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Ethics and Government: A Case Study of Emerging Hybrid E-Government in Nigeria

Jovita Chijioke-Eze

user10482463

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Dr. Cristina Isabel Ibarra Armenta

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Dedication

To my late mother, Mrs. Regina Ovute Eze and Robbie Nelson my boss.
You two have had the most influence on leading me on to greater heights. From you I
realized that no pursuit is impossible. You have been my source of inspiration and
motivation.

Abstract

Ethics is a key ingredient for a successful public entity. Hybrid E-Government is revolutionizing and reinventing government throughout the globe, building back trust, transparency and fairness in the way public sector is administered. An examination of secondary data was undertaken to see if there is a correlation between e-government systems and ethics in the public sector. The study found a nexus between Hybrid E-Government and ethics in government. E-Government is not a panacea for corruption, rather it has a mitigating impact while re-inventing government, building back trust and engenders best practices. The study concluded that the introduction of hybrid e-government systems in Nigeria could help to improve the ethical behavior inside public entities. It can engender transparency, fairness, ethical and moral standards, and ease of doing government business in Nigeria.

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Introduction

Unethical issues have been the bane of Nigerian government, and because it was not being addressed or checked properly, it has now metamorphosed to endemic corruption. The lack of ethical adherence in the governance of Nigeria has led to the corruption culture in the country where unethical practices appear as normal behavior for public managers. Ethics can be defined as standards of behavior, of what is right or wrong which guides what we, as human beings ought to do or not do. This is in terms of rights, obligations, public good, transparency, and fairness while managing public affairs. It can also be specific virtues expected of public office managers. Being ethical is adhering to what the law of the land requires and society accepts. The evolving scenario where elements of hybrid e-government systems are beginning to emerge in Nigeria, though slow due to obvious reasons of level of literacy and the Information Communication Technology (ICT) penetration has been a welcome development. Hybrid e-government is a middle strand of e-government system that engages all stakeholders both ICT experts, administrative personnel and the public in the development and application of information and communication technology (ICT) for the delivery of government services, exchanging of information and communication between the public and government. The introduction of the hybrid e-government systems with its attendant introduction of transparency, fairness, and most importantly inclusiveness which has ensured a cross-section of stakeholders as part of building the system and ensuring its success is reinventing the government and building back trust in the system. Hybrid e-government systems has shown significant success as a means to diminish unethical practices, and hinder corrupt practices by public managers. The objectives of this study includes, (a) to examine how unethical behaviors in government operations is a hindrance for government agencies achieving set objectives. (b) to determine the extent to which the establishment of hybrid e-government systems can help in improving the ethical behavior in public entities. This study involved the review of literature, documents and publications that relates to e-government and its transformative attributes concerning ethical issues in public organizations among other advantages. The study conclude that the establishment of hybrid e-government systems is enhancing good ethical and moral standards in governance in Nigeria, engendering efficiency, fairness, transparency and more in Nigeria public affairs.

