Social Media

Diffusion of Innovation: The Perception and Attitude of Journalists in South-South Nigeria on e-Governance

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Abstract: The major focus of this study was to assess the attitude and perception of practising journalists towards e-governance in South-South Nigeria, with Cross River and Akwa Ibom States as the case study. The theoretical framework hinged on the diffusion of innovation theory. Descriptive survey method was used. Out of a population of 702 practising journalists in the two states, 140 of them formed the study's sample. Questionnaire was the instrument used to generate data. Findings showed that majority of the respondents had a poor attitude towards e-governance as they did not access government information, participate in e-governance process and report/cover e-governance even though they had a positive perception of the innovation and its operations. It was, therefore, recommended that journalists should periodically upgrade their knowledge of this innovation in governance as well as participate actively in publicising it to the populace.

Keywords: Attitude; diffusion of innovation; e-governance; journalists; perception

1. Introduction

Nigeria, by many standards, is a complex nation. With her uncontrollable growing population, porous international land borders, delicate infrastructural network, hundreds of uncompromising tribal/ethnic groupings, political insensitivity and instability, religious intolerance, alarming rate of insecurity and criminal activities, and sophisticated level of corruption in governance, the country is a difficult place to govern (Okon & Ekpe, 2018). To address this myriad of challenges, especially

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that of corruption, the Federal Government in the early 2000s announced "the initiative … to go digital to enhance the operation of the government in providing public services in a transparent, effective and efficient means" (Abdulkareem & Ishola, 2016). This initiative gave birth to the innovation, called electronic governance or e-governance, for short.

After 16 years of embracing this innovation by the Nigerian government, Abdulkareem and Ishola (2016) conclude that it "has been a mix of failure and success". One of the reasons for failure as identified by Abasilim and Edet (2015) is "attitude or resistance to change". In order to change this negative attitude, much sensitisation is required; and the mass media have a serious role to play in this regard.

Media practitioners, especially the journalists, are agents of social change. According to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (2014), journalism and media, together with those that work for them, "have the power and responsibility to both inform and inspire the public to political action". With the introduction of a relatively new concept such as the e-governance, these media professionals, in line with the above expectation, are to help in diffusing it among the citizenry. However, for them to do this effectively, they themselves should have a positive attitude towards and high perception of the innovation. Where they lack such level of attitude and perception, they cannot effectively discharge the responsibility expected of them. This paper is to, therefore, assess the attitude and perception of practising journalists about e-governance in South-South Nigeria, but particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom – two of the six states in the geopolitical zone.

1.1. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

i)To examine the ideas, beliefs or thinking about the operations of pushing government policies and programmes through online tools among practising journalists in South-South Nigeria.
ii) To ascertain how journalists in South-South Nigeria behave or act regarding reporting about online data for purpose of governance, accessing government online services and general dissemination of government policies and programmes.

1.2. Research Questions

i)What are the perceptions among journalists about the operations of e-governance in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States?

ii) What is the attitude of practising journalists towards the coverage and accessibility of e-governance services in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States?

1.3. The Evolution of e-Governance

Budhiraja (2003), in presenting the evolution of e-governance, claims that the innovation originated in India during the 1970s with focus on in-house applications in the area of defence, economic monitoring, planning, and the development of ICT to manage the data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax, administration, etc. most of these initiatives were stand-alone applications. During the 1980s, state wide area networks (SEANs) were created linking all districts through ICT networks. From the late 1990s onwards, the national government as well as the state governments enthusiastically pursued the adoption of ICTs, particularly, web-based technologies including the internet. According to the Indian Government's Second Administrative Reforms Commission's 11th report (2008, p. i)), "e-governance is, in essence, the application of Information and Communications Technology to government functioning in order to create 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance."

Budhiraja (2003) supports this position by alluding that e-governance involves making and implementing decisions, proper leadership, putting in place organisational arrangements, ensuring resources and funding, establishing accountability and measuring success. To this end, the European Commission adopted the definition of e-governance as the use of information and communication technologies in public administrations combined with organisational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes and strengthen support to public services (p. 120).

