

Enhancing Transparency and Accountability through Information Management Practices for Economic Development in Public Institutions

¹Elemure, Clement Boluwaji, ²Eke, Siene Elizabeth

^{1,2}Department of Office Technology & Management, the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti

Abstract: Transparency and accountability have become key pillars that are standing behind effective governance, especially in the administration of public institutions, where the efficient administration of information plays a crucial role in promoting institutional credibility and promoting economic development. This investigation examines the issues of interrelations between information management practices, transparency, accountability and the resultant economic development outcomes among public institutions located in the Ekiti State of Nigeria. Based on the principles of efficacious management and digital administration, the study adopts a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected from thirty-five administrative personnel and twenty-seven information managers scattered over four public tertiary institutions by structured questionnaires. The research instrument was a four point Likert type scale. Descriptive statistics were employed in order to answer the research questions whereas Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were carried out to examine the hypotheses at the 0.05 significant level using the software package, Statistical Package and System (SPSS). The findings show that most of the institutions have some sort of functioning information management system using digital records, ICT innovations and regular performance reporting to help improve transparency and accountability. A strong positive relation ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.01$) was found between information management practise and the dimensions of transparency and accountability while moderate but statistically significant ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$) relation was found between information management and economic development outcomes. Regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.67$) shows there is a significant influence of transparency and accountability on economic development, where information management practises play a role as structural enablers. To some extent, the development impact of information systems is mediated through transparency systems and accountability mechanisms. Accordingly, the need for augmentation of ICT infrastructure, institutionalisation of frameworks for transparency, investment in capacity building and integration of information systems as part of broader administrative reforms, inter agency collaboration, and routine monitoring and evaluation processes is recommended by the study.

Keywords: Transparency, Accountability, Information Management Practices, Economic Development, Digital Governance, Data Governance

Introduction

Transparency and accountability have become key thematic constructs in recent discourse on good governance, institutional administration and economic development, especially the public institution. The very efficiency and credibility of these institutions is fundamentally dependent on their ability to manage, store and disseminate information effectively. In the present era, characterised by an intensified demand for openness, transparency and accountability are regarded as indispensable pillars for sustainable progress in public institutions; information - management practises are not just administrative requirements but strategic devices that can contribute to public trust, accountability and -substantial economic developments (World Bank, 2016).

Public institutions across the world are a key leverage to the national development by providing services, regulatory oversight and policy implementation. Nevertheless, their effectiveness is closely linked to the quality of their information handling procedures. Practises like systematic record keeping, digitisation of data, open access systems and effective reporting systems are instruments for promoting transparency and ensuring that officials are held accountable. When information is made accessible and properly maintained, the room for malpractices and corruption are barred thus leading to improvement in governance (Eze & Chukwuma, 2020; Okonjo-Iweala, 2018). Nigeria is a good example of this: reforms - such as the Freedom of Information Act (2011) and efforts of e-governance - have tried to bring consolidation to transparency in the public administration. Yet, there still remain gaps in the adoption of modern practises of information management, creation of effective accountability structures, and mitigation against the processes of ineffective documentation, information hoarding, weak information systems, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and deficiency in data governance-all of which negatively affect institutional efficiency and foster corruption (Eze and Chukwuma, 2020; Okonjo-Iweala, 2018). These shortcomings impinge upon economic development, since efficient information systems are indispensable in informed decision making and resource allocation and performance evaluation.

Governments and organisations worldwide increasingly adopt mechanisms to bring administrative practises in line with stakeholder expectations in terms of openness, trust, and equity. Information management practises are at the heart of this paradigm shift and determine the efficacy with which information is generated, processed, stored and disseminated by institutions for public consumption. O'Donnell (2020) names transparency as the extent to which information about government activities, decision making and policy formulation are made accessible, accurate and available to time for public examination whereas accountability involves the obligation on public officials to explain their actions and decisions especially in relation to management of resources and

provision of services (Mulgan, 2018). Both transparency and accountability depend to a large extent on good information management practises, which link institutional processes and stakeholders that demand informed engagement.

