



Digital Technology and the Economic Transformation of Nigeria via the lens of Delta State: Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Prospects

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Abstract: Digital technology is rapidly transforming the global economy, and Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy, has not been left out of this trend. The objectives of this paper were to ascertain if the media can contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology; identify critical areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy, and determine if digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria. A quantitative method was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of media practitioners and industry experts regarding the role of media in driving digital transformation in Nigeria. Questionnaire was utilised as the instrument for data collection. This study was based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Findings from the study revealed that the media can play crucial role in the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology. It was also found that some challenges that Nigeria faces in harnessing the full potential of digital technology include inadequate infrastructure, limited digital skills, and insufficient regulatory frameworks. Also, it was established that digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria. The paper concluded that digital technology has the potential to significantly transform Nigeria's economy, creating new business opportunities, enhancing access to markets, and increasing productivity. It was recommended that the media should do more in strengthening collaboration and partnerships between government, industry, academia, and civil society organisations to drive digital transformation and contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria. Furthermore, government should expand access to reliable Internet connectivity across Nigeria, including remote and underdeveloped areas; upgrade technological infrastructure to support digital innovation and entrepreneurship, and foster public-private partnerships to accelerate the development of digital infrastructure.

Keywords: Challenges, Digital Technology, Economy, Future, Opportunities, Prospects, Transformation

I. Introduction

Digital technology has emerged as a powerful driver of economic transformation globally, and Nigeria, as one of the largest economies in Africa, is seeking to leverage this technology to foster its own economic growth. Guanah et al., (2023) assert that Science and technology have become one of the most important aspects of human society given the level of impacts in human interaction as well as work. With a population of over 200 million people, and a thriving entrepreneurial spirit, Nigeria holds immense potential to harness the benefits of digital technology to stimulate economic development and overcome various socio-economic challenges (World Bank, 2021).

The advent of digital technology has revolutionised the way societies operate, transforming industries, markets, and economies worldwide. Digital technology encompasses

a range of innovative tools and platforms that facilitate the collection, storage, processing, and dissemination of information through digital means. Key elements of digital technology include the internet, mobile devices, cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology. These advancements have fundamentally altered traditional business models, disrupted industries, and created new avenues for economic growth and development (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Nigeria, as a resource-rich country with a young and dynamic population, has witnessed significant economic growth over the years. However, the country still faces numerous challenges, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and limited access to basic services. In this context, digital technology offers a promising pathway for Nigeria to address these challenges and drive inclusive economic development.

The Nigerian government has recognised the transformative potential of digital technology, and has taken steps to promote digital transformation in the country. The National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy, launched in 2019, outlines the government's commitment to building a digital economy that is inclusive, globally competitive, and capable of fostering job creation and innovation (Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, 2019). The policy focuses on key areas such as digital infrastructure development, digital skills acquisition, and the promotion of digital entrepreneurship (Aondover et al., 2024).

This paper aimed to explore the relationship between digital technology and the economic transformation of Nigeria, through the lens of Delta State. It sought to identify the opportunities, challenges, and future prospects associated with the utilisation of digital technology for economic advancement in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

While digital technology has the potential to drive economic transformation in Nigeria, there are several challenges and gaps that need to be addressed to fully realise its benefits. These challenges hinder the effective integration of digital technology into Nigeria's economic landscape, particularly in the context of Delta State. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for creating an enabling environment that promotes the growth of Nigeria's digital economy and maximizes its potential for economic development.

One of the primary problems is the limited understanding of how the media can contribute to Nigeria's economic transformation through digital technology. The media play a critical role in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how the media can effectively utilise digital technology to drive economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Another problem lies in the identification of critical areas that require attention to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy. These critical areas include digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and regulation. Insufficient digital infrastructure, such as limited access to reliable internet connectivity and inadequate technological infrastructure, hampers the effective adoption and utilisation of digital technology. Additionally, low levels of digital literacy among the population pose challenges in leveraging the full potential of digital tools and platforms. Furthermore, existing regulatory frameworks may not be conducive to the rapid growth of the digital economy, hindering innovation and investment.