This definition is quite wide and includes aspects that are fundamental for successful use of ICT, such as organisational change and user skills. It does not assign a value to ICT or e-governance per se, but relates them to wider effort to support public policies. Adejuwon (2012) holds that the infrastructural requirements include telecommunications network, internal agency systems, cross-government systems, service delivery network access points, internet access and skilled staff. According to him, the expected outcomes are better delivery of government services to citizens, improving interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information and more efficient government management. In terms of the objectives of e-governance, Wimmer and Traumuller (2001) are explicit about them.

They contend that the main objectives of e-governance should include the following restructuring administrative functions and processes: (1) reducing and overcoming barriers to co-ordination and cooperation within the administration, and (2) the monitoring of government's performance.

E-governance has captured the interest of developing countries. There has been a considerable demonstrational effect of the constructive differences that e-governance has made in advanced economies in the delivery of services, provision of information and internal administration of the public sector. A country's ICT infrastructure and its openness to public reform play an important role in determining the type of application and kind of goals adopted for its implementation (Bhatnagar, 2007). A country's willingness to adopt basic public sector reform must determine the breadth and scope of e-governance applications. Many times, e-governance applications are used as catalyst that enables further reform. E-governance projects are funded with the expectation that these applications will increase efficiency, and bring about more transparency and accountability to citizens.

On the stages of e-governance, it is held that a couple of models have been proposed for the different stages in the evolution of e-governance services (Adeyemo, 2011). The United Nations e-governance global survey has adopted the following five-stage e-governance model (UN e-government survey, 2004, 2005 & 2008):

Stage 1 – Emerging presence: In this stage, a country commits to becoming an e-government player. A formal but limited web presence is established through a few independent government websites which provide users with static organisational or political information.

Stage 2 – Enhanced presence: Here, a country's online presence begins to expand as the number of official websites increases, with more dynamic and specialised frequently-updated information content. The interaction is still primarily unidirectional with information flowing from government to citizens.

Stage 3 – Interactive Presence: At this level, a country' presence on internet expands dramatically by entering the interactive mode with access to a range of government institutions and services.

Stage 4 – Transactional presence: In this stage, two-way interactions between the citizens and the government is included.

Stage 5 – Networks (or fully integrated) presence: This stage represents the most sophisticated level in the online e-government initiatives. It is characterised by an integration of G2G, G2C, and G2G (and reverse) interactions. Government

encourages participatory deliberative decision-making and is willing and able to include the society in a two-way open dialogue (UN global e-government readiness Report, 2004).

1.4. Benefits and Challenges of e-Governance

The benefits of e-governance come in different forms. Some relate to the provision of fast inexpensive services to the population (Heeks, 2001); and socio-economic development and political reformations for developing countries (Ifinedo, 2004, Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005). E-governance enables the citizenry to participate in the governance of their country (Moon, 2002). Nowhere is this benefit more than in developing countries, where governance excludes a majority of their population either deliberately or inadvertently. Similarly, corrupt practices that are rampant in many developing countries could be curtailed through a purposeful e-governance initiative (Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005). E-governance, according to Coleman (2005), offers the prospect of at least 10 major administrative and democratic improvements:

i. Cheaper and more effective management and processing of information.
ii. A freer flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government.
iii. More professional administrators supported by standard electronically-embedded decision-making systems.
iv. The routine provision of services according to impersonal rules as opposed to client-list arrangements.
v. Transparency, particularly in relation to the procurement of government services.
vi. Opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector in modernising governmental processes.
vii. A freer flow of information between government and citizens
viii. The strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions such as parliament, local government, civil society, organisations and independent media.
ix. Opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development.
x. Opportunities to combine traditional and modern methods of accountability.

