iwasokun, 2012; Adesola 2012; Adeyeye 2016) confirmed the submissions of the respondents responses above.

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Table 1: Impact of ICT on Transparency in the Governance Processes at the Local Level in Southwestern Nigeria

S/N	Assertions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Response	Descriptive Statistics	
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
i.	Local good governance is predicated on transparency, openness and participation.	183 (43.8)	170 (40.7)	27 (6.5)	26 (6.2)	12 (2.9)	3.16	0.993
ii.	Transparency in local revenue generation and expenditure, through a formidable ICT platform like POS and e-registration can guarantee good local service delivery in Southwestern Nigeria.	128 (30.6)	217 (51.9)	41 (9.8)	21 (5.0)	11(2.6)	3.03	0.918
iii.	Transparency of political leaders in governance has been improved through ICT.	104 (24.9)	177 (42.3)	71 (17.0)	52 (12.4)	14(3.3)	2.73	1.071
iv.	Reduction in corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants' salaries have been enhanced with the introduction of e-payment, e-tax collection, and IPPIS (integrated Personnel Payroll Information System).	129 (30.9)	184 (44.0)	55 (13.2)	39 (9.3)	11 (2.6)	2.91	1.022
v.	The use of ICT platform such as the newly introduced programme of IPPIS, TSA, BVN, FOI, Whistle Blower policy and e-payments systems of the government helped to reduce leakages of local public funds.	131 (31.3)	203 (48.6)	38 (9.1)	35 (8.4)	11 (2.6)	2.98	0.989
vi.	Lack of transparency is responsible for low-development and bad governance at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.	159 (38.0)	194 (46.4)	40 (9.6)	14 (3.3)	11 (2.6)	3.14	0.911
vii.	Corruption, lack of transparency and election rigging has undermined democratic survival and development in Southwestern Nigeria.	152 (36.4)	200 (47.8)	38 (9.1)	15 (3.6)	13 (3.1)	3.11	0.932
viii.	Lack of transparency in local revenue generation processes and expenditure by the public office-holder will engender corruption on the part of public and political office holder in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria.	158 (37.8)	192 (45.9)	34 (8.1)	22 (5.3)	12 (2.9)	3.11	0.959
ix.	Transparency is part of the driver of bad local governance in Southwestern Nigeria.	193 (46.2)	162 (38.8)	38 (9.1)	14 (3.3)	11 (2.6)	3.22	0.935

Source: Field Survey, 2018

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

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

Table 2:   Correlation analysis between Influence of ICT on Transparency in Governance Processes within Southwestern Nigeria

Hypothesis				
ICT has no significant influence on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.	Correlation co-efficient (r)	Df	p-value	N
	+0.421	1	0.000	418

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 presents the correlation analysis between influence of ICT and transparency in governance processes within Southwestern Nigeria. According to Table 2, the spearman's correlation coefficient was positive (+0.421), which is significant at $p < 0.05$. The positive coefficient indicated that there is 42% positive influence between the role of ICT and transparency in governance processes within Southwestern Nigeria. Since probability value (0.000) is lesser than alpha level (0.05), the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that ICT has significant influence on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria ($r = 0.421$, $p < 0.05$). The spearman co-efficient therefore implies that two-fifth of the changes occurring on the transparency in governance processes at the local level in the Southwestern Nigeria is associated with the influence of ICT. The positive relationship also showed that the better influence of ICT, the better the transparency in governance in selected Local Government Areas within Southwestern Nigeria.

This result was further confirmed by the outcomes of respondents' responses during the interview session. Alabi[3] and Alebelewe's[4] responses captured the fact that there is a link between the use of ICT and governance transparency in the selected local governments area. Besides, evidences from Nassar (2005), Adesola (2012) and Fukuyama (2013) all confirmed the results from both the quantitative and qualitative test. For instance, Adesola (2012) noted that ICT promotes transparency in governance at the local level, while Nassar (2005) found out that ICT facilitates

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democratic governance through massive participation of citizens in governance, using any of the ICT tools. From all these analyses, it can therefore be concluded that ICT in the actual term is strongly linked or related to transparency in governance at the local level.