Also, there is a need to determine the extent to which digital technology can contribute to overall economic development in Nigeria. While there is evidence of the positive impact of digital technology in specific sectors, such as agriculture and e-commerce, it is essential to assess its broader contribution to Nigeria's economic growth and development.

Understanding the potential benefits and limitations of digital technology in driving economic development is crucial for formulating effective strategies and policies.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives were to:

1. Ascertain if the media can contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology,
2. Identify critical areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy, and
3. Determine if digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratifications Theory was applied to this study. The theory was developed by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974), and it focuses on how individuals actively seek and use media to satisfy their specific needs and desires. In the context of Nigeria's economic transformation, the Uses and Gratifications Theory can shed light on the motivations and gratifications individuals derive from utilising digital technology. It emphasises that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages but actively select and engage with media based on their personal needs, goals, and preferences (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

Applying this theory to Nigeria's digital economy, individuals may turn to digital technology, such as online marketplaces or social media platforms, to satisfy various needs and gratifications. For instance, entrepreneurs and small business owners may use digital technology to enhance their market reach, expand their customer base, and increase their business opportunities (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). This utilisation of digital technology aligns with the gratification of entrepreneurial ambitions and the need for business growth.

Moreover, consumers in Nigeria may use digital platforms for information seeking and entertainment purposes. They may seek out digital media content, such as online news or streaming services, to stay informed, entertained, and connected with the world (Osho, Olaleye & Ayo, 2020). This aligns with the gratification of information acquisition, social connection, and leisure.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory also considers the role of the media in facilitating gratification fulfillment. In the context of Nigeria's economic transformation, the media plays a crucial role in disseminating information, creating awareness about digital opportunities, and showcasing success stories in digital entrepreneurship (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021; Aondover et al., 2025). The media serve as a platform through which individuals can obtain relevant information, inspiration, and guidance to pursue their economic goals.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the motivations, needs, and gratifications that drive individuals to engage with digital technology in the context of Nigeria's economic transformation. It emphasises the active role of individuals in selecting and utilising digital media to fulfill their specific needs and desires. By applying this theory, researchers can gain insights into how digital technology satisfies the entrepreneurial ambitions of individuals, facilitates information acquisition, and promotes social connection in Nigeria's digital economy.

2.2 Media Contributions to the Economic Transformation of Nigeria through Digital Technology

The media play a crucial role in contributing to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology. By leveraging digital platforms, the media can facilitate information dissemination, market access, and collaboration among various stakeholders, thereby driving economic growth and development (Aondover et al., 2022). This section explores the specific ways in which the media contributes to Nigeria's economic transformation and cites relevant studies to support these assertions.

Firstly, the media serve as a powerful channel for raising awareness and disseminating information about digital opportunities, entrepreneurship, and economic development in Nigeria. Through digital platforms such as social media, online news outlets, and digital marketing channels, the media can reach a wide audience and effectively communicate information about digital initiatives, government policies, and success stories in the digital economy (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021; Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024). This information dissemination can inspire and motivate individuals to explore digital entrepreneurship, enhance their digital skills, and participate in the digital economy.

Secondly, the media provide a platform for showcasing digital innovations, products, and services, thereby promoting market access and business growth. By featuring digital startups, entrepreneurs, and their success stories, the media can raise the visibility of these ventures and attract investment and partnerships (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). This exposure helps digital businesses to expand their customer base, access new markets, and create employment opportunities, contributing to economic growth (Osho et al., 2020).