The fourth African Development Forum (held in Addis-Ababa in October, 2004), as cited in Olufemi (2012), produced a consensus statement declaring that e-governance is an important innovation for enhancing good governance and strengthening the democratic process. It further acknowledged that e-governance can facilitate access to information, freedom of expression, greater equity, efficiency, productivity, growth and social inclusion (Kitaw, 2006). According to him, successful e-

governance initiative offers tangible opportunities which include: transforming the cumbersome public administration and service delivery processes thereby increasing efficiency of government, empowerment and participation of citizens; contributing to strengthening democratic processes, greater transparency and accountability, thus leading to a better governance; reducing opportunity for corruption; and stimulating the usage of ICT to transform agriculture-based economies.

Electronic governance is a phenomenon that is linked to the information society and the advantages associated with it. It allows government departments to network and integrate their services using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to improve service delivery and the relationship between the government and the public. The major ingredients of e-governance are: infrastructure, human resources and information.

The political benefits of e-governance that accrue from the use of I.T., according to Shatne (2001) and Symonds (2000) include: reduced government spending and increased interest earning. Costs incurred by government in providing services can be reduced by the use of the internet and less number of 'in-person' government contacts. Governments are under pressure to meet rising expectations for their services. With the use of internet, more individuals are able to access government's services without necessarily going to the government's office or contacting by telephone. The use of the internet reduces the negative attitude individuals have towards government agencies because not many people enjoy interacting with their government. Also, it allows for delivery of government services from any place to citizens 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Websites serve as convenient and cost effective platforms for centralised service provision. Businesses, residents, visitors and inter-government agencies can easily access public information related to their specific needs by simply checking on different web links. They can also contact government officers directly through e-mail or online request forms. One of such developments is the use of CRM software, which provides a vehicle through which government can increase cooperation through integration of back office and front office. Another beneficial outcome of e-governance is the promotion of e-democracy. Some examples of digital democracy include voter registration, public opinion polling, and communication among elected representatives and their constituents.

Some scholars have examined some challenges of e-governance. According to Olufemi (2012, p. 128), the first impression was that e-governance would change the daily lives of ordinary citizens. However, this positive first impression changed when

it was observed that creating a sound system of e-governance would not be as easy as expected. He further posits that the main disadvantage or challenge of an e-government is to move the government services into an electronic-based system. This system leaves out the person-to-person interaction which is valued by many people. In addition, the implementation of an e-governance service is that, with technology-based services, it is easy to make the excuse that problems with the service provided are because of the technology (example, the server has gone down).

The implementation of e-governance does have certain constraints. Literacy of the users and their ability to use the computer is one. Users who do not know how to read and write would need assistance (Muhammed, 2010). Other challenges include socio-economic inadequacies that exist in countries belonging to the sub-Sahara region. Poor organisation skills, inadequate infrastructural support and poor or limited human capital resources (Ifinedo, 2005). Some leaders still need to understand the relationship between e-governance and effective governance. In this respect, Olufemi (2012) observes that advocacy and awareness building are required to create or evoke changes in political mind-set and culture. Advocacy involving the mass media would, no doubt, bring the issue to the front-burner and enhance the tendencies for its success (p. 129). Another challenge is to overcome un-coordinated activities within the federal, state and local governments and within agencies of the same ministries or within ministries that have similar functions or responsibilities. Adding to this problem are severe funding and even budgeting defects in respect of e-governance tools and infrastructure within government agencies.

Olufemi (2012) further holds that several barriers confront developing countries that result in the slow diffusion of e-governance initiatives. Some of the barriers have their roots in cultural orientation of the region, to include poor infrastructural, organisational, political, economic, and social factors (Ajayi, 2003). By barriers, we mean any factor that creates an inhibition for government to develop new or improve on existing e-governance applications. While the subsequent progression and potential benefits of e-governance applications are without limits, there are a number of barriers that impede the implementation of such applications, especially in Africa. The major one is the lack of sound infrastructure for e-governance. Ajayi (2003) holds that there is also lack of well-developed vision and mission statement. Instead of natural priorities, the needs and priorities of each organisation affect the development of e-governance implementation and this cannot lead to great success. Therefore, all information society activities need to be coordinated in such a way as

to ensure increased economic value added and social welfare, as well as be carried out in a participatory manner.