The United Nations (2015) links transparency and accountability to the Sustainable Development Goals and Goal 16 in particular which calls for inclusive institutions and effective governance. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the current situation on Information management practises in public institutions, its contribution to transparency and accountability and the relationship and the impact of information management practises on economic development outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary international discourse, transparency and accountability are generally seen as essential elements of good administration and governance. Nonetheless, many public institutions in Nigeria continue to struggle with issues of faulty information management systems and incomplete, poorly maintained or inaccessible records that create an environment that encourages corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency. The lack of robust information systems also affects stakeholders' ability to access qualifying and current data, which destroys the faith in public administration and reduces opportunities for a constructive involvement from citizens.

Empirical observations also show that infrastructural deficiencies, technical ineptitude and cultural resistance to openness often undermine administrative efficiency, institutional accountability, investment and developmental outcomes in public institutions. In the Nigerian context and more so, in public institutions in Ekiti State, these deficiencies seem to have compounded the ongoing economic challenges such as low investor confidence, syphoning of public funds and poor service delivery. The key issue therefore becomes the weak relationship between the practises of information management, transparency and accountability in the public institutions which have a negative impact on economic development.

Consequently, there is a compelling need to empirically probe the dominant state of affairs of information management practises in the public institutions of Ekiti State and assess the effectiveness in stimulating transparency and accountability and their impact on the results of economic development.

Research Objectives

- To examine the current state of information management practices in public institutions with regard to transparency and accountability.
- To examine the extent to which information management practices could promote transparency and accountability in public institutions.
- To assess the relationship between effective information management practices and economic development outcomes in public institutions

Research Questions

- What is the current state of information management practices in public institutions with respect to transparency and accountability?
- To what extent do information management practices contribute to promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions?
- What is the relationship between effective information management practices and economic development outcomes in public institutions?

Research Hypothesis:

H₀: Information management practices and promotion of transparency and accountability have no significant influence on economic development outcomes in public institutions.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between effective information management practices and economic development outcomes in public institutions.

Literature Review

This research is a build-up of core concepts such as transparency, accountability, information management practises, and economic development. These concepts are interconnected under the governance of public institutions and discourses of development. Transparency ensures visibility of processes; accountability ensures responsibility; information management practises ensures that records and decisions are efficiently handled and economic development is the ultimate goal of efficient administration. As such, sound information management practises form the core of these principles, ensuring that institutional information is accurate, accessible and reliable.

Transparency and Accountability of Public Institutions

Transparency has been widely accepted as one of the basic principles of good institutional administration. It has been defined by D'Anna (2014), O'Donnell (2020) as the degree to which stakeholders can access accurate, timely and relevant information about what operations are going on within the institution. Heald (2012) emphasized the function of

transparency which is through visibility in rendering the action and process to be seen by the oversight bodies and the public. In Nigeria, the Freedom of Information Act (2011) was passed in order to promote transparency by requiring public institutions to provide access to asked information. Nevertheless, according to Eze and Chukwuma (2020), compliance has been weak owing to a power of secrecy, poor infrastructure in ICT, and poor awareness. Internationally, the World Bank (2016) says that transparency via open data initiatives improves governance performance and stakeholder trust in a number of developing countries. As such, transparency is not just a moral imperative but also is a functional requirement for building trust and for a functional implementation of policies.

Accountability, on the other hand, refers to the responsibility of public officials to provide explanations and justification for decisions and to be held accountable for decisions that are mismanaged. Mulgan (2018) found that there are two dimensions to accountability: answerability (to explain decisions) and enforceability (to impose sanctions/consequences for wrongdoing). In Nigeria, poor accountability has been associated with corruption, inefficiency, rampant mismanagement of resources, and low development (Adewale, 2019). Information management practises such as proper record keeping, auditing, and reporting are central in ensuring accountability and are vital in promoting it through proper record keeping, auditing systems and reporting mechanisms which facilitate oversight bodies such as the EFCC and ICPC to monitor the activities in the institution.