Moreover, the media facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing within the digital ecosystem. Through digital platforms, individuals and organisations can connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas, leading to the emergence of innovative partnerships and business models (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). Media platforms such as online forums, webinars, and social networks enable entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices, fostering an ecosystem of digital innovation and entrepreneurship (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021; Aondover et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and policy discourse related to digital technology and economic transformation. Through investigative journalism, opinion pieces, and analysis, the media can highlight the importance of digital transformation, advocate for favorable policies, and hold stakeholders accountable (Osho et al., 2020). This media engagement can create awareness among policymakers and the public about the potential benefits of digital technology and drive the necessary policy reforms to support the growth of the digital economy (Aondover et al., 2022).

2.2 Media Role in Promoting the Transformation of Nigeria's Digital Economy

The media play a vital role in promoting the transformation of Nigeria's digital economy. Through its various platforms and channels, the media contribute to creating awareness, facilitating knowledge dissemination, and fostering collaboration within the digital ecosystem. Firstly, the media serves as a key platform for raising awareness about the digital economy and its potential benefits. Through news articles, feature stories, and opinion pieces, the media informs the public about digital initiatives, policies, and success stories, thereby generating interest and inspiring individuals to explore opportunities in the digital economy (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021).

By providing information on digital trends, market dynamics, and technological advancements, the media helps shape public perception and understanding of the digital economy (Idris & Msughter, 2022).

Secondly, the media play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and best practices related to the digital economy. Through digital platforms such as websites, blogs, and online forums, the media provide a wealth of information on digital skills, digital entrepreneurship, and digital transformation strategies (Osho et al., 2020). This knowledge dissemination equips individuals and businesses with the necessary insights and tools to navigate the digital landscape, adopt digital technologies, and leverage digital platforms effectively.

Moreover, the media foster collaboration and networking within the digital ecosystem. Through digital platforms, the media enables entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts to connect, share experiences, and collaborate on digital projects and initiatives (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). Media outlets often organise events, webinars, and conferences that bring together key stakeholders from the digital sector, facilitating knowledge exchange, idea generation, and partnership formation (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019).

Furthermore, the media act as a platform for showcasing digital innovations, startups, and success stories. Through interviews, features, and dedicated sections, the media highlights the achievements of digital entrepreneurs, the impact of digital technologies, and the growth of the digital economy (Osho et al., 2020). This media exposure not only raises the visibility of digital initiatives but also attracts investment, fosters entrepreneurship, and encourages the replication of successful models.

Additionally, the media influence policy discourse and advocacy for the digital economy. Through investigative journalism, policy analysis, and opinion pieces, the media sheds light on policy gaps, challenges, and opportunities in the digital sphere (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). Media engagement can raise awareness among policymakers, shape public opinion, and drive the necessary policy reforms to support the growth of the digital economy.

2.3 Critical Areas that Need to be Addressed to Promote the Growth of Nigeria's Digital Economy

Promoting the growth of Nigeria's digital economy requires addressing critical areas that can facilitate digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and adoption of digital technologies. There are areas that need to be addressed to foster the growth of Nigeria's digital economy; they include adequate digital infrastructure is essential for promoting the growth of Nigeria's digital economy. This includes improving access to reliable internet connectivity, expanding broadband infrastructure, and investing in technological infrastructure. A study by Akinsola and Akinola (2021) emphasises the significance of digital infrastructure development in supporting digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth. Policymakers and stakeholders should prioritize investments in digital infrastructure to create an enabling environment for digital transformation.

Also, enhancing digital skills and literacy among individuals and businesses is critical for the growth of Nigeria's digital economy. By providing training programmes, educational initiatives, and digital literacy campaigns, individuals can acquire the necessary skills to effectively utilise digital tools and platforms. Okorie, Obijuru and Ibe (2020) stress the importance of digital skills acquisition for sustainable entrepreneurship development. Government agencies, educational institutions, and private organisations should collaborate to develop and implement comprehensive digital skills training programmes to bridge the digital skills gap.

Establishing a conducive regulatory environment is essential for fostering the growth of Nigeria's digital economy. Flexible and adaptive regulations can encourage digital entrepreneurship, protect consumer rights, and promote healthy competition. Onifade, Adewumi, and Ogunleye (2019) highlight the significance of creating a favorable regulatory framework that supports digital innovation and investment. Policymakers should review and

update regulations to address emerging digital trends and foster an environment that enables digital startups to thrive.