Lack of cooperation among governmental agencies also constitutes another major challenge to e-governance. Although every ministry in Nigeria has its own web page, the linkage between them and a standard system is missing (Olufemi, 2012). The system, therefore, is not interactive. In addition, there is lack of information in the internet environment. Not all the information for which the public access should exist or can be found on the web pages of the public administration authorities.

Adeyemo (2011) holds that there is lack of cooperation between government agencies and private sector agencies. In the private sector, there exists the capacity, technology and qualified personnel regarding ICT. However, this knowledge has not been used efficiently towards the need of e-governance implementation in public administration. The bureaucracy lacks the willingness to effectively use e-governance tools. Bureaucracy in general tends to resist change. Due to the perception that wide usage of the internet would decrease its dominance, the bureaucracy sees e-governance implementation as a threat.

Ajayi (2003) opines that in most developing societies, particularly some African countries, there is lack of education regarding usage of computers and the internet which is common in the public sector. Some schools' curricula have not been designed according to the needs of this technology era. Therefore, there is insufficient education in the schools regarding the usage of computers and internet. There is also lack of legal framework in the field of e-governance. The needs which stem from the developments in telecommunication technologies are not fully met by regulations, such as legislation on the preservation of privacy and personal information, provision regarding information technology crimes in penal code, and legislation on intellectual property rights.

Similarly, Olufemi (2012) observes that worldwide, there is an inequity of knowledge of ICT vendors, of skills, of experience between ICT vendors and their public sector clients, with the former seen as possessing more of these important resources. Such inequalities are particularly acute in Africa where they often-painted picture of 'Virgins marrying Casanova' fits perfectly the imbalanced interactions that occur between public servants and vendors. As such, the vendors are often in a position to guide – even dictate – the direction and content of e-government.

From the review, it could be said that e-governance has all-embracing benefits but fraught with challenges occasioned principally by the technological deficiencies of the adopting nations.

2. Theoretical Framework

Diffusion research goes one step further than two-step flow. The original diffusion research was done as early as 1903 by the French sociologist, Gabriel Tarde who plotted the original s-shaped diffusion curve, which is of current importance because "most innovations have an s-shaped rate of adoption" (Rogers, 1995).

Diffusion research centres on the conditions which increase or decrease the likelihood that a new idea, product or practice will be adopted by members of a given culture. Diffusion of innovation theory predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influence opinion and judgment. Studying how innovation occurs, Rogers (1995) argues that it consists of four stages: Invention, diffusion (or communication) through the social system, time and consequences. The information flow through networks and the roles opinion leaders play in them determine the likelihood that the innovation will be adopted. Innovation diffusion research has attempted to explain the variables that influence how and why users adopt a new information medium, such as the Internet. Opinion leaders exert influence on audience behaviour via their personal contact, but additional intermediaries called change agents and gate keepers are also included in the process of diffusion. Five adopter categories are: (1) innovators, (2), early adopter, (3) early majority, (4) late majority, and (5) laggards. These categories follow a standard deviation curve. Very little innovators adopt the innovation from the beginning (2.5%), early adopters making up to 13.5%, a short time later, the early majority 34%, the late majority 34% and after some time finally, the laggards make up for 16% (Rogers, 1995).

The process of adopting a new innovation has been studied for over 30 years, and one of the most popular adoption models is described by Rogers in his book "Diffusion of innovations". Dooley (1999) and Stuart (2000) mention that much research from a broad variety of disciplines have used the model as a framework and they include: political science, public health, communications, history, economics, technology and education and defined Roger's theory as widely used theoretical framework in the area of technology, diffusion and adoption.

Roger's (1995) diffusion of innovation theory is appropriate for investigating the adoption of technology in higher education and educational environments. In fact, much diffusion research involves technological innovations as Rogers (2003) usually used the word technology and innovations as synonyms. For Rogers, a technology is a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the

cause-effect relationships involved in achieving a desired outcome. It is composed of two parts – hardware and software. While hardware is the tool that embodies the technology in the form of a material or physical object, software is the information base for the tool (Rogers, 2003, p. 25a).