Literature Review

Frederickson and Rohr (1993) argues, “Ethics and Public Administration refutes the arguments that administrative ethics cannot be studied in an empirical manner and that empirical analysis can deal only with the trivial issues in administrative ethics” This concludes that “the authors qualify their findings and take care not to over-generalize results....Specific areas addressed include understanding public corruption, ethics as control, and ethics as administration and policy.” Lack of ethics in public administration is the breeding ground for corruption, whereas where good ethical principles are the standards of behavior, corrupt practices are diminished. Bwalya (2011) opines, “Electronic government (e-Government), implemented towards transformation of public service delivery, aims to contribute to effective information management practices between the government and citizens and/or businesses. E-Government is not a panacea to problems associated with government service delivery and issues such as corruption, but it may go a long way in mitigating its existence in the public service delivery value chains.....it facilitates interactive, vertical, collaborative and participatory engagement of citizens, businesses and other governments, reducing cost of service delivery, encourages global participation of citizens in the decision-making processes; provides and opportunity for governments to rethink and reformulate their administrative praxis and provides a framework where governments continuously re-engineer their business processes to retain currency and relevance to best practice. E-government may further be utilized to mitigate corruption levels in the public sector. For example, the introduction of e-procurement and e-tendering can greatly reduce corruption in tendering processes.” Furthermore, Beeri, Dayan, Vigoda-Gadot, and Werner (2013) conducted a study on the relationship between ethics and performance in local governance and aver, “ethics program was very effective, resulting in greater awareness of code of ethics, increased inclusion of employees in ethical decision making (EDC), and an improved ethical climate (EC).” Studies have shown that there is a link between e-government system and improved ethical behavior and corruption. Machova, Volejnikova, and Lnenicka (2018) opine, “E-government is recognized as a tool for improving transparency and openness in the public sector and for combatting corruption. Understanding the relationship between e-government development and the level of corruption would allow for a more effective leveraging of related projects in anti-corruption efforts.” The authors assert that e-government systems diminishes ethical issues and lower corruption levels in

public entities. The body of literature is awash with writings exposing the dearth of ethical practices in the Nigerian public sector and how that has been the bane of economic growth and development. Nigeria, a country with rich minerals and material resources has been a lame duck giant despite a resounding availability huge natural resources, and reasonably technically educated human resources. At each corner of its history, as it is about to break away from the clutches of extreme unethical issues that breed corruption and nepotism, it will suddenly fall deeper into the abyss and further sink in poverty and underdevelopment. Why does this keep happening? What has been done in the past to address this perennial problems and why they keep failing to lift the country from this quagmire? Can something be done differently? What is new? E-government systems present a partway to locating and mitigating some of the ethical issues endemic in the society. Gajendra, Xi, and Wang (2012) avers, "The key benefits of e-Governance include efficiency, improved services, better accessibility of public services, and transparency. The e-governance requires a considerable increase in regulation and policy making abilities, with all the expertise and opinion-shaping processes." Onifade, Imhonopi Urim (2013) posits, "The insecurity challenge in Nigeria has assumed a formidable dimension that not only requires a multi-stakeholder approach, as it is being touted in various quarters, in quelling this conflagration threatening Nigeria's statehood, but also necessitates a revival and reinforcement of moral values and virtues. The thirst for blood and the preference for violence in expressing pent-up frustration and disenchantment with the state, its citizens and national totems may be a pointer to the need to revive moral values and virtues within the socioeconomic, political, religious and educational institutions in the country. Nigerian leaders, politicians and their amen corners must be forced to evince and uphold moral values and virtues in all their conduct in order to lead by example and to avoid heating up the polity unnecessarily by their conducts and comments which sometimes incite violence in their followers." There is so much frustration with government in Nigeria due to lack of sincerity, fairness, and transparency in the conduct of government business. This has led to bad leadership, which has led to citizens adopting self-help. It is the resort to self-help that has led to armed conflict that is besieging the country. Further to the assertion above, Sunday, Eleojo, and Y.Idu, (2021) argues, "Ethics and anti-corruption campaign have become an integral part of the Nigerian public service and governance but with little relevance, and large scale evidences of failure. In other words, the effectiveness of ethical codes of conduct among civil servants, politicians and the noise about anti-corruption campaign remain doubtful in the face of the rising spade of ineptitude to work, embezzlement