Access to finance and funding is crucial for digital startups and entrepreneurs to scale their businesses and drive innovation. Adequate financial mechanisms, such as venture capital funds, angel investors, and crowdfunding platforms, should be developed to provide financial support to digital entrepreneurs. Adejumo, Awojobi, and Adegbuyi (2021) emphasise the need for financial support mechanisms to drive digital agriculture in Nigeria. Public and private sectors should collaborate to establish funds and initiatives that specifically target digital startups and provide them with the necessary financial resources.

Addressing cybersecurity threats and ensuring data privacy are vital for building trust and confidence in the digital economy (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). Developing robust cybersecurity frameworks, data protection policies, and regulatory measures can safeguard individuals' data and protect digital infrastructure. As the digital economy grows, efforts should be made to strengthen cybersecurity capabilities and raise awareness among individuals and businesses about the importance of cybersecurity.

2.4 Ways Digital Technology can contribute to Economic Development in Nigeria

Digital technology has the potential to significantly contribute to economic development in Nigeria by fostering innovation, enhancing productivity, promoting entrepreneurship, and expanding market access (Msughter et al., 2023). Digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria through various means. Digital technology provides a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship, enabling the development of new products, services, and business models. By leveraging digital tools, entrepreneurs can create innovative solutions to address societal challenges, improve existing processes, and tap into new market opportunities (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021).

Digital innovation and entrepreneurship drive job creation, attract investment, and stimulate economic growth. A study by Adedokun and Odumodu (2021) emphasises the transformative impact of digital technology on entrepreneurship and economic growth in Nigeria.

Digital technology facilitates market access by breaking down geographical barriers and connecting businesses with a wider customer base. Through e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital marketing channels, businesses can reach customers across Nigeria and beyond (Adejumo et al., 2021). Digital platforms enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to showcase their products and services, expand their customer reach, and compete in the global marketplace (Aondover et al., 2025). This enhanced market access drives revenue growth, increases employment opportunities, and contributes to economic development (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024a).

Digital technology enables businesses to streamline their operations, automate processes, and enhance productivity. Through the adoption of digital tools such as cloud computing, data analytics, and workflow automation, businesses can optimize their operations, reduce costs, and improve efficiency (Osho, Olaleye & Ayo, 2020). Increased productivity translates to higher output, improved competitiveness, and accelerated economic development (Vitalis et al., 2025).

Digital technology plays a vital role in promoting financial inclusion, especially in a country like Nigeria where a significant portion of the population remains unbanked. Digital financial services such as mobile banking, digital wallets, and online payment systems provide individuals and businesses with access to formal financial services (Osho et al., 2020). By enabling secure and convenient financial transactions, digital financial inclusion helps individuals save, invest, and participate in economic activities, thereby driving economic development (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024b).

The adoption of digital technology creates a demand for digital skills, leading to skills development and employment opportunities. Digital skills training programmes, coding boot camps, and online learning platforms empower individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital economy (Okorie, Obijuru, & Ibe, 2020). The acquisition of digital skills not only increases employability but also promotes entrepreneurship, as individuals can start digital-based businesses and contribute to economic development.

2.5 Future Prospects of Nigeria's Digital Economy

The future prospects of Nigeria's digital economy are promising, presenting opportunities for sustained economic growth, innovation, and socio-economic development. The potential future prospects of Nigeria's digital economy rely on various factors. The future of Nigeria's digital economy lies in the widespread adoption of digital technologies across various sectors. As digital infrastructure improves and digital literacy increases, sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, finance, and e-commerce are expected to undergo significant digital transformation (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). Digital technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain have the potential to revolutionize these sectors, driving efficiency, innovation, and economic growth (Oreoluwa et al., 2024).