Diffusion of innovation theory has four main elements, namely: innovation, communication channels, time and social system. An *innovation* may have been invented a long time ago, but if individuals perceive it as new, then it may still be a new innovation for them. The newness characteristic of an adoption is more related to the three steps – knowledge, persuasion and decision – of the innovation-decision process. The second element is *communication channels*. Communication occurs through channels between sources. The third element is *time* which, according to Rogers (2003), is ignored in most behavioural research. The last element, *social system*, is "a set of inter-related units engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal" (Rogers, 2003, p. 23).

In relation to this study, the innovation is e-governance which needs to be communicated through the mass media (and indeed, other avenues) to enable citizens be aware of its advantages and disadvantages so as to adopt it. This adoption process captures diffusion of the innovation. The role of the mass media in communicating the innovation is central to its diffusion and this is the focus of the study. In examining the role of the mass media, we analyse the attitude and perception of journalists as necessary factors in the diffusion of the e-governance initiatives in Nigeria.

3. Research Methodology

Descriptive survey method was used for this study. This is because the survey is an economical and useful tool used in finding out a problem in an environment (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

The research population was 702, made up of 204 practicing journalists in seven chapels of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Cross River State and 498 journalists in 14 chapels of the union in Akwa Ibom State. These two states were purposively chosen from among the six states in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The percentage principle method was adopted in determining the sample size. As enunciated by Nwana (1981, p. 81), "if the population is a few hundred, 40% or more

samples will do; if many hundreds, a 20% sample will do…." Therefore, for this study, a sample of 140 respondents, being 20% of the population, was used.

The instrument adopted for data collection was close-ended structured questionnaire. The four-point Likert Scale, with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. The 140 copies of questionnaire were proportionately distributed – 41 in Cross River State and 99 in Akwa Ibom State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents in order to ensure that those chosen cut across the different chapels of the union in the two states studied.

4. Presentation of Data

The following data obtained from respondents' responses are presented based on the research questions formulated for this study:

Research Question 1 - What are the perceptions about the operations of e-governance among journalists in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria?

Table 1. Responses on the Perceptions of E-Governance

S/N	Questions	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total	%
1.	I know the meaning of the term, e-governance	140	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	140	100
2..	The concept has become part of news gathering and dissemination of information	86	61	45	32	8	6	1	1	140	100
3.	E-governance has achieved its objectives	49	35	51	36	26	19	14	10	140	100
4.	I cover beats related to e-governance	83	59	31	22	19	14	7	5	140	100
5.	E-governance contributes to development	89	64	49	35	2	1	0	0	140	100

From Table 1 above, all the respondents strongly agreed that they are aware of the meaning of the term, e-governance. In addition, a majority also agreed that they are aware of the time when e-governance became part of news gathering and dissemination and have a working knowledge of e-governance. In terms of coverage of beat related to e-governance, majority of the respondents agreed and also strongly agreed they had covered such beats. This represents what could be described as fair perception on the concept of e-governance among journalists in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States.

Research Question 2 - What is the attitude of practising journalists in terms of reporting/coverage and accessing e-governance operations or services in South-South Nigeria?

Table 2. Responses that Bother on Attitude of the Subjects to the Innovation of e-Governance

S/N	Questions	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total	%
6.	I have had to anchor any series or special features to create awareness on e-governance.	32	23	26	19	72	51	10	7	140	100
7.	I am impressed about the concept of e-governance.	66	47	52	37	17	12	5	4	140	100
8.	I rate e-governance very high in terms of believability and applicability.	50	36	62	44	22	16	6	4	140	100
9.	I will keep applying e-governance in my day-to-day business.	58	41	59	42	12	9	11	8	140	100
10.	I access government information on the net.	24	17	42	30	62	44	12	9	140	100

From Table 2 above, it can be seen that the attitude of the subjects in terms of reporting or coverage of operation or services of e-governance is poor as they view that they have never anchored special features or programmes to create awareness on e-governance. Majority of the respondents have an acceptable impression about the concept of e-governance and a significant number of the respondents rate the believability and applicability of e-governance very high.