Administrative staff are frequently involved in creating, storing and updating institutional records. With the use of electronic databases and filing systems and automated record tracking, staff ensures that information is accurate, secure and easily accessible. This practice helps to strengthen the transparency by providing stakeholders with access to genuine records and helps to strengthen the accountability by establishing a clear trail of decisions and transactions (Ojo, 2018). Consequently, due to a lack of strong information systems, accountability frameworks break down and public resources are open to abuse. Heeks (2018) postulated that countries with institutionalised accountability mechanisms tied to information systems reported higher efficiency and better economic performance. Therefore, accountability thrives in an environment where information is well managed, accessible and verifiable.

Information Management Practises in Government Institutions

Information management practises involve the systematic process of collecting, storing, retrieving and disseminating information. Laudon and Laudon (2021) have defined it as the coordinated processes ensuring the accuracy, access and security of information for decision-making. They further claimed that the digital technologies have changed the

way of information management in modern administration. E - administrative platforms, electronic filing, digital archiving and online portals boost efficiency, reduce bureaucracy, reduce reliance on paper - based records and improve real-time data access for stakeholders (World Bank, 2016). Okonjo-Iweala (2018) cited problems like infrastructural deficits, lack of ICT training, cultural resistance etc. which hinder the total digital acquisition of modern information management systems. While Chukwuma and Eze (2021) argue that digital record keeping initiatives are impactful in enhancing accuracy of reports and curtailing loopholes of corruption, outright integration of the system does not appear to be without challenges.

In the public institutions, information managers provide stakeholders with access to institutional policies, circulars, and operational guidelines. By insisting that these documents are up-to-date and accessible on easy internal portals or noticeboards so that they allow staff and other external actors to make informed decisions. This builds on the transparency of the decision-making process and the accountability of the institution for its actions (Olusegun & Oyewole, 2019). Information managers also use a variety of such tools such as intranets, databases, e-filing systems, document management software, etc., to aid in information flow. The use of ICT helps with reduced human error, no information is manipulated and enhances efficiency. For the administrative staff, it ensures that records are managed in a transparent way, and ICT systems produce logs which enhance accountability mechanisms (Heeks, 2018).

Similarly, there are administrative people who keep proper accounts of financial transactions, procurement activities, expenditure reports etc. Such documentation ensures that the funds are properly tracked (thus minimising the risk of diversion). When audited regularly, such records impose a sense of accountability on the officers responsible for the utilisation of resources, while on the other hand, they ensure transparency in the conduct of financial operations (Afolabi, 2017). Information managers are an important part of ensuring that requests for information are responded to in respect of FOI regulations. Administrative staff, in turn, collate and publish accurate data within specified timelines, hence the problem of enhanced transparency and administrative secrecy in public administration, bettering incidents of accountability as institutions must have to justify their decisions and actions to external stakeholders (Chukwuma & Eze, 2020). In much the same vein administrative staff within public institutions assist in preparing periodic performance reports on the institutional activities administered while information managers often coordinate the collation and dissemination of such reports to management and oversight bodies. This practice can guarantee transparency-in the sense that the performance of an institution is not hidden, as well as accountability-in the sense that officials can be held responsible for triumphs or

shortfalls (World Bank, 2016). Information managers set up communications channels like help desks, newsletters, suggestion boxes, and digital feedback forms and administrative staff handle the processing of this information to see that the appropriate responses are made. Such practises are further aimed at fostering greater transparency through open sharing of institutional updates, as well as accountability through making sure that concerns by stakeholders and staff are addressed in tangible measurable ways (Okot-Uma, 2004).

Information Management and Economic Development

Economic development or sustainable economic development means protection of sustained economic development of economic indicators, efficient utilisation of resources, improved living standards. The World Bank (2016) claims that there is a direct correlation between good institutional management based on transparency and accountability and economic growth. It further affirms that strong information systems improve the performance of the institutions, reduce corruption and facilitate foreign investments. Heeks (2018) emphasises that the e management and information reforms can bring about significant improvement in service delivery and growth of economies of developing countries. In Nigeria, poor information systems has resulted in inefficiency in resource allocation, discouragement of foreign investment, and poor service delivery (Adewale, 2019).