These results revealed that ICT had helped to promote transparency in our political leaders at the local level. In a more specific term, results in Mkandawaire (2010) showed that ICT tools like mobile phone, BVN, IPPIS, e-payment, e-pension and e-governance block financial loopholes and enhanced financial integrity at the local level.

In the same vein, results in Adesola (2012) revealed that ICT promotes integrity, openness and legitimacy of the government at the local level. On the issue of reduction in corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants' salaries with the introduction of e-payment, e-tax collection, and IPPIS (integrated Personnel Payroll Information System), all respondents agreed that corruption is reduced and quick and direct payment of workers' salaries is enhanced with the use of ICT at the local level. This result was further affirmed by that of the quantitative test as seventy percent of respondents were of the view that corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants' salaries were enhanced with the introduction of ICT at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

These results were aptly consistent with that of empirical work of Fukuyama (2013) who reveals that the essence of ICT is to eschew corruption and promote quick payment of workers' salaries in government offices. Also, at the interview session, issue like the use of ICT platform such as the newly introduced programme of IPPIS, TSA, BVN, FOI, Whistle Blower policy and e-payments systems of the government to reduce leakages of local public funds were thrown up as respondents give insight into the usefulness of ICT. 77% of respondents were of the view that ICT platforms like IPPIS, TSA. BVN, etc., have significantly helped to block areas of financial leakages of local public funds.

Corroborating this view was the response from a Community Development Association Chairman in one of the selected state of the study area, his response:

> *In public offices, especially at the local government level,*
> *IPPIS tools/platforms like TSA and BVN have significantly*
> *helped to block and bridge the leakages of local public funds.*
> *Specifically, the government is continually saving more money*
> *through IPPIS, TSA and BVN. Direct payment of workers'*
> *salaries as and when due fosters a deep sense of belonging*
> *among civil servants. ICT is a tool of organizational progress*
> *and development[5].*

The foregoing analysis shows that ICT has helped to blocked financial leakages in government offices including local governments. It improves the performance of local governments in terms of prompt service delivery and accountability. More importantly, ICT promotes a sense of belonging among workers who operates the ICT tools. In sum, it can be inferred that the use of ICT has had a greater impact in the transparency of political leaders at the grassroots level.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This sub-section provides further discussion on the study findings. It triangulates and synchronises the quantitative and qualitative findings with related empirical findings of other research works on the subject matter of the study. However, it attested to the point of divergence between the findings of this study and other empirical outcomes. The objective and assumptions earlier stated in the introductory section of this study were tested with data collected from the field in form of questionnaire and in-depth interview of key respondents. Having tested and accepted the hypothesis, it is imperative we discuss our findings further

Regarding the influence of ICT on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria, there is a consensus between results from quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results from the interview session showed that all respondents were of the view that ICT, when appropriately applied and implemented, has a significant influence on transparency in the government processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. Though few respondents disaffirmed this view, but comparatively, majority of respondents supported the view that ICT has immensely influenced transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria. This result was largely consistent with that of results from quantitative analysis as the results showed that governance processes such as revenue

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generation (81%), recruitment and transparency of political leaders (66%), corruption-free (70%) and blockage of financial leakages (79%) (See items ii-ix of Table 1). These results were consistent with that of empirical findings in Odalonu (2015), Frey (2008), Mouffe (2007), and Yanina and Anita (2016). Thus, the second objective was attained with data collected via interviews and questionnaire, and this corresponds to the second research hypothesis that ICT has a significant influence on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in the Southwestern Nigeria. The second hypothesis is valid and reliable considering the correlation between the second objective and the hypothesis that ICT has impacted positively in making political leaders and public office holders accountable in local governance in Southwestern Nigeria. This is valid, reliable and accepted.

These results revealed that ICT had helped to promote transparency in our political leaders at the local level. In a more specific term, results in Mkandawire (2010) showed that ICT tools like mobile phone, BVN, IPPIS, e-payment, e-pension and e-governance block financial loopholes and enhanced financial integrity at the local level.