of public funds, bazaar mentality, insecurity of lives and property; bribe taking, and the likes. Inability to arrest these vices in Nigeria has circumvented sustainable development in the country.” In the same vain, Omotoso (2014) aver, “Citizens expect public servants to be accountable and transparent in their actions. Public ethics and accountability are prerequisites to, and underpin, public trust. They are the cornerstones of good governance and development. In Nigeria, public trust in governance is low as a result of many challenges, principally the so-called Nigerian factor. Lack of transparency affects effective participation of citizens in the governing process.” Nigeria has been making vain efforts to combat the ills of lack of ethical practices in government, but such efforts are also bedeviled by endemic corruption. In most cases, the agencies set up to fight corruption in the country has become political instruments in the hands of political office holders to hoodwink the opposition and political enemies. Also writing on ethical issues in Nigeria, Osoba (2007) aver, “In Nigeria it became the principal means of private accumulation during the decolonisation period, in the absence of other means, and came to shape political activity and competition after independence. All subsequent regimes, military and civilian, have been pervaded by corruption. Aided and enhanced by oil revenues, this has created a deepening crisis of kleptocracy, shown in its most extreme form since 1984. It results in a combination of scandalous wealth among the ruling class with growing poverty, misery and degradation among the mass of Nigerians. Political life has become dominated by winner-take-all factional struggles, political cynicism and violence, while the economy and social institutions have been driven into decay. Unethical practices has thus become a way of life in Nigeria, one which existing governments neither wish to, nor can, control. Combating unethical behaviors requires a popular participatory democracy able to monitor and hold to account those in charge of the state and the treasury.” Unethical practices in Nigeria is beyond imagination and has taken very critical dimensions as it have dominated even the security architecture of the nation. To begin to solve this problem, a clear departure from the normal way of providing public good and services must be advanced.

Whereas there is a wealth of literature on the dismal performance of successive governments in Nigeria due to lack of embedded ethical policies in the annals of the Nigerian government, very little literature is available that addresses the nexus between the introduction of e-government and its capacity to engender ethical behavior, transparency and trust in Nigerian governance generally. Having exposed the dearth of ethics in the governance of Nigeria, the question becomes, what can be done? The introduction of e-government systems

appears to be able to provide a mitigating impact to this ill. Ashaye (2014) posits, “E-Government applications have emerged rapidly in the developing world. This is due to its usefulness as an enabling tool to increase efficiency and enhance transparency.” The evolution of the e-government systems appear to serve as a mitigating measure, a place to start and work through the state setup to begin to rid it of those avenues that seem to give impetus to unethical practices. E-Government systems have provided positive results as an anti-corruption strategy in several countries. Andersen (2008) paraphrasing Wescott, 2003, aver, “the potential of e-government to improve the fight against corruption has not slipped the attention of practitioners. The Asian Development Bank has provided a long list of examples of e-government initiatives worldwide along with interesting anecdotal evidence intended to document achievements (Wescott, 2003). In Pakistan, the entire tax department is undergoing restructuring; information and communication technology (ICT) systems are being introduced with the stated purpose of reducing contact between tax collectors and tax payers. In the Philippines the Department of Budget and Management has established an online e-procurement system that allows public bidding for suppliers. This technology system has increased transparency in transactions. In the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, where 40% of its 76 million people cannot read, 214 deed registration offices have been fully computerized. . Before the introduction of online registration, opaqueness of procedures forced the citizens of Andhra Pradesh to employ middlemen who used corrupt practices to obtain services. In several Asian countries governments are introducing smart cards that help citizens access health-care services without having to provide corruption-prone cash payments for these services.” Examples abound on the potential of e-government to empower citizens to challenge unethical public sector practices and there is hope that same can be achieved in Nigeria to fight the endemic corruption that have been ravaging the country. Nevertheless, there are challenges as exposed by the following authors. Amagoh (2015) aver, “In Nigeria, these challenges are compounded by the fact that it is the most populous country in Africa (with 170 million people), with a lack of basic infrastructures (water, electricity, roads, etc.) and a high rate of corruption. In addition, Nigeria is faced with the “digital divide”, whereby there is significant gap between the limited few who have access to modern ICT and those who do not. This means that for e-government to succeed in Nigeria, the government must work towards universal access to ICT by addressing the issue of the digital divide amongst others.” A nexus has been established between the establishment of e-government systems and its engendering impact of ethical and moral practices in governance.

The challenge of cause is the literacy level and ICT penetration level across the whole spectrum of governance and the citizens.