On the other hand, institutions of public service when they adopted digital information systems tendered to improving on the service delivery this led to enhanced trust and investment (Eze and Chukwuma, 2020). These scholars further suggest that better record-keeping and digitisation have a positive impact on improving efficiency and public trust, which are critical to development. Likewise, Njuru (2020) postulated that e-record management systems were responsible for reducing corruption relating to procurement and increased institutional spending efficiency. This evidence suggests that information management practises are not just administrative tools but also are a catalyst for economic transformation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) & Institutional Administration

The introduction of ICT in institutional administration has revolutionised information management. According to Heeks (2018), ICT is improving transparency by enabling open portals for disseminating information and accountability by improved reporting systems on a real-time basis. Globally ICT has been linked to better stakeholder engagement, less bureaucracy and greater trust in public institutions (World Bank, 2016). In Africa, however, the execution is patchy due to infrastructural voids and digital divides as well as

weak enforcement of policies. In Nigeria, although digital reforms have been made in the country, issues like unstable electricity supply, poor internet connectivity and insufficient ICT training among the public servants limit the progress (Okonjo-Iweala, 2018). Nevertheless, ICT is critical to modern administration and a pre-requisite to attaining transparency and accountability for the digital economy era.

Methodology

This research method is descriptive in research survey design, which is suitable for studying staff in administration, information management, and information and communication technology (ICT) employees about perceptions on the practise of information management, transparency, accountability, and economic development at public institutions. The population is made up of staff in four public tertiary institutions in Ekiti state: Federal University of Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti and Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti. From this population a sample of about 200 people was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table in order to ensure fair representation from the various categories of institutions.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire that was designed with a 4-point Likert scale of the items, which were developed against the objectives of the study. Instrument reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha with a minimum acceptable score of 0.70, using a pilot test. Questionnaires were provided electronically (through Google Forms) to maximise participation and access. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and SDs) were used for the data analysis while Pearson's correlation and regression analysis were used to test relationships and predictive effects between the different variables. Ethical standards had been maintained, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality & anonymity of responses to comply with institutional guidelines as well as APA (2020) standards.

Analysis of Result

Research Question 1: What are the current state of information management practices in public institutions with respect to transparency and accountability?

Information Management Practices for Transparency and Accountability

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	My institution maintains accurate, up-to-date and retrievable digital records that support decision-making.	3.08	0.84	Agreed
2	Policy documents, circulars, and operational guidelines are made easily accessible to staff and stakeholders.	3.06	0.74	Agreed
3	Information on financial transactions and procurement activities are properly documented and regularly made available through official portals.	2.90	0.86	Agreed
4	ICT tools (such as databases, e-filing systems, and intranet platforms) are effectively used to manage records.	3.13	0.74	Agreed
5	My institution prepares periodic performance reports that are shared with management and oversight bodies.	2.90	0.72	Agreed
6	Feedback mechanisms (help desks, suggestion boxes, and digital portals) are available for stakeholders to monitor and evaluate institutional activities.	2.90	0.74	Agreed
7	Performance reports are prepared and shared with stakeholders for evaluation.	3.05	0.78	Agreed
8	There are effective communication channels (newsletters, portals, town halls) to share decisions with staff.	3.06	0.83	Agreed
9	Information management practices in my institution help prevent misuse of public resources	3.15	0.87	Agreed

The data presented in the preceding table outline the respondent evaluation of the information management practises related to transparency and accountability in public institutions. Using the mean-threshold interpretation (0.000-1.499=strongly disagree; 1.500-2.499=disagree; 2.500-3.499=Agree; 3.500-4.449=strongly agree), the results show that the mean scores of all items ranged from 2.90 to 3.15 with SD of 0.72-0.87, and hence, reflect a relatively uniform perception among the respondents. Respondents agreed that their institutions keep proper and updated digital records (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.84), have accessible policy documents (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.74) and have ICT tools used effectively for record management (Mean = 3.13, SD = 0.74). Significantly positive ratings were also given to performance-reporting and feedback mechanisms (mean values >2.90). The one that has the highest mean (3.15) implies that information management practises are perceived to be instrumental in preventing the abuse of public resources.

