**ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT), AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM WEST AFRICA**

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**Abstract**: Poor Access to electricity may hinder West African countries from raising levels of financial development with the aid of Information communication Technology (ICT). Using 16 West African countries, and data over the period of 2000 to 2018, this present study analyses the effect of greater access to electricity on financial development through ICT. ICT was measured using mobile use and internet use, while financial development was measured using private bank credit to GDP ratio and Broad Money Supply to GDP ratio. Panel data fixed effect instrumental variables estimation was used for analysis and the study found that access to electricity significantly boosts mobile use and internet use, while resulting from access to electricity mobile use significantly boosted both measures of financial development but internet use significantly reduced the measures. Further categorizing sample countries into Anglophone and Francophone West Africa countries, access to electricity through ICT boosted both measures of financial development for Francophone countries, while only boosting broad money supply to GDP ratio for Anglophone countries. Thus greater access to electricity through for example provision of electricity infrastructure and regulation of electricity charges to households and firms is important to boost levels of financial development in West Africa.

**Keywords**: Access to Electricity, Information communication Technology (ICT), financial development, Mobile subscription, Internet Use, West Africa,

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