In the same vein, results in Adesola (2012) revealed that ICT promotes integrity, openness and legitimacy of the government at the local level. On the issue of reduction in corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants salaries with the introduction of e-payment, e-tax collection, and IPPIS (integrated Personnel Payroll Information System), all respondents agreed that corruption is reduced and quick and direct payment of workers' salaries is enhanced with the use of ICT at the local level. This result was further affirmed by that of the quantitative test as seventy percent of respondents were of the view that corrupt practices, prompt and quick payment of civil servants salaries were enhanced with the introduction of ICT at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria.

These results were aptly consistent with that of empirical work of Fukuyama (2013) who reveals that the essence of ICT is to eschew corruption and promote quick payment of workers' salaries in government offices. Also, at the interview session, issue like the use of ICT platform such as the newly introduced programme of IPPIS, TSA,

BVN, FOI, Whistle Blower policy and e-payments systems of the government to reduce leakages of local public funds were thrown up as respondents give insight into the usefulness of ICT. 77% of respondents were of the view that ICT platforms like IPPIS, TSA. BVN, etc., have significantly helped to block areas of financial leakages of local public funds.

Corroborating this view was the response from a Community Development Association Chairman in one of the selected state of the study area, his response:

> *In public offices, especially at the local government level, IPPIS tools/platforms like TSA and BVN have significantly helped to block and bridge the leakages of local public funds. Specifically, the government is continually saving more money through IPPIS, TSA and BVN. Direct payment of workers' salaries as and when due fosters a deep sense of belonging among civil servants. ICT is a tool of organizational progress and development[5].*

The foregoing analysis shows that ICT has helped to blocked financial leakages in government offices including local governments. It improves the performance of local governments in terms of prompt service delivery and accountability. More importantly, ICT promotes a sense of belonging among workers who operates the ICT tools. In sum, it can be inferred that the use of ICT has had a greater impact in the transparency of political leaders at the grassroots level.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion on the role/impact of ICT on local governance in Southwester Nigeria, so far, is quite revealing. Of major revelation is the extent of positive impacts of ICT on good grassroots governance that is predicated on effective and unhindered citizens' participation, openness, accountability and effective local service delivery. This position was further validated by the results of the analysis of the data for this study which is measured and analysed using spearman's correlation coefficient to test for a significant association between the factor and the outcome variables at 0.05 levels of significance. P-values of less than or equal to 0.05 indicates that the independent variable (ICT) is significantly related to the outcome variable (good local governance predicated on unhindered citizens' participation, transparency, accountability of

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political and public office-holders and effective service delivery). And validation of the tested Hypotheses,

Thus; the spearman's correlation coefficient was positive (+0.421), which is significant at $p<0.05$. The positive coefficient indicated that there is 42% positive influence between the role of ICT and transparency in governance processes within Southwestern Nigeria. Since probability value (0.000) is lesser than alpha level (0.05), the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that ICT has significant influence on transparency in the governance processes at the local level in Southwestern Nigeria ($r = 0.421$, $p < 0.05$) (see Table 2). The spearman co-efficient therefore implies that two-fifth of the changes occurring on the transparency in governance processes at the local level in the Southwestern Nigeria is associated with the influence of ICT. The positive relationship also showed that the better influence of ICT, the better the governance transparency in selected local government areas within Southwestern Nigeria.

It was, however, further confirmed by the outcomes of respondents' responses during the interview session. Alabi[3] and Alebelewe's[4] responses captured the fact that there is a link between the use of ICT and governance transparency in the selected local governments area. Besides, evidences from Nassar (2005), Adesola (2012) and Fukuyama (2013) all confirmed the results from both the quantitative and qualitative test. For instance, Adesola (2012) notes that ICT promotes transparency in governance at the local level, while Nassar (2005) found out that ICT facilitates democratic governance through massive participation of citizens in governance, using any of the ICT tools. From all these analyses, it can therefore be concluded that ICT in the actual term is strongly linked or related to transparency in governance at the local level.

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Notes

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1 Interview with Akanji S. K Revenue Collector at Ife Central LGA Osun State

2 Interview with Ogunkoya APC Youth Leader in Ipokia LGA Ogun State

3 Interview with Alabi K A. Information Technology Officer, Odo- Otin LGA

4 Interview with Alabelewe H. A Community Leader, Community Development Association in Ife Central LGA Osun State

5 Interview with Ayeleru E. A. Inisa Community Development Association, Odo-Otin LGA Osun State.