Methodology

The descriptive approach was adopted for this work, and it is based on secondary data. It relied on an already existing data that was reviewed to achieve the objectives of the study. The objectives are to determine the extent to which the establishment of hybrid e-government systems can help in improving the ethical behavior in public entities. This involved analyzing data collected from already completed works, which are in the public domain. A descriptive analogy of published works that threw some light regarding the objective of the study. The body of publications, documents, and government agency websites were reviewed to determine the extent to which e-government systems can help in improving ethical behaviors and best practices in the public sector. Visits to internet sites of publication outfits, libraries, archives, and organizational reports, journal papers and magazines. This method of investigation allowed gathering information on ethical issues associated with the public sector in terms of standards of behavior, the moral expectations of a public office holder, the notion of good versus bad, the desire to pursue public good and desist from actions that may be inimical to the public perception of governance. To this end, information was sought about the introduction of e-government systems to see how it has aided transparency, efficiency, fairness, and trust in government. Did the introduction of hybrid e-government systems tend to engender trust, transparency, fairness and efficiency in government? The information gathered presented a nexus between the introduction of e-government systems and the regrowth of trust, moral standards, fairness, and transparency in the public sector. Though this method is quick and costs less, one major disadvantage is that it did not answer the specific research questions posed by this topic, and did not contain specific information as would have been needed and requires further research. Nevertheless, it provided and pointed to a direction that illuminated the subject matter leading to appreciable positive conclusions.

Ethical Challenges Encountered

There are always ethical issues arising during a research of this nature. The encounters between researchers and participants is ethically challenging in regards to the personal involvements and subjective influences that interject and interfere in the researcher's judgements that may influence drawn conclusions. There are issues with integrity, honesty, objectivity, and openness to consider in a given research work. Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, and Cheraghi (2014) aver, "Qualitative studies tend to use methods that result in text production rather than numerical outputs. Given that the researcher is considered to be the research instrument, and the plan of inquiry needs to be developed and altered as the study progresses, a qualitative researcher cannot depend upon traditional approaches to address certain concerns such as bias and credibility." Though this research relied on secondary data, nonetheless there were some ethical challenges to deal with. The internet was surfed for information and materials, official websites of government agencies, journals and other publications. The evaluation and interpretation poses some ethical challenges. Some of these challenges include the issue of proper interpretation of works done by others so as to avoid deception, plagiarism, proper referencing, conflicts of interest etc. and in this regard mindfulness on the secondary data upon which this work is relied on, the potential impact of my personal convictions regarding the subject matter, the manner of obtaining official information and disclosure of it. The fact that this research is interpretative posed the challenge of allowing subjectivism to smear the outcome or maintaining objectivism that ensures it retains its scientific profile. I was mindful to ensure that my interpretations of the events are correct and not biased. I avoided controversial innuendos or nuances that may mislead the reader. I made sure not to be subjective or biased in my interpretation of the information gathered and analyzed to ensure a trustworthy outcome. This research did not venture or used any unauthorized material; all works and publications used were properly acknowledged and referenced. All biases were checked and eliminated leaving an objective interpretation of materials obtained.

Results

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria is saddled with the conduct of state and national elections in Nigeria. It also conducts voter and political party registration efforts. Over the years, this agency of government has been riddled with unethical practices ranging from manipulation of voter registration numbers, election results

