



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS RESEARCH: G
INTERDISCIPLINARY

Volume 21 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2021

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals

Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

Policy Transfer: An Analysis of the Implementation of E-Government Reform Strategies by the Nigeria Immigration Service

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Keywords: e-government, policy, policy transfer.

GJMBR-G Classification: JEL Code: H19



POLICYTRANSFERANALYSISOF THEIMPLEMENTATION OF EGOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIES BY THE NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE

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Keywords: e-government, policy, policy transfer.

I. INTRODUCTION

Policy making is no longer an exclusive right of the national governments in less developed countries. Policy ideas and public sector reform strategies are in many cases sourced outside the continent. The reforms are inspired by the ideas of new public management and e-government strategies. New Public Management (NPM) and e-government strategies originated mainly from the European countries and the USA in the global north. Evidence from this study reveals that the domestic policy actors recognised the challenges of service delivery in the 21st Century and identified the need for global solutions to the problems with no evidence that such global solutions can address domestic peculiar challenges in Nigeria. The financial aid, loan and technological dependence of Nigeria on the global north made international donor organisations to be the major triggers of such policy transfers. Consequently, the transfer of internationally formulated

solutions to Nigeria has been mainly conditional rather than voluntary adoption of new innovations by Nigerian policy actors.

In most cases, the transfers were based on the number of policy assumptions. These include: that Nigerian government would effectively implement such reforms for fear of losing the much needed financial aids, loans, and technical assistance that come as a condition for reform acceptance. This is in line with the argument that a "... political leader in a Third World country has little alternative but to accept the policies imposed by the World Bank or the IMF given that the consequences of refusal are deepening debt and economic and, probably, political crisis" (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996:245). This makes donors the major triggers and agents of policy transfer and public sector reforms from the international arena to Nigeria, a less developed country in Africa. But as this study demonstrates, the use of conditions to enforce policy transfer from the international arena to Nigeria may not necessarily lead to the expected outcomes of the implementation of the adopted reform strategies. This is so because the domestic factors and local policy actors not international donors implement public sector reforms in Nigeria.

The second assumption is that local contextual factors are suitable for the implementation of the internationally formulated policy solutions in Nigeria. This assumption makes international policy actors to overlook the domestic contextual factors, and coerce the political office holders to adopt reforms without considering local factors like culture, availability of infrastructure, and other critical domestic policy actors like the willingness of the ordinary citizens to accept new reforms before the adoption. This paper argues that the effective roll-out of public sector reform strategies from the international arena is not an automatic process even when conditions were attached to such transfers. This is the case because country's specific infrastructures, political commitment, and the citizens' acceptance of new reforms are necessary conditions for the effective roll-out of reform strategies in Nigeria.

The questions that guided the study are:

- From where did e-government reform strategies originate to the Nigeria Immigration Service?

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- ii. What were the causes and the modalities used for the transfer?
- iii. What factors constrained the effective implementation of the e-government reform strategies in the Nigeria Immigration Service?

The paper uses the case of e-government reform strategies in Nigeria Immigration Service and examined the dynamics of the effective implementation of policy transfer in Nigeria. It explores the origin, the actors involved and the factors that shaped and determined the effective roll-out of public sector reforms in Nigeria.

II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

a) *Policy Transfer*

In the original literature of policy transfer, Dolowitz and Marsh defined policy transfer as "...a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and /or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place" (1996:344). Arguably, in less developed countries across Africa, the sources of solutions to the problems of service delivery have been not only across their national boundaries but also outside their continent. Countries in the global north have been the major sources of transfer of public sector reform strategies to improve service delivery in Africa. The extant literature has acknowledged that between 1980s and 2000, governments and donors in developed countries placed high priorities on policy transfer to domestic policy making especially in Africa (Azeez, Abidoye, Adesina, Agbele, & Oyewole, 2012; Heeks, 2002a; Karyeija, 2012). The reforms were inspired by the ideas of NPM and the use of e-government strategies to change the change structure of governments work and the delivery of public services in the continent. The reforms include privatisation of public enterprises, deregulation, downsizing, devaluation of local currencies among other examples. The major targets of those reforms are to improve efficiency in governance, and economy and effectiveness in the delivery of public goods and services across Africa. E-government is considered by international donors and domestic political policy actors as a key tool to deliver on the targets of increase efficiency, economy, accountability and transparency across Africa.