In terms of consistency or continuity in application of e-governance, significant number agreed that they would keep applying e-governance in their day-to-day business. The attitude of the subjects in terms of accessing government information on the Internet is very poor as most of the subjects do not access government information on the Internet which is actually the essence of e-governance.

The high level of believability among the subjects on e-governance does not translate to actual practice and this has been attributed to the cautious approach towards journalism and reportage of issues pertaining to government in Nigeria to avoid "falling prey" to the watching eyes of government and its agencies on the media. In all, it could be said that the attitude of the subjects in terms of covering/reporting and

accessing e-governance does not measure up with the overwhelming positive perceptions about the concept in Nigeria.

5. Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: What is the attitude of journalists towards the coverage and accessibility of e-governance services in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States?

Responses in this regard though fairly significant, raise some questions. If a media journalist has a positive attitude towards an innovation but does not adequately apply it, it possibly puts a question mark to his appropriate understanding of it. Earlier, we expounded the benefits of e-governance as an innovation expected to allow for less corruption, provide increased transparency, afford greater convenience, improve revenue and reduce cost (Godse & Garg, 2009). Assuming that these benefits are realisable, how would inadequate attention to coverage of issues about e-governance help to reap the benefits? The media have a somewhat super attribute to sensitise the public on trending innovations. It is widely believed, and correctly too, that any issue, idea or innovation that is a victim of media blackout suffers stillbirth. Therefore, ideas that fail to receive the desired attention by media practitioners suffer retrogression. It is understandable when the journalists view that they would continue to apply e-governance in their day-to-day businesses provided that they not pay lip service to this all important assertion. From the responses, the journalists rate the believability and acceptability of e-governance high. What then is responsible for the overall general appreciation of the uses and applications of e-governance in the study area? How come, the same journalist whose impression of the concept is positive and who believes it is a credible tool of governance still fails in his duty to diffuse the e-governance innovation? The issue of poor infrastructural development in Nigeria is a likely explanation for this gap.

Analyses of data in Table 2 reveal that in terms of reporting/coverage of e-governance in order to create awareness, majority of the respondents viewed that they have not anchored or reported issues on e-governance. In terms of accessing e-governance or participating in e-governance, majority of the respondents viewed that they do not access e-governance. The implication is that there is no corresponding attitude in terms of reporting/coverage and accessing e-governance by journalists in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria.

It, therefore, becomes obvious that after some of years of the existence of e-governance in Nigeria, a situation that has witnessed most government activities on the Internet; accessing such information and participating in the processes are very low among journalists. Adeyemo (2012) holds that though e-governance cannot be said to be thriving at a high scale but there are commendable efforts. For instance, most government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) have websites from where information could be accessed. Also, most states and MDAs have embraced the e-payment option which is a fall-out of e-governance. Almost all State governments in Nigeria have official websites that contain platforms that allow for interaction with the citizens and effective feedback. The big question however is: Despite these commendable efforts towards e-governance, do the citizens participate in the whole process? This question brings the issue of attitude of journalists towards e-governance to limelight. It has been observed here that majority of the subjects have poor attitude in terms of accessing and coverage/reporting e-governance. What, therefore, might have been the factors that are responsible for the inability of these journalists to access government information, participate in e-governance process and report/cover e-governance?

Attitude, in terms of accessing e-governance, could be poor due to the fact that oral culture thrives in Nigeria. This is a situation where people do not depend on authoritative sources of information but depend more on oral information passed from one person to another. The implication is that though authoritative sources exist, the penchant to rely on and spread hearsay information or messages grows. In a society where oral culture is rife, transmitting informally from one person to another becomes commonplace. This can negatively affect such innovations as e-governance in such a society.

Adum (2010) has raised the issue of scammers on any ICT-driven process in Nigeria. He holds that this robs such laudable programmes or processes of high e-participation, acceptance and, more importantly, believability. Poor attitude in terms of accessing e-governance could also be explained in the light of this.