falsification and more. INEC have recently introduced hybrid e-government systems to handle voter registration, as well as electronic voting with the introduction of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS), the INEC Continuous Voter Registration Portal, which is an online registration app and INEC Electronic Results Transmission. According to a statement from the INEC website, it states thus, “Over the last three electoral cycles, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has consistently sought to apply technology to improve the credibility and safety of the electoral process in Nigeria. This has intensified in recent times with the threat to public safety posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated an inevitable quantum rise in remote, rather than direct and physical interactions in the electoral process. Technology has made this possible. Consequently, within the last two years, the Commission has applied several technological innovations to managing the electoral process. Some of these are the introduction of the INEC Results Viewing (IReV) portal, separate portals for nomination of candidates, accreditation of election observers, and accreditation of the media for elections and for nomination of polling agents. In addition, the Commission recently introduced online pre-registration of voters as part of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, which has made it possible for well over two million Nigerians to commence and/or complete their registration without difficulties within a period of ten weeks.” The just concluded Anambra State governorship election is another testament of INECs deployment of a hybrid e-government system in the conduct of elections in Nigeria. According to INECs National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, “The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) performed well in a substantial number of the polling units in Anambra State. We had glitches in a few of the polling units and we quickly mobilized our Registration Area Technical Assistants (RATECS) to the affected polling units and using the information being reported by the devices, they made adjustments and deployed updates to the devices on the field”. The outcome of the election and its conduct has been described as transparent, free and fair by most stakeholders. This has given a glimmer of hope that the next general election cycle will witness an improved transparency and fairness in its approach, thereby diminishing the ethical challenges observed over the years.

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is another agency of government that has faced ethical challenges over the years. The operations have been opaque, time consuming, and inconvenient. However, with the introduction of hybrid e-government system into its

operations, a lot has improved. Awoleye, Aworinde, and Oyebisi, (2020) opined, “a good proportion of the respondents indicated that they mostly use the platform for passport application (88.5%), passport renewal (73.2%) and for related enquiries (51.7%). The result further revealed that the use of the e-platform resulted in reduction in waiting time, increased efficiency, and reduction in transportation costs among others. The study recommends the creation of more awareness to further increase the rate of adoption as well as improved quality of services provided. In addition, further improvement is required in order to enhance the e-government platforms to mitigate the bottlenecks of partial online processing of passports.” There is no doubt that the application of e-government systems within the operations of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), services have improved tremendously and thereby tamed the ethical issues associated with the agency.

The vehicle registration in Nigeria has witnessed all manner of unethical issues and fraudulent activities ranging from forgery of vehicle papers, clumsiness in the process, corrupt insurance system, loss of revenue due to undocumented accrued monies by operators and more, an e-government solution system was deployed termed Electronic Vehicle Registration (eVreg). An online real time solution with benefits listed on the website: (<https://fctevreg.com/aboutus.htm>) as follows: “Bringing in a cashless system that makes use of e-payment for online transactions, eliminates forgery of vehicle papers by implementing an integrated intelligent system that cannot be broken as each motor vehicle has a unique identity code, ensures full vehicle registration as all the transaction must be executed within a computerized one stop point, a genuine insurance policy by authorized and competent insurance consortium, since the revenue received from the process goes directly to the account of the various tiers of government involved, the loss as a result of fraud is eliminated, and making an average motorist enlightened and inquisitive as it is an internet solution thus breaking the barrier of illiteracy in the country.” The above statement from the official website says it all. The introduction of the e-Reg has positively influenced the operations of this agency, and again reducing the incidences of ethical challenges associated with obtaining vehicle registration in Nigeria. This reflects a burgeoning revolution with the establishment of hybrid e-government systems to replace old practices in the running of government. Again, services are greatly impacted; it is more transparent, fair and efficient. Gberekibie, Ayo, Iyoha, Ojeka and Abasilim (2016) argues, “Past experiences have shown that public agencies in Nigeria are yet to achieve the goals for which they were established due to their non-

responsive and non-accountable attitude. Furthermore, it has been observed that the non-responsive and non-accountable attitude of these agencies are due to lack of access of the people to contribute towards the decisions of these agencies in terms of the services needed by them and how these services are to be provided to realize government's quest for societal development.....the study explores the possibility of how the adoption of e-governance could bring about accountability and hence achieve the goals for the establishment of these agencies." This study reiterates that public managers being responsive and accountable will help in achieving the set goals of the agencies.