However, the transfers of those reform ideas from the donor countries mostly in the global north to less developed countries across Africa are in most cases not voluntary, they are conditional and sometimes coercive. Even though the extant literature suggests that public sector reforms across Africa were mostly motivated by the local demand for change and the desire by local governments to emulate international

reforms; this study argues that donors in most cases take advantage of African economic and political crises, use financial aids and loan conditionality to transfer internationally formulated solutions to many African countries. The use of conditionality and coercive measures like military might have long become the major determinants of policy transfer and public sector reforms across Africa (McCourt, 2001; Mkandawire & Soludo, 1999; Therkildsen & Development, 2001). But there are limits to how far the transfer of Western ideas can be effectively implemented in Africa even when conditions are attached to enforce policy transfer and public sector reforms. This is mostly due to the variations in the availability of basic infrastructures, citizens' willingness to accept new reforms and the commitments by local policy actors to implement reforms that originated from the global north. Thus, despite the transfer of NPM reform ideas to some countries across Africa, many of those reforms still remain interesting propositions that are not mostly implemented, or at best poorly executed especially in Nigeria (Antwi, Analoui, & Nana-Agyekum, 2008; Tambulasi, 2011). Many of the e-government reform strategies have failed to deliver on the original targets of their transfer from the international arena to Nigeria.

This study uses the multilevel frameworks of policy transfer as a core analytical element to understand the dynamics of the transfer and the implementation of e-government strategies from the international to Nigeria. The framework draws on Evans and Davies (1999) and Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) multilevel approach to policy transfer. The framework identified national and international policy actors and the role they play in domestic policy development through policy transfer in Nigeria. By way of definition, the multilevel framework of policy transfer is a term used to describe how the domestic policy-makers and the international interest groups find themselves negotiating policy agenda that leads to policy transfer across national boundaries (Evans, 2004; Hague, Harrop, & McCormick, 2016). Here, the authority and policy-making influence are shared across different levels of government: subnational, national, and supranational (Gualini, 2004; Hague et al., 2016).

But instead of using the international level, the macro-level and the inter-organizational level as Evans and Davies did, this paper uses the subnational, national, and international levels of government as Gualini (2004) used in his study with some modifications. This study argues that the international policy arena and actors and the national policy actors and factors are important in the effective implementation of public sector reforms in across developing countries where Nigeria is situated. By using this approach, the researcher hopes to not only identify specific countries in the international arena where e-government strategies

were transferred to Nigeria but also the pressures for the transfer, and the critical factors that determined the outcomes of effective implementation the reforms.

The paper treats policy transfer and the outcomes of the transfer as dependant variables. The transfer depends on certain pressures for reforms, and the effective roll-out of the reforms depends on the local contextual factors and the actions of the domestic policy actors in Nigeria that influence the outcomes of reforms implementation. This is the case because if one attempts to use policy transfer to explain effective policy outcomes, then one also needs to explain the reasons for transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). Although the transfer of e-government reform strategies to Nigeria was successful, the outcomes of the transfer in terms of online service delivery, increase efficiency, transparency and the general reduction in the cost of governance have not been as successful as expected in the country. To explain the reasons for the poor implementation of the adopted reform programmes in Nigeria, it would be better to trace the origin of the transfer, the actors involved, the causes of the transfer and the critical factors and actors that determine the effective outcomes of the transfer in country. This is meaningful given the position of Nigeria in both global and African e-government ranking by the United Nations between 2001 and 2020.

b) *E-government*

There are various approaches to understanding the meaning of e-government, where there is convergence within the literature. E-government means the use of the Internet, website, computers, and any interconnected system that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, sharing of data and delivery of information and services (United Nations, 2018). These technologies are powerful and fast, and have the potential to make sizeable savings in data and reduce both human and material cost of governance across national boundaries (King & Crewe, 2013). Even though many policy actors in the global south see e-government reforms as the installations of table computers and laptops in public offices, it is evident that e-government is more than mere putting of computers into government offices. It is the use of new technologies driven by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) innovations to transform the delivery of information and services, minimise physical contact in service delivery, and reduction in human and material costs of governance especially in Less Developed C (LDC).