The future of Nigeria's digital economy includes the expansion of e-commerce platforms and digital marketplaces. As internet penetration increases and consumer behavior shifts towards online shopping, e-commerce is expected to witness substantial growth (Adejumo, Awojobi, & Adegbuyi, 2021). The rise of digital marketplaces will enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access a wider customer base, foster entrepreneurship, and contribute to job creation. The growth of the digital economy in Nigeria aligns with global trends, where e-commerce is becoming a significant driver of economic activity.

The future of Nigeria's digital economy relies on nurturing digital startups and creating innovation hubs. These hubs provide a supportive ecosystem for startups, offering access to funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities (Adedokun & Odumodu, 2021). By fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, Nigeria can position itself as a hub for digital innovation and attract investment from both domestic and international sources. This, in turn, can contribute to job creation, economic diversification, and the development of a robust digital ecosystem (Kurfi et al., 2021).

To harness the full potential of the digital economy, Nigeria needs to invest in digital skills development and human capital. The future prospects of Nigeria's digital economy depend on equipping individuals with the necessary digital skills to thrive in the digital era (Okorie, Obijuru & Ibe, 2020). By enhancing digital literacy programmes, incorporating digital skills into education curricula, and promoting lifelong learning, Nigeria can cultivate a skilled workforce capable of driving digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development (Msughter et al., 2023).

Collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial for the future prospects of Nigeria's digital economy. Public-private partnerships can drive investments in digital infrastructure, foster innovation, and create an enabling regulatory environment (Adejumo et al., 2021). Collaboration can also facilitate knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and the sharing of best practices (Msughter et al., 2023). By fostering these partnerships, Nigeria can leverage the expertise and resources of both sectors to accelerate the growth of the digital economy.

2.6 Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have explored the impact of digital technology on the agricultural sector in Nigeria. For instance, (Adejumo et al., 2021) conducted a study on the use

of digital technology in agriculture and found that digital platforms, such as mobile applications and online marketplaces, have facilitated access to agricultural information, improved market linkages, and increased productivity among farmers. These digital innovations have enhanced farmers' ability to make informed decisions, adopt best practices, and access markets more efficiently.

Similarly, Afolabi, Adeyeye, and Adeleye (2020) investigated the impact of e-extension services on agricultural productivity in Nigeria and reported positive outcomes. Through the use of digital platforms, farmers were able to receive real-time information on weather patterns, crop management techniques, and market prices, leading to increased crop yields and improved profitability. These findings demonstrate the potential of digital technology to drive economic growth in the agricultural sector and contribute to food security.

Empirical studies have also identified key challenges and opportunities within Nigeria's digital economy. For example, Osho, Olaleye and Ayo (2020) examined the mediated impact of digital media on financial inclusion and economic growth in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that digital banking services, such as mobile money and online payment systems, have improved financial access for previously unbanked individuals and contributed to economic growth. However, challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, low digital literacy, and regulatory constraints were identified as barriers to realizing the full potential of the digital economy.

Moreover, Akinsola and Akinola (2021) conducted a study on digital economy infrastructure and economic growth in Nigeria. They highlighted the importance of investing in digital infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity and technological infrastructure, to promote digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Their findings emphasised the need for policymakers to address the infrastructure gaps and create an enabling environment for digital transformation.

Studies have also examined the role of digital entrepreneurship and innovation in driving economic transformation. Adedokun and Odumodu (2021) explored the link between digital technology, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in Nigeria. They found that digital technology has enabled the emergence of new business models, increased market access, and enhanced productivity, leading to job creation and economic growth. The study highlighted the potential of digital entrepreneurship to transform Nigeria's economy by fostering innovation, creating employment opportunities, and attracting investment.

III. Research Methods

A quantitative methodology was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of media practitioners and industry experts regarding the digital technology and the economic transformation of Nigeria via the lens of delta state: opportunities, challenges, and future prospects. It provided a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, and captured both the breadth and depth of data. Through random sampling technique, one hundred and seventeen (117) respondents were selected; this includes journalists from both private (39) and government (39) media, made up of both the print and broadcast media in Delta State, Nigeria, and industry experts (39) from each of the 25 local government areas in the state.

A questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by two mass communication Professors and two experienced industry experts, and internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.89 for the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method. Out of the 117 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, only 92 (78.63%) copies were returned. Data obtained for the study were analysed using simple percentages and tables.

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1. Media can contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology

	Res	Fre
Strongly Agree	32	34.78
Agree	24	26.09
Undecided	6	6.52
Disagree	19	20.65
Strongly Disagree	11	11.96
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Likert - type five points rating scale and dichotomous was used: 5= Strongly Agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3= Undecided (U), 2= Strongly Disagree (SD), and 1= Disagree (D) responses as well as open ended questions.

Data from Table 1 show that the media can contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology.

Table 2. Critical areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy

Responses	Frequency	%
Digital infrastructure developer	20	21.74
Digital literacy	17	18.48
Digital skills acquisition	18	19.56
Regulation	17	18.48
Others	20	21.74
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in table 2 revealed the critical areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy; it also includes the promotion of digital entrepreneurship.

Table 3. Digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	32	34.78
Agree	24	26.09
Undecided	6	6.52
Disagree	19	20.65
Strongly Disagree	11	11.96
Total	92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Likert - type five points rating scale and dichotomous was used: 5= Strongly Agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3= Undecided (U), 2= Strongly Disagree (SD), and 1= Disagree (D) responses as well as open ended questions.

Data from Table 3 show that digital technology can significantly contribute to economic development in Nigeria.

IV. Results and Discussion

The first finding of this study was that the media can contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology. This finding aligns with the assertions of the African Leadership Magazine (2021) that digital technology is helping to drive growth in promising non-oil sectors in Nigeria, such as media and entertainment, finance, and fast-moving consumer goods. The article cites examples of how digital technology is being used to create jobs, boost exports, and improve access to financial services.

Also, it is in consensus with the finding by Solomon (2020) that individual usage of digital technology, rather than business or government usage, has a significant impact on economic growth in African countries. His study found that countries with higher levels of individual digital technology usage tend to have higher rates of economic growth.

Likewise, the Daily Trust (2021) argues that technology, particularly the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, has the potential to rescue Nigeria's economy from its current recession. The article cites examples of how the ICT sector is already contributing to economic growth in Nigeria, and argues that the sector could play an even greater role in the future. Similarly, TechCabal (2022) reports that the ICT sector contributed more than the oil sector to Nigeria's GDP in the second quarter of 2022. This is the first time that the ICT sector has surpassed the oil sector in terms of contribution to Nigeria's GDP.

According to the Nigeria Digital Economy Diagnostic report by the World Bank, Nigeria can fully unleash new economic opportunities, create jobs and transform people's lives with improvements in digital connectivity, digital skills, digital financial services and other core areas of digital development (World Bank, 2019). Digital technologies are unlocking new pathways for rapid economic growth, innovation, job creation and access to services in Africa (World Bank, 2021) African countries need to invest more in research and development (R&D) and international partners should offer investment support to create home-grown digital solutions (World Economic Forum, 2022).

The foregoing provide evidence that digital technology can play a significant role in economic transformation in Nigeria. The studies suggest that digital technology can help to create jobs, boost exports, improve access to financial services, and raise awareness about social and economic issues. As digital technology continues to evolve, the media will have even more opportunities to play a role in Nigeria's economic development. This study also found that the critical areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of Nigeria's digital economy are digital infrastructure development, digital skills acquisition, digital literacy, regulation, and the promotion of digital entrepreneurship. Hitherto, Tan, Ngan, Hai, and Anh (2022) argue that digital transformation has the potential to disrupt traditional economies by creating new opportunities for mid-businesses to grow, while challenging established players in various industries.