Similarly, the issues of literacy and accessibility of ICTs have also been raised. According to Adum (2010), literacy in ICTs is still poor in rural areas of Nigeria despite the popularisation of these technologies. In addition, accessibility is an albatross in view of the epileptic power supply and dearth of ICT gadgets with which one needs to access e-governance. The situation is also applicable to media organizations and journalists in Nigeria. According to Adum (2010), except for few media organisations, majority of them, particularly public-owned, cannot boast of

basic ICT gadgets. Even when some are present, they are worn-out and require replacement due to lack of maintenance.

Some studies on e-governance have been corroborated by the finding that there is poor attitude in terms of accessing e-governance among journalists in the study area. For instance, Adeyemo (2011) observes that in most climes where e-governance has been adopted, the major challenge is low participation by the citizens. He further holds that this situation is more often in developing societies. Similarly, Laidi (2011) states that e-governance is often challenged by poor attitude of the public, lack of willpower by government and general apathy. He further recommends mass enlightenment and mobilisation so as to mass participation.

In the diffusion of innovation theory, which forms the theoretical framework of this study, the finding relates to the two major stages of innovation diffusion process as espoused by Rogers (1995), notably the 'persuasion' and 'decision' stages. The existence of these stages has been given credence by the observation of this study.

According to Sahin (2006, p. 16), "the persuasion stage occurs when the individual has a negative or positive attitude towards the innovation, but the formulation of a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards an innovation does not always lead directly or indirectly to an adoption or rejection". The individual shapes his or her attitude after he or she knows about the innovation, so the persuasion stage follows the knowledge stage in the innovation – decision process. Furthermore, Rogers (2003) states that while the knowledge stage is more cognitive-centred, the persuasion stage is more affective-centred.

Rogers (2003) equally notes that at the 'decision' stage in the innovation-decision process, the individual chooses to adopt or reject the innovation. However, rejection is possible in every stage of the innovation-decision process. Rogers (2003) expresses two types of rejection: active and passive. In an active rejection situation, an individual tries an innovation and thinks about adopting it, but later decides not to adopt it; while in passive rejection, the individual does not think of adopting the innovation at all. In the case of this study, there appears to be a combination of the active and passive rejections and this represents a big challenge for effective e-governance in Nigeria.

Other studies framed around the innovation-diffusion theory which are corroborated here include Isleem (2003), Less (2003), and Carter (1998). Isleem (2003) examined the level of computer use for instructional purpose by technology education teachers in Ohio public schools. He focused on the relationships between the level of

computer use and selected factors, expertise, access, attitude, support and teacher characteristics. He observed that technology education teachers use more mainstream computer applications than computer specialised applications. Moreover, he further found teachers' perceived expertise, access to computers and attitude towards computers as the significant predictors of the level of computer use.

Less (2003) examined faculty adoption of computer technology for instruction in the North Carolina Community College System. She classified the faculty members based on Rogers' five categories of innovation adoption and compared them on the demographic variables of age, gender, race/ethnicity, teaching experience and highest degree attained. While a significant relationship emerged between Rogers' adopter categories and their years of teaching experience and highest degree attained, the results did not show an important difference between faculty adopter categories and age, gender and race/ethnicity.

Carter (1998) conducted a computer survey and in-depth interviews to determine computer-based technologies that were being used by the faculty members and the factors that affect their use of these technologies. Faculty attitudes toward using computer-based technology, support, resources, and training were the selected factors needed to use these technologies effectively. Also, Carter (1998) found that word processing software, email, and Internet resources were the most frequently used computer-based technologies.

RQ 2: What are the perceptions among practicing journalists about the operations of e-governance in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States?

Perception is very crucial in the effective application of any concept or innovation. Hence, the image one has about an innovation would basically help to shape his entire appreciation of it. Responses in Table 1 which bother on perceptions of e-governance by journalists are cheery. However, the overall application of e-governance by these journalists does not seem to be in tandem with their positive perceptions. It is either that their perceptions are purely academic or their low knowledge of the concept is a remarkable limiting factor.

In Table 1, some specific questions were asked which bother on the perceptions of the respondents on the operations of e-governance in Nigeria. Majority of the subjects (71%) perceived, though in varying degrees, that application of e-governance has achieved its objectives. Also, it was discovered that the respondents have positive perception of the innovation and operations of e-governance.