Although e-government involves many applications and incorporates virtually all ICT platforms, the Internet is the major driver of the use of e-government reform strategies in both the global north and the global south. The internet has changed the way citizens and business organisations interact with their

governments across national boundaries especially in the global north. Just like the personal computer, the Internet has become an indispensable tool in governance in general and provision of online information and service delivery in particular. Governments across Africa as their counterparts in other parts of the World have created websites to provide information about their policies, programmes, goods and services online. It is expected that the adoption of e-government reforms by governments would also facilitate easy, cheap, fast and a more convenient way of interaction between government and the citizens, government and businesses, government and government and between government and their other clients online (Homburg, 2008; Mundy & Musa, 2010; Nyundo, 2013).

To successfully implement e-government reforms, the career public servants and the ordinary citizens who are critical stakeholders in reform implementation must be willing to accept new reforms. Basic infrastructures like stable electricity supply, personal security and safety, personal computers and laptops must be available and affordable to all who would like to own them. But it appears that these critical issues in most cases have not been considered prior to the transfer of e-government reform strategies from the international arena to Nigeria as in many other African countries. This partly explains the reasons why in the global south where Nigeria is situated, the implementation of e-government strategies has not been as successful as hoped for especially by the international donors that used conditionality to coerce governments in the global south to reform. For instance, countries like Somalia, Chad, South Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo were ranked at the bottom of global e-government ranking by the UN. These are countries with extreme poverty, poor electricity supply and Internet connectivity, and are politically and economically unstable countries. These conditions have the potentials to affect the successful roll-out of e-government reforms in the aforementioned countries. Apart from five countries namely: Mauritius ranked 1st in Africa and 58th globally, and Tunisia ranked second in Africa and 72nd globally. Others are South Africa 3rd in Africa but 76th in the world, Morocco 4th in Africa and 85th in the world, and Seychelles 5th in Africa and 86th in the world. All other Africa countries including Nigeria were placed in the lower two tiers of e-government capacity: medium and minimal e-government capacities (UN e-government Survey, 2018). The position of Africa in global e-government ranking can be attributed to the limited technological infrastructure, poverty, and inadequate human capacity, political instability, local currency devaluation, and poor personal security and safety.

The UN e-government survey report ranked Nigeria fifth in Africa behind South Africa, Djibouti,

Gabon, and Cote d'Ivoire. The country was placed among the countries with a minimal e-government capacity in the World. Thirteen years later, in 2014 to be precise; the United Nations e-government survey 2014 placed Nigeria in the middle of the top 20 countries in Africa and 141 in the world respectively (United Nations e-government survey report, 2014). This means that Nigeria is ranked behind countries like Egypt, Morocco, Mauritius, and South Africa. The position of Nigeria in the global and Africa e-government ranking by the UN has deteriorated considerably over the years. Nigeria is not among the top 20 countries in e-government ranking in Africa according to the 2016 United Nations e-government survey reports (United Nations e-government Survey Report, 2016). The country is again ranked behind countries like Egypt, Morocco, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, and Kenya. This is certainly not the best position for Nigeria. Given that the country earns huge amount of revenue from the sales of crude oil, and is the biggest economy in Africa. The claims by government that e-government reforms have been successfully implemented has been contested by the empirical evidence from this study and the factors responsible for the not successful outcomes of e-government reform strategies have been identified and discussed.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

A case study research design was used for this study. The theoretical assumptions about policy transfer and their influence on the paper's research questions justified the choice of a case study research design. A case study research design enables the researcher "...to gain insight into the world of several groups of stakeholders...discover the world as seen by participants in the system, and try to explain why they see it this way" (Swanborn, 2010:23). The strength of case study research design lies in its ability to deal with a variety of evidences such as documents, and interviews from multiple sources. This design also "...benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2013:17). It is an in-depth investigation from multiple sources and perspectives of research participants that provides in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon under investigations.