The results of the analysis show that public institutions have, in general, a favourable and effective state of information management practises based on transparency and accountability. In particular, the use of ICT in record-keeping, preparation of performance reports, and provision of communication channels combined together represent institutional culture that advocates openness and responsible governance.

Research Question 2: To what extent do information management practices contribute to promoting transparency in public institutions?

Extent to which Information Management Practices Promote Transparency and Accountability

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	The use of digital records has improved transparency in decision-making processes in my institution.	3.05	0.80	Agreed
2	Open access to policy documents and reports has increased stakeholder confidence in institutional activities.	2.90	0.74	Agreed
3	Proper documentation and audits of financial transactions have reduced opportunities for corruption.	3.15	0.65	Agreed
4	ICT-based information systems have strengthened transparency by making information more reliable and accessible.	3.23	0.76	Agreed
5	Performance reports have improved accountability by allowing management and oversight bodies to evaluate progress.	3.15	0.72	Agreed
6	Feedback mechanisms have promoted transparency by ensuring that staff and citizens' opinions are considered.	3.10	0.72	Agreed
7	Information management practices have made staff and management more accountable for their actions.	3.23	0.61	Agreed
8	Communication through newsletters, portals, town halls in my institution have significantly improved openness in operations.	3.13	0.69	Agreed

The present findings define respondent's perception on the extent in which information management practises helps to achieve transparency and accountability. Mean scores for the 8 items varied between 2.90 and 3.23 with SD ranging between 0.61 - 0.80. These values fall in the category of "Agree" indicating a high level of agreement between participants. The use of digital records was perceived to increase transparency in decision-making (Mean = 3,05; SD = 0,80); while open access to policy documents increased stakeholder confidence (Mean = 2.90; SD = 0,74). Notably, ICT based systems had the highest mean (Mean = 3.23; SD = 0.76) which stresses the pivotal role of ICT based systems in reinforcement of information reliability and accessibility. Furthermore,

documentation and audit procedures were positively assessed for their ability to minimise opportunities for corruption (Mean = 3.15; SD = 0.65).

These results suggest that information management practises are substantively conducive to transparency and accountability through ensuring the availability of information, aiding in increasing public trust, facilitating oversight functions, and aiding in facilitating communication between institutions and stakeholders. Consequently, digitalisation and structures for documentation gain centrality as dynamics for the promotion of transparency in public institutions.

Research Question 3: What are the relationship between effective information management practices and economic development outcomes in public institutions?

Relationship between Information Management Practices and Economic Development Outcomes

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	Effective information management has improved resource utilization in my institution.	3.02	0.67	Agreed
2	Transparent information systems have increased public trust, which contributes to economic stability.	3.02	0.78	Agreed
3	Proper records management reduces waste and supports cost savings in institutional operations.	3.26	0.63	Agreed
4	ICT-driven information management has enhanced productivity among staff and departments.	3.26	0.68	Agreed
5	Accountability practices supported by information management improve the efficient use of public funds.	3.11	0.79	Agreed
6	Access to reliable institutional data contributes to evidence-based decision-making for development planning.	3.08	0.75	Agreed
7	Information management practices have improved service delivery, which supports national economic growth.	3.16	0.68	Agreed
8	Proper documentation of institutional performance promotes innovation and competitiveness in the economy.	3.16	0.71	Agreed
9	Information management practices in public institutions contribute directly to good governance, which drives economic growth.	3.15	0.83	Agreed
10	Overall, the adoption of effective information management practices supports sustainable economic development in Nigeria.	3.13	0.78	Agreed

The table measures the perceived relation between good practises in information management and the results of economic development. Mean scores were 3.02-3.26, all in the "Agree" category, and SDs between 0.63-0.83. Respondents agreed with the statement that effective information management improved the utilisation of resources (Mean = 3.02; SD = 0.67), improved the productivity of staff through the integration of ICT (Mean = 3.26; SD = 0.68) and supported evidence-based decision-making as a basis for development planning (Mean 3.08 and SD 0.75). In addition, the importance of proper records management scored the highest (Mean = 3.26; SD = 0.63), which for them highlights the impact on saving costs and improving efficiency in a process.