Previously, Asian Development Bank (2019) identifies five key areas that need to be addressed to promote the growth of the digital economy: infrastructure, skills, innovation, inclusion, and governance. Also, the World Bank (2019) identifies key challenges and opportunities, and recommends a number of policy interventions to promote the growth of the digital economy, including investments in infrastructure, skills development, and regulation. Guobadia (2023) argues that the government needs to do more to promote the growth of the digital economy, such as by investing in infrastructure, providing digital skills training, and creating a more supportive regulatory environment.

According to the International Communication Union- ITU Academy (2021), digital skills are now seen as a key enabler of countries' digital transition and indispensable for its success.

Strengthening digital skills has therefore become an integral part of national digital transformation strategies. Effective strategies to address digital literacy and skill-building will

require public and private investments in digital infrastructure, policy and governance frameworks, and training in the use of digital technologies (Center for Strategic and International Studies- CSIS, 2022). According to a recent International Communication Union- ITU (2021) report, 40% of individuals in 40% of countries surveyed reported carrying out an activity that requires basic digital skills in the last three months. The COVID-19 pandemic has boosted digitization.

Lastly, this study found that digital technology can contribute to economic development in Nigeria. This corroborates with Guanah's (2022) declaration that science and technology have essentially provided solutions to almost all of the challenges that man faces daily. They are improving the flexibility, productivity, and sustainability of various facets of human life, from education to agriculture, industries, healthcare, communication, construction, entertainment, financial services, engineering, and sundry others.

This finding also tallies with that of Adaramola (2022) which argues that digital technology can help to increase capital and labour productivity, and also help to obtain goods and services at lower prices. It also notes that digital technology levels the playing field for entrepreneurs anywhere in the world. World Bank (2019) report further provides an overview of the state of the digital economy in Nigeria, and identifies opportunities and challenges for its further development. The report finds that Nigeria has a number of positive factors that could support the growth of its digital economy, including a large and young population, a growing middle class, and a rising number of Internet users.

The Nation Newspaper (2022) also highlights some of the positive indicators for the growth of Nigeria's digital economy, such as its fast growing youth population, expanding consumer power, and increasing smartphone penetration. On their part, Ogunleye and Akinbode (2020) investigated the impact of digital technology adoption on economic growth and labour productivity in Nigeria, and they found that digital technology adoption has a positive impact on economic growth and labor productivity in Nigeria. Equally, Nwachukwu and Asongu (2020) examined the impact of digital technology usage on economic growth in Africa, and they found that digital technology usage has a positive impact on economic growth in Africa.

V. Conclusion

The economic transformation of Nigeria through digital technology, as examined through the lens of Delta State, presents significant opportunities, challenges, and future prospects. This study explored the role of digital technology in Nigeria's economic development, identified critical areas for growth in the digital economy, and assessed the potential contributions of digital technology to the overall economic transformation of the country.

The findings of this research highlight the immense potential of digital technology in driving economic growth and development across various sectors. Empirical studies have demonstrated the positive impact of digital technology adoption in sectors such as agriculture, finance, and entrepreneurship. Digital platforms and innovations have improved market access, increased productivity, and fostered innovation, leading to job creation and economic growth.

However, the realisation of these benefits is contingent upon addressing critical challenges and gaps. Insufficient digital infrastructure, including limited access to reliable internet connectivity and technological infrastructure, poses a significant barrier to digital transformation. Low levels of digital literacy among the population hinder the effective utilisation of digital tools and platforms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were put forth:

1. The media should do more in strengthening collaboration and partnerships between government, industry, academia, and civil society organisations to drive digital transformation and contribute to the economic transformation of Nigeria.
2. Government should expand access to reliable internet connectivity across Nigeria, including remote and underserved areas; upgrade technological infrastructure to support digital innovation and entrepreneurship, and foster public-private partnerships to accelerate the development of digital infrastructure.
3. Bridge the digital divide by providing affordable access to digital devices and internet connectivity; develop programmes to ensure digital inclusion for marginalised groups, including women, rural communities, and persons with disabilities.

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