Two different qualitative methods of data collection were used to generate the necessary data for this paper. The use of different qualitative methods of data collection is also for triangulation purposes. Triangulation is important to ensure reliability, and validity of the data due to subjectivity and limitations that may be associated with the use of only one tool of data collection (Tambulasi, 2011; Yin, 2009). The qualitative methods of data collection used in this study were interviews with different categories of the research

subjects, and the documentary sources. The documentary sources include government and the United Nations publications on e-government reforms in Nigeria. The primary data were generated with the use of in-depth interviews with 3 officials of Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), 2 officials of World Bank, 3 academics, 2 representatives of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), 1 official of All Progressive Congress (APC) and 2 policy experts respectively.

a) *The Empirical Case Study: Nigeria Immigration Service*

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) was established as an agency of government responsible for immigration matters in 1958 prior to political independence in 1960. The agency is one of the para-military agencies under the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs. Its mandates is the control of the people coming into or leaving the country. The agency issues passport to Nigerians in and outside the country and residence permits to foreigners in Nigeria (Nigeria Immigration Service, 2017:2). Prior to the introduction of the e-government reforms at the NIS, the Nigeria passport was a handwritten document. Service delivery then requires physical contacts between the officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service and the service consumers. All payments were made on the Counter and in some designated banks across the country (Olatokun & Abduldayan, 2014).

A number of problems associated with this manual service delivery were identified by the research participants. These include multiple issuances of passport, weak security features the passport, and identity theft. Others included the delay in service delivery, difficulties in accessing immigration related information, diversion of government revenue, ghost workers and lack of efficiency and accountability in service delivery. There are participants who suggested that a desire to solve these problems in line with the global best practices led to the transfer of different e-government initiatives to the NIS. Others emphasised that the pressure from the international community was more responsible for policy transfer to Nigeria. In this regard, the paper identifies two broader causes of the transfer of e-government reforms to the NIS. The domestic demand for change and the external pressure for the transfer of e-government reform strategies to Nigeria. Consequently, the e-government reforms implemented at the NIS include: the Machine Readable Passport, Electronic Passport, the creation of the official websites to have online presence and the use of the Internet to deliver information and services to the target audience.

IV. FINDINGS

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings

E-government Strategies	Machine Readable Passport (MRP)	E-passport	The internet and dedicated website
Places of Origin to Nigeria	UK	UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France and the USA	UK, Canada, USA and South Korea, China, India, Bangladesh and South Africa
Actors involved in the transfer	International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service	ICAO, World Bank, EU, UKDFID, officials of NITDA, Federal Ministry of Communication and Nigeria Immigration Service	World Bank, EU, Korea Institute for Development Strategy, UKDFID, NITDA, Federal Ministry of Communication, Nigeria Immigration Service
Causes of the transfer	To replace non- MRP, stop identity theft, multiple acquisitions, improve national security, and pressure from the ICAO	To improve national security, prevent identity theft, multiple issuance; international prestige and leadership, pressure from the ICAO, and the need to implement Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) manifesto	The desire to improve efficiency and transparency, to bring public service and information closer to the people, and eliminate corrupt practices
Modalities for the transfer	Conferences and international pressure	Conferences, capacity building, case study visits, conditions for board	Conferences, capacity building programmes, formal education training in ICT

Source: field work 2017

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

a) The Origin of E-government Reform in Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS)

This section presents a discussion of findings from the empirical case study on the origin of e-government reform strategies implemented in (NIS). The aim is to answer the study's first research question that is from where did e-government reform strategies originate to Nigeria?

Through the study of one empirical case, this paper reveals that the e-government reform strategies implemented in Nigeria originated from countries in both global north and the global South. These countries include the UK, USA, Canada, France, New Zealand, Germany, China, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This is not surprising given that many of the so-called solutions originated outside African continent. These include liberal democracy, New Public Management reforms and the latest being the e-government strategies adopted across different Ministries and agencies of government. This is in line with the policy transfer framework developed by Dolowitz and Marsh that international arena is the common source of policy transfer among nation states (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2004). Governments can transfer from either the

national or the subnational levels. This is also in line with the theoretical framework developed for this study where it is argued that the international arena is the source of e-government reforms implemented in Nigeria. The finding is also supported by the argument in the extant literature that e-government initiatives have already arrived in Africa as imported reform concepts based on imported design (Benson, 2018 & Heeks, 2002:97).