This analysis concludes that successful information management is a critical factor contributing to economic development by providing for good governance, better service delivery, reduced waste and data-based planning. The agreement of the respondents in all given indicators points to the strategic role of information systems in promoting sustainable economic growth in public institutes.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: H_0 : Information management practices and promotion of transparency and accountability have no significant influence on economic development outcomes in public institutions.

Multiple Regression Analysis Summary showing Effect of Information Management Practices and Transparency and Accountability on economic development outcomes in public institutions

Variable	Coefficients (β)	Standard Error (S.E)	t-value	p-value	95 % Confidence Interval	Significance
Intercept (Constant)	7.31	2.37	3.08	0.00	[2.57, 12.05]	Sig.
Inform. Management Practices	-0.16	0.12	-1.30	0.20	[-0.40, 0.08]	Not Sig.
Transp. and Accountability	1.14	0.14	7.91	0.00	[0.85, 1.42]	Sig.

Note: $R^2 = 0.67$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.66$, $[F(2,59) = 59.38, p\text{-value} (0.00) < 0.05]$, N (Observations) = 62

The null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. Therefore, Information management practices and promotion of transparency and accountability have a significant influence on economic development outcomes in public institutions. $R^2 = 0.67$ indicates 67%, is the proportion of the variance in economic development outcomes (dependent variable) that can be

explained by the information management practices and promotion of transparency and accountability (independent variables).

The contributing effect of information Management Practices is not significant, $p(0.20) > 0.05$ but the effect of Transparency and Accountability is significant on Economic Development Outcomes in public institutions, $p(0.00) < 0.05$ level of significance. While the multiple regression analysis shows that the model explains 67% ($R^2 = 0.67$) of the variance in economic development outcomes, with a significant F-statistic [$F(2, 59) = 59.38, p < 0.05$].

The analysis indicates that information management practices have no statistically significant effect ($\beta = -0.16; p = 0.20 > 0.05$), while transparency and accountability have a significant positive influence ($\beta = 1.14; p = 0.00 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that while information management provides the structural framework, it is transparency and accountability that drive economic development outcomes in public institutions.

Hypothesis 2: H_0 : There is no significant relationship between effective information management practices and economic development outcome in public institutions.

Correlation Between effective information management practices and economic development outcomes in public institutions

	Information Management Practices	Economic Development Outcomes
Information Management Practices	1.00	0.56**
Economic Development Outcomes	0.56**	1.00
N	62	

Note: **. Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2 tails)

The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and it indicates a positive association between effective information management practises and the outcome of economic development at public institutions is statistically significant.

The results of the correlation analysis ($r=0.56, p<0.01$) show that there is a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between effective information management practises and the results of economic development. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that better information management is correlated with a

better economic performance, efficient utilisation of resources and better results in institutional development.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study show that respondents generally agreed with the statements of 9 items related to the situation of the management of information in their institutions. The average scores were 2.90-3.15 which lies within "Agree" with respect to the mean scores (2.500-3.499= Agree). This trend indicates that public institutions have moderately strong information management systems that are conducive to transparency and accountability. Of particular note, the first highest mean score (Mean = 3.15, SD = 0.87) was the item that stated that "information management practises in my institution help prevent misuse of public resources." This shows that institutional information management systems should play a crucial role in protecting public resources and preventing misappropriation. The utilisation of ICT tools (including databases, e-filings systems etc) for record management also had a fairly high mean (Mean = 3.13, SD = 0.74) suggesting the deployment of digital technologies to increase the efficiency and reliability of record-keeping processes. Items related to policy documents accessibility, communication over portals, preparation of performance reports also obtained mean scores within 2.90 and 3.08 and have shown consistent implementation of such practise. Nevertheless, the low mean values (just above 3.00) indicate that there is still scope for improvement, especially in the context of disseminating performance reports and financial information with a broader audience of stakeholders.