E-procurement is yet another e-government system introduced in Nigeria to promote transparency, accountability, fairness and more, Egidario et al (2020) aver, "The use of electronic (e-) procurement to support the execution of supply chain management activities in the different industrial sectors is permeating all regions of the world. However, in countries in sub-Saharan Africa where there is a significant level of corruption and unethical practices in the procurement process, there is a need for a better understanding of how e-Procurement can help to check the incidence of corrupt and unethical practices in construction project delivery.....The results of the descriptive statistics, relative importance index and principal components analysis identified 18 anti-corruption capabilities in e-Procurement in construction project delivery with the three most important ones being the capability of e-Procurement to ensure good inventory management/record keeping; accountability by providing audit services trail and minimize direct human contacts during bidding. The key underlying dimensions of these capabilities include the advantage of e-Procurement over the traditional paper-based method; transparent bidding process and increase in competition in construction project delivery process." The authors attempted to establish the link between e-government and ethical issues and indicate a causal relationship of how the establishment of e-procurement is helping to engender ethical responsiveness thereby lowering corrupt practices. Another interesting result came from the work of Jameel, Asif and Hussain (2019) who assessed the mediating effect of e-government in Pakistan. The authors opine, "Administrative practices have always been acknowledged as a crucial tool for establishing good governance. Strong evidence shows that good governance extensively influences citizens' behaviors toward government.....The results confirmed the causal relationship between good governance and public trust. The results also reveal that e-government plays a mediating role in the relationship between good governance and public trust."

Discussion

In response to the unethical menace plaguing the Nigerian public entities, several anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) were set up not just to fight corruption, but also to engender ethical behaviors in public entities. Yet it has not been able to stem the tide as these agencies by themselves are also engulfed in unethical practices. From the results outlined above, responsiveness and accountability are key attributes public managers must have to enable it deliver on set objectives. The question is, is there a tool out there that can engender these attributes? Hybrid E-Government systems by its nature has the potential to deliver on the set attributes. Hybrid e-government systems are those systems that took into consideration all stakeholders participation in building of the system. That is, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) specialists, Administrative personnel and the citizens. Hybrid e-governments system takes a middle approach between hard and soft component parts of e-government system to come up with a system where all stakeholders know and play their roles for the system to work. Gberekvie et al (2016) quotes Backus (2001) thus, E-governance is more than just a government website on the internet. It is defined as the application of electronic means to improve the interactions between government-citizens and government-business as well as to employ electronic means in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic government and business aspects of government with the primary goal of boosting administrative efficiency". Gberekvie et al (2016) also cited Oye (2013) defining e-governance as "the application of information and communication technologies to improve the functions and service delivery of the government" and arguing that if e-governance is strategically adopted and implemented, it can improve efficiency and transparency, and these are two critical aspects of ethical behavior for public managers. Machova, Volejnikova, and Lnenicka (2018) documented the outcome of their study stating, "E-government is recognized as a tool for improving transparency and openness in the public sector and for combatting corruption. Understanding the relationship between e-government development and the level of corruption would allow for a more effective leveraging of related projects in anti-corruption efforts." Surely, this has become incontrovertible. Seeing the extent to which e-government systems serves as a tool to check misdemeanors that grow to become huge ethical infractions and entrenched corruption. Successive governments in Nigeria have continued to engage in acts inimical to the growth