Prior to the transfer of e-government strategies to Nigeria, domestic policy actors "travelled to the UK, Canada, India, China and the US before writing the first draft of National Policy on e-government reforms" (Policy expert 01). The e-government strategies include the Machine Readable Passport (MRP), e-passport, e-payment, the Internet, and the establishment of official websites. They were transferred mainly from Western Countries in the global north and some countries like China, India, Pakistan in the global South to Nigeria.

b) The Actors Involved in the Transfer

The majority of the participants in this study have identified domestic policy actors and the international donors as the agents of the transfer of e-government strategies from the global north to the NIS. The domestic actors involved in the transfer are the senior civil servants of the Nigeria Immigration Service

(NIS), politicians and policy experts. However, international donors were considered by the research participants' to be the major policy actors that initiated the transfer of e-government reforms to Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that the donors involved in the transfer are the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the European Union and the World Bank. This finding agrees with the original literature of policy transfer by Dolowitz and Marsh where they identified international organisations and donor agencies as agents of policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000).

The extant literature acknowledges that donor organisations and financial institutions have been in many cases responsible for the transfer of New Public Management reform strategies from the global north to the global south (Heeks, 2002b; Tambulasi, 2011; Tettey, 2001; Therkildsen & Development, 2001). Although the study reveals that both domestic and international policy actors were involved in the transfer of e-government reform strategies to Nigeria, majority of the research participants claimed that donors were more responsible for the transfer than the domestic policy actors because of the modalities used for the transfer.

c) *The Modalities Used for the Transfer*

There were different opinions on the modalities used by both domestic policy actors and the international donors for the transfer of e-government strategies to the NIS. However, a common view amongst those opinions was identified. The majority of the participants remarked that conference, workshops were used as modalities by policy actors to transfer e-government initiatives to Nigeria. Others are the financial support by donors to Nigeria, case study visits by local policy actors to countries that have implemented those reforms, and the condition for acceptance into ICAO board membership. These conditions were used by donors to transfer e-government reform strategies to NIS. Donors offer technical assistance to the NIS in different fields. These include providing consultants who advised the NIS in diverse areas including e-government reforms, and sharing experience of other developed countries with the staff of the NIS.

Donors like the ICAO and the Korean Institute for Development Strategy gave financial support to government officials to attend training, workshops and conferences within and outside the country on E-passport reform and the establishment of the online present. When government officials attend such conferences and formal academic training especially in the area of ICT, they usually write report on their return. They make some policy recommendations to the government to implement in line with what they have learnt, and of course based on donors policy prescriptions.

Due to Nigeria's dependence on the global north for financial aid, loans, and technology transfer, conditions were used to enforce the transfer of the MRP, e-passport, and the internet reforms introduced in the NIS. One such condition by the ICAO was that Nigeria must adopt the use of E-passport as a condition for admittance into its Board. The country accepted, introduced e-passport reform and became the only African country in the Board of ICAO in 2009. This is in line with Dolowitz and Marsh framework of conditional policy transfer (see Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2004). Even though, government officials described it as a voluntary policy transfer, evidence above suggests that it was a clear case of conditional rather than voluntary policy transfer. Supra-national institutions like the World Bank, IMF and EU have played a crucial role in the spread of Western monetary policies to Third World countries. Although, the IMF or World Bank loans may appear cheaper for developing countries, in return these donors stipulate certain reform initiatives that have to be implemented if the loan is to be granted to those countries in need (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996:348).

The donors also used experience sharing as a mechanism for the transfer. They mostly did that by discussing the benefits of such reforms and their achievements in many countries in the global north with the local policy actors in the developing country. This modality was effectively used in the transfer of e-passport, the internet and website reforms in Nigeria. The donors recommended and made some financial contributions for government officials to visit mostly developed countries to learn from their experience and to transfer the reform ideas to Nigeria. This was possible because political leaders in many countries in the global south have little but to accept the public sector ideas suggested by the World Bank or IMF given that the result of non-acceptance are likely deepening economic and political crisis (see Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). This study reveals that e-government reforms were used by the ICAO, the World Bank, and the EU as a condition for technical and financial support for Nigerian government. This finding supports the argument that when aid agencies are making loans, organising conferences and sharing experiences, they are likely to lead to conditional policy transfer especially in the third world countries (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2004).