These findings show that public institutions have developed functional information management systems characterised by the utilisation of ICT, feedback mechanisms as well as structured reporting which, in combination, lead to a moderate level of transparency and accountability. This observation is consistent with the views of Okeke and Nwankwo (2021), who emphasised on the fact that the introduction of ICT tools to record management facilitates its accessibility and enhances administrative transparency including the potential manipulation of information within public organisation.

The study also suggests that the respondents perceive that information management practises contribute considerably towards transparency and accountability in their institutions. The highest mean score (Mean= 3.23, SD= 0.76) was obtained for the item that ICT based information systems have boosted transparency through making the information more reliable and accessible. Similarly, information management practises has improved staff and management accountability received high (Mean = 3.23, SD = 0.61) mean percentages. These results highlight the central role played by the ICT infrastructure and well-structured information systems in increasing the level of

transparency in the public sector. Documentation and audits were also highly rated (Mean = 3.15, SD = 0.65), which suggests that following careful documentation practises help to reduce corruption by making financial transactions more traceable. Access to policy documents and performance reports was positively rated; a strong indication that information sharing builds the level of trust of the stakeholders and enables the oversight bodies to effectively monitor what the institutions have been doing.

The robustness in these findings indicate that information management practices are fundamental in supporting transparency and accountability in public institutions, especially in fundamentally systems that are enabled by digital tools, open channels of communication and strong reporting structures. This supports the needs of Adepoju and Alhassan (2020) who reported that digital information systems contributed to the openness of institutions, encourage stakeholders to hold them accountable and support good governance.

In the same vein the findings shows that effective information management is perceived to have a significant positive impact on outcomes of economic development within public institutions. The highest mean values (Mean = 3.26) were reported for two items, that proper records management reduces wastage and supports cost saving and ICT-driven information management enhances staff productivity. This suggests a possible contribution of well-structured information systems in the form of operational efficiency, cost reduction and improved staff performance, all of which are critical for economic growth. Other highly rated items include the role of information management in the improved service delivery (Mean 3.16) and the promotion of innovation and competitiveness through the proper documentation of the performance of the institutions (Mean 3.16). These findings are indicative of the opinion that information management is not simply administrative but rather strategic in how it drives the quality and innovation of service to suit national economic objectives.

The study suggests that effective information management contributes to good governance, public trust, resource utilisation and service delivery that ensures sustainability of economic development. This accords with findings by Eze and Ugochukwu (2019), who contended that information systems enhance decision-making and institutional efficiency and contribute to general economic outcomes.

Conclusion

Information management practise is found to play a crucial role in strengthening transparency and accountability and to drive the outcome of economic development within the public institutions. It was further established that despite improved record accuracy, access to policies and informed decision making offered by ICT-based

information systems, a more direct impact on development performance is that of transparency and accountability. Effective records management does the following: saves waste, increases productivity and inspires innovation - all essential for quality service delivery and national development. Statistical evidence showed strong positive relationships between information management on the one hand, transparency, accountability and economic development - placing great emphasis on a co-evolved use of advanced ICT systems and structures for transparent governance. Consequently, the management of information should not only be viewed as an administrative function but it should also be considered as a strategic pillar for sustainable development in the public sector of Nigeria.

Recommendations

- The government should strengthen ICT infrastructure and institutional capacity with the deployment of modernised systems, institutional capacity enhancement, staff training, and effective monitoring mechanism, and to increase transparency and accountability in information management.
- The information systems should be interlinked within frameworks of transparency and governance by institutionalising clear policies, linking information to decision-making processes and fostering stakeholder engagement building public trust.
- Information management should be aligned with economic development goals by connecting ICT systems with governance, promoting efficiency and innovation, and enforcing supportive legislation to standardize practices across all government levels.

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