and development of the country as direct impacts of non-institutionalization of good ethical and moral standards in the government systems. The importance of ethics in government cannot be overemphasized, and in public administration, ethics has been determined not only to be central in building trust, acceptance and cooperation, it has become the bedrock of the public sector to succeed in delivering good governance and engendering public good, growth and development. Lack of ethically minded governance especially in the developing world in general, Africa and Nigeria in particular is the bane of positive growth and development bedeviling these countries for decades and if not well situated and addressed, will continue to hold down these countries and denying the citizens the much needed emancipation from the clutches of poverty pervading the countries. Reviewing the data obtained on the subject, there is good news – the evolving situation with the introduction of e-government systems is revolutionizing the public sector in the developing world, in Africa and Nigeria in particular. The evolving scenario where elements of hybrid e-government systems are being introduced, though slow due to obvious reasons of level of literacy and the Information Communication Technology (ICT) penetration. The introduction of the hybrid e-government systems with its attendant introduction of transparency, fairness, and most importantly inclusiveness which has ensured a cross-section of stakeholders as part of building the system and ensuring its success is reinventing the government and building back trust in the system. We have seen the impact of hybrid e-government systems in a few of the Nigerian government agencies studied here. The evolving developments in INEC, NIS, the Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO), and e-procurement systems are just a few agencies that have deployed hybrid e-government platforms among others and are beginning to yield positive results.

What is even more, a nexus has been established between endemic ethical issues and the deployment of hybrid e-government systems to stem the tide of non-institutionalization of ethical and moral standards of practices in government of Nigeria. Ashaye (2014) aver, “E-Government applications have emerged rapidly in the developing world. This is due to its usefulness as an enabling tool to increase efficiency and enhance transparency”. The hybrid e-government system deployed by INEC has become a game changer in the way elections were conducted in Nigeria, the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), INEC Results Viewing (IReV) portal, the online pre-registration of voters as part of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, the electronic transmission of election results are all hybrid e-government systems that the INEC is using to eliminate sharp practices like manipulation of

figures, the processes is becoming more transparent, fair, and more accessible to all stakeholders. The E-vehicle registration, an e-government solution system termed eVreg is revolutionizing vehicle documentation and renewals and stamping out unethical practices in the system. Ensuring ease of processes, ease of access, and an online real time solution. The Nigeria Immigration Service and the unethical practices within its processes are currently being checked by the deployment of a hybrid e-government system in the processing of new passports and renewal of all travel documents. The use of the e-platform has reduced the waiting time, increased efficiency, and transparency in the operations of this agency of government.

Though there are evidence to support the notion that the introduction of hybrid e-government systems is stemming the tide of ethical issues in governance in Nigeria, there are still major challenges militating against its full deployment across all sectors of the Nigerian government. [Okunola](#) and [Rowley](#) (2019) aver, “There is strong evidence of concern in relation to the security of financial transactions, the use of personal data and trustworthiness, which is aggravated by inadequate user support. There is a lack of consensus regarding ease of use, website quality and content and information. In terms of barriers and benefits, there was a general agreement that the website offered greater convenience than alternative channels, but some concerns were identified regarding the reliability of technology, and, for users in Nigeria, the reliability of the electricity supply.” Also, Ifinedo (2006) posits, “The main problems facing the emergence of e-government in Nigeria have their roots in socioeconomic inadequacies that have plagued several countries in the SSA region.....poor organizational skills, attitudinal problems, inadequate infrastructural support, and poor or unavailable human capital resources.” Though the evolution of hybrid e-government is at its infancy, and the challenges faced are enormous, the government has continued to strive towards achieving excellence in that direction.

Conclusion

From the body of information gathered and analyzed, it has been established that e-government systems is a means to diminish corruption, and hinder unethical behavior in government. In addition, lack of ethical and moral standards in the public sector is a breeding space for corrupt practices. The introduction of hybrid e-government systems have largely eliminated the instances of unethical behaviors, introducing trust, fairness, transparency, and

efficiency in government operations. The hybrid e-government systems possesses transformational elements that reinvents government. Nigeria has been languishing under the weight of endemic lack of ethical and moral standards in government and this has brought with it corruption in a large scale. This situation has led to distrust by the public against the public sector requiring an urgent fix and the evolution of the hybrid e-government systems appear to be turning the tide against fraudulent practices in government. The few areas where the e-government system has been allowed to thrive has shown that it can in fact be a redeeming feature. E-government is transparent, fair, and not easily manipulated. The above notwithstanding, more research is needed to further enlighten the benefits of e-government in regards to ethical behaviors in governments entities.

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