d) *The Causes of the Transfer*

Although Nation States strive for more efficient and better ways of delivery public services, findings from this study revealed that international pressure has been the major driver for the adoption of e-passport reform at the Nigeria Immigration Service. These international pressures are discussed below.

i. *The International Pressure for Transfer*

Pressure from the international community often leads to policy transfer and public sector reforms especially from the global north to Africa. The international arena is a field that serves as a source of policy transfer and home that accommodate donors that influence policy transfer across Africa. The participants in this study belief that the actual pressure that led to the transfer of e-government strategies to NIS came from the international community. They argued that the use of conditions for financial assistance by the World Bank, the European Union, and for admission into the board of the ICAO were the major causes for the transfer of e-government reforms to the NIS. This is the case because:

The more donor dependant a nation is, the less likely it is to set its own agenda behind which donor efforts can be aligned. That is why in most cases, donors dictate the agenda for reforms. Poverty has robbed our policy actors of their self-confidence, and self-esteem. It has made them to allow donors to dictate policy prescriptions to them even when those donors lack the sufficient knowledge of the local environment (Policy Expert 02, 2017).

A similar argument was made by another participant that:

It is a global best practice that is also in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation standards of operations. It was a condition for admittance into the Board of ICAO. That is why in due recognition of Nigeria Immigration Services stride the ICAO, the global body that regulates standards for travel documents admitted Nigeria into its Board as the sole African representative in 2009 (Government official 04).

The international donor organisations took advantage of the hierarchical international aid regimes to transfer e-government strategies to Nigeria. Studies have revealed that subtle coercive pressure and the use of conditions by donors led to policy transfer especially from the global north to the global south (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2004; McCourt et al., 2001). Many of the interviewees considered donors as the major triggers of public sector reforms in Nigeria despite acknowledging the involvement of local policy actors in the process of the transfer. This is in line with the argument in the extant literature that conditional transfer occurs when the international policy arena contains agents powerful enough to impose best practices on nation states (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2004).

Another important issue that emerged from the interviews was the argument by the participants that donors also get good returns on their policy proposals and reform strategies when they transfer them to Nigeria. They noted that that has been the motivation on the part of the donor agencies to continue to introduce

new reform strategies to the Nigeria government, and use conditions to enforce acceptance in the country.

e) *The Constraints for the Effective Roll-out of E-government Strategies in Nigeria*

Many of the participants argued that the government's e-government strategies implemented at the Nigeria Immigration Service have not been as successful as they should have been. The majority of the respondents attributed the failure of e-government reforms at the Nigeria Immigration service to a number of factors. These include the high cost of e-government strategies and their implications on national security. Others are the poor electricity supply and Internet connectivity, low level of ICT skill and high rate of poverty, and corruption in governance. The majority of the interviewees across all the five categories of the research participants identified the aforementioned factors as the major constraint to the effective roll-out of e-government reform strategies at the NIS.

i. *Poor electricity supply and internet connectivity*

A stable electricity supply and access to Internet connectivity are important ingredients for the successful roll-out of e-government reform strategies. Electricity and the Internet connectivity are required to access information and services online. Where these two basic infrastructures are not available or are available only to the few because of the cost involved and the high level of poverty among the supposed e-service consumers, e-government reforms would not be as successful as they should have been. The majority of the interviewees attributed the not very successful implementation of e-government reforms at the NIS to these twin problems of electricity supply and the high cost of Internet connectivity. They observed that many of the NIS offices across the nation depend on generators for power supply and the financial implications of doing so high. The cost of Internet subscription is also high. These challenges are affecting the online service and information delivery at the NIS. One concern expressed regarding power supply and internet connectivity was that:

Epileptic power supply is disrupting the success of e-government here in the Nigeria Immigration Service. Irregular power supply is common in Nigeria with negative impacts on our ICT facilities. The service depends on the generating sets as an alternative source of power supply to our ICT facilities. In addition, the cost of internet subscription is also very high without government subsidy. The financial implications of paying for internet subscription without subsidy and depending on generators as alternative source of power supply have added to the costs of service delivery in Nigeria (Government official 01, 2021).