If one considers the place of the mass media in social engineering and orientation, one can then appreciate the assumption of the positive perception of e-governance by media journalists goes a long way in determining the effectiveness and success of the process. What follows is that positive perception should translate to a positive knowledge and attitude in terms of accessing e-governance, creating needed awareness and mobilising citizens to appreciate and participate the innovation.

Adum (2010) opines that media practitioners in Nigeria have always had positive perception of any ICT-driven programme. He holds that this stems out of the attachment and seeming successes of adoption of ICT in both the media and other sectors in developing societies like Nigeria.

Another way, perhaps, to explain or buttress the finding that journalists have positive perception of e-governance in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States is to examine some impacts of ICTs on the media. Wilson (2011) observes that journalism, like most professions, is not left out in the ICT drive. The role of ICTs in journalism cannot be underestimated because such technologies in recent times present immense opportunities for information communication, storage and retrieval. ICTs have become indispensable for any successful professional operation in the modern world and journalism is not an exception. Some identified opportunities created by ICT which often draw positives perception of journalists include source of relevant and latest information, rise of independent media, and research.

According to Garrison (1999), online materials have provided avenues for media professionals or journalists to source for relevant and latest information. For example, most foreign news, besides monitoring them on satellite television and radio stations, are mostly from websites where motion and still pictures of events are downloaded by local journalists to boost their foreign pages or segments. Also, resources found on the internet often enhance coverage of breaking news stories such as natural disaster. Journalists use online resources as background for interviews or other purposes to find or identify sources to check or verify facts, to become informed about current events, and to identify story ideas.

Nwora (2005) notes that another major trend that has emerged in journalism practice in Nigeria regarding the internet is the rise of independent online media. These internet sites are now competing with the established newspapers' websites in providing news and information to Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. It is assumed that journalists would latch on this benefit of the ICT to develop a positive perception to any ICT-driven programme like e-governance

The issue of the crucial role of ICTs for journalism research has been raised. According to Randall (2000), research was time-consuming and quite tedious. Communicating with research stakeholders or sources also took time. The advent of computers, mobile phones and particularly the internet has made it easier for journalists to make researches for their news, features, etc. It has also become easier for journalists to contact story-makers and communicate with contacts online. The internet, through e-mail connections and mobile phones, easily facilitates the interviewing process for journalists. It also offers journalists an opportunity to link a story happening in their locations with international trends. In brief, the internet and, indeed, ICTs have tremendously helped journalists and the media in their operations and activities. It follows that most ICT-driven processes excite any media person and eventually triggers positive or favourable perceptions towards such process or programme (Wilson, 2011).

One can also understand the positive perceptions of media practitioners in the study area on the operations of e-governance by considering the fact that, according to Nwora (2005), "the government and governance in Nigeria need to be made participatory" (p. 20). In line with this, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) had issued a communiqué which emphasised the need for "government at all levels in Nigeria to run an open-system, participatory and focused with tendencies of taking care of the primary essence of government which are welfare and security of the citizens" (NUJ, 2015). It follows, therefore, that an introduction of e-governance which fulfils the desire of the NUJ as stated above, would naturally attract positive perceptions about the e-governance innovation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

It was concluded that inasmuch as media practitioners had positive perceptions of e-governance, it did not translate to or correlate with the dissemination of government policies and programmes. In view of this, it is concluded that the significant low knowledge of the operations of e-governance by media practitioners in the Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria accounts for the overall ineffective use of e-governance in the dissemination of government policies and programmes. However, the study has thus confirmed that knowledge is not a direct function of attitude.

It is, therefore, recommended that:

1. In order to redress the slow progress made towards e-governance, practicing journalists in South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States,

should upgrade their knowledge through periodic seminars, conferences and trainings in the rudiments of e-governance;

2. Journalists should play more active roles in e-governance such as accessing government information on the internet, and publicising e-governance activities so that the citizens of South-South Nigeria, particularly Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, can be more aware of the e-governance innovation in Nigeria.

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