Many of the respondents noted that poor power supply and the high cost of internet connection has been a challenge to the effective implementation of e-government strategies of the NIS. The interviewees noted that irregular power supply and the cost of internet subscription is affecting both the service providers and the service consumers in Nigeria. This is the case because not every Nigerian has access to electricity and many cannot afford to use generators as an alternative source of power supply. The overwhelming majority of Nigerians do not also have access to the internet. Hence, even when information and services are available online, many people go for the traditional method that requires physical contacts between service provider and service consumers. The participants on the whole demonstrated that the combined impacts of lack of sufficient electricity supply and access to the internet constitute a barrier to the success of e-government reforms at the NIS.

i. *Low ICT Skill, high rate of poverty and poor funding of e-government initiatives*

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education and skills have been identified by the majority of the interviewees in this study as the basic requirement for the success of e-government in Nigeria. But the interviewees remarked that this basic infrastructure at best is grossly insufficient and in some places and among some categories of individuals is completely lacking. The participants argued that this is one of the reasons why e-government reforms have not been successful in the Nigeria Immigration Service. The respondents attributed the low ICT skills among both the government employees and the general public to poverty. They observed that the poverty rate has prevented many people who are willing from having ICT training and workshops within and outside the country. They claimed that not all government employees at the NIS have ICT training and education because the service cannot afford to pay the training fees for its entire staff to go for the basic ICT training and workshops. Many of the interviewees claimed that the government budgetary allocation to the Nigeria Immigration Service has always been low, and cannot meet all the financial requirements of e-government projects. In this regard, a respondent argued that:

The majority of the employees at the Nigeria Immigration Service do not have the required level of education and training in ICT to successfully perform the task of e-service delivery. The few with the ICT knowledge are not willing to give on the job training to those without the skills. And the organisation does not have enough money to send every employee for ICT training either within or outside the country because of the size of its budget. The few employees with ICT skills are being

overwhelmed with huge tasks. This has been our predicament at the Nigeria Immigration Service (Government official 01, 2021).

This view was echoed by one of the policy experts interviewed when he said that 'a low ICT skill among government employees and the target beneficiaries of their e-services has been a threat to the success of e-government reforms in Nigeria. The low ICT education could be linked to the high rate of poverty in the country'. The study reveals that there are employees who are willing to go for ICT trainings to acquire the basic skills to meet the new requirements of their official responsibility but cannot do so because of the fees involved and their financial status. There are individuals outside government without ICT education. This category of individuals cannot benefit from e-services and e-information even when such services are available for them online.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper used a single empirical case study to explore the dynamics of the transfer of e-government reform strategies from the international arena to the Nigeria Immigration Service. The study answered questions related to the origin, the exogenous causes of the transfer, the actors involved and the modalities used for the transfer. The paper used a case study research design and qualitative methods of data collections to generate relevant data from different research participants to answer the study's research questions.

The findings have significant implications for policy development in Nigeria and other developing countries across Africa. As has been demonstrated by the study, we can say that while nation states strive for increase efficiency and productivity, international pressure is the major cause of policy transfer from the international arena to Nigeria. This is due to the Nigeria dependence on the global north for financial assistance, and technology transfer. But local conditions are the determinants of the outcomes of the transfer of e-government reforms not the donors that enforced the transfer. Local factors and actors should be considered before the transfer of western solutions to less developed countries across Africa. The availability of basic infrastructures, economic and educational conditions etc. of the people must not be ignored in the transfer of solutions of western origin to less developed countries in Africa. In addition, citizens' acceptance of reforms is important for the success of policy transfer across Africa. This is the case because citizens are the potential consumers and the major beneficiaries of policy transfer and public sector reforms across Africa. Thus, they should not be ignored in the process of the transfer because they are among the important domestic policy actors that determine the outcomes of policy transfer. Without their support in patronising the e-

services and e-information, even if such services are available, e-government reforms would not be as successful as they should have been in Nigeria. Consequently, while donors in most cases are responsible for policy transfer and public sector reforms in LDCs, national factors and actors are the main determinant of the effective roll-out of policy transfer.

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