RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mapping Edo State University's Undergraduates' Awareness and Usage of the New Media

Obinna Johnkennedy Chukwu[1], Ata-Awaji Anthony Reuben [2]

Abstract

The study was carried out to map Edo State University undergraduates' awareness and usage of the new media. The study was predicated on one theory - Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The objectives, among other things, were to ascertain the extent of awareness and usage of new media in Edo State University; and the constraints they (undergraduate students) encounter, in respect to the usage of the media. Survey was adopted as the study design, while questionnaire was used to elicit information from 210 undergraduate students. Findings showed that the extent of awareness and usage of new media in Edo State University is high. The findings indicate also, amongst others, that the undergraduate students of the Institution did not encounter challenges in respect to usage of the new media. Based on the forgoing, it was recommended, amongst others, that the use of new media in pedagogy be introduced in schools, particularly, tertiary institutions in Nigeria, given the effectiveness of the use new media for teaching and learning in Edo State University, Uzairue, Nigeria. Further, efforts should be geared toward training undergraduate students on how to utilise new media for educational purposes.

Keywords: Mapping, Undergraduates, Awareness, Usage, New Media.

Author Affiliation: [1] Department of Mass Communication, Edo State University, Uzairue, Edo State, Nigeria.
[2] Department of Mass Communication, Topfaith University, Mkpatak, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
Corresponding Author: Obinna Johnkennedy Chukwu. Department of Mass Communication, Edo State University, Uzairue, Edo State, Nigeria.
Email: obinnakennedy@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

New media is nothing but the amalgamation of all types of media into one new form, all conceptions, ideas and theories of the original media are embedded into the new form. He asserted that new media's definition can be gleaned from three distinct aspects, namely, Technological aspect – which sees new media as nothing, but a new technology, which helps in sustainable development in the field of communication; Cultural and social aspect – new media as a new technological advancement to induce socio-cultural change in the developing society; Environmental aspect – new media as a media which works not only for technological, social or cultural development, but also for sustainable environmental development. Conclusively, he posited "new media as a new technological advancement not only for the field of social or cultural aspect, but also working hand in hand with environment for sustainable development" (P.3). scholars agree that the importance of the new media technologies is huge and transcend age barriers. It has also become tools utilised for impartation of knowledge, learning, communication exchange and interaction, and mobilization of the citizens for advancement of society's good. Akpan, in support, quip that the new technologies have provided a wealth of opportunities for creating new forms of expression and developing new services. Aside the above, it has made access to information and information's sources easy, and without the usual restraints. In Nigeria, many of the universities are facing enormous difficulties and challenges in terms of access to the new technologies, partly, during the Covid-19 pandemic's lock-downs. Ochoga opines on the state of the Nigerian universities' exposure to the digital realm thus: "many of the Nigerian universities represent a blank slate in the digital realm". This may have been the reason why majority of the university student do not have access to computer sets or laptops, mobile computing technologies, and/or the internet. Worse still, majority of Nigerian students are computer and/or digital illiterate. [1]

2. Statement of the Problem

Digital divide, referred to as the gap between those with regular effective access to digital and information technology, and those without access, continues to grow astronomically, despite the huge

investment in the sector, introduction of new easy-to-access devices, and availability. O'dea captures this ugly situation in his study, where he puts the number of smart phone users (a device that makes access to some of the new media platforms available) in Nigeria, at an estimated figure of 10 - 20% out of the 170 million subscribers to the Global System for Mobile Communication, popularly known as GSM, as at August 2020. The study further set the smartphone-penetration growth to 60 percent by 2025. The above depicts and highlights the dire situation regarding utilization of the new media. In the vein, available data indicates that Nigerian universities still habour and are preponderated with students with no access to new media. Whilst, in the advanced climes, access to new media technologies has been made the basic requirement for study at the tertiary level. This lackadaisical approach to basic things germane to proper learning and knowledge-impartation contributed, in no small measure, to the inability of the majority of the universities in Nigeria to have online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns. Even where online classes held, evidence abound that there were mammoth challenges, ranging from students' inability to utilise the technological devices deployed for learning purposes, absence of requisite devices, and new media technology availability, amongst others. Hence the need to ascertain and understand the extent of awareness and knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students in Nigerian universities, particularly, Edo State University, Uzairue. In view of the above, it is unclear whether or not the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue, are aware, know the new media technologies, utilised it, and/or the new media technologies have contributed to students learning; also, whether or not the new media technologies are available in Edo State University, Uzairue, amongst others. Further, answers to the above, will indicate whether or not the digital divide is still prevalent in the school. [2,3,4]

3. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:
1. Find out the extent of awareness of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue. [5,6,7,8]
2. Assess the extent of knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue,
3. Determine the extent of usage of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue.
4. Investigate how the new media technologies contribute to the students' learning.
5. Identify the purpose the new media serve the students of Edo State University, Uzairue,
6. Ascertain the level of constraints undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue, encounter in the usage of the new media.

3. Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions are formulated.
1. What is the extent of awareness of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue?
2. What is the extent of knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue?
3. To what extent have the undergraduate students of Edo State University utilised the new media technologies?
4. To what extent have the new media technologies contributed to undergraduate students' learning?
5. What purpose do the new media serve the students of Edo State University, Uzairue?
6. What constraints do undergraduate students of Edo State University, Uzairue, encounter whilst utilising new media?

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Surendran asserts that the theory, developed by Davis, is one of the most popular research models to predict use and acceptance of information systems and technology by individual users. Surendran notes further that in TAM model, there are two factors perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use is relevant in computer use behaviors. Davis defines perceived usefulness as the prospective user's subjective probability that using a specific application system will enhance his or her job or life performance. Perceive ease of use (EOU) can be defined as the degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort. Explaining the theory, Morah & Uzochukwu note that the model suggests that some factors influence user's decisions about how and when they will use technologies when they are presented with new technology. [9,10,11,12]

The relevance of the theory to this work lies in the fact that awareness and usage of the social media by undergraduate students of Edo State University, must start from the students' acceptance of the new innovation or new technology before it can be used by them. More so, the envisaged benefits of usage of the social media by the students must account for its acceptance. Equally important is the availability and comfort that comes from the usage of the social media. It is a known fact that the new media are ubiquitous and pose no cumbersome in their usage. It is believed that the tenets of this theory will be applicable to the undergraduate students of Edo State University, hence its adoption for this study. [13,14,15]

5. Conceptual Review

Online media, new media, social media, social networking sites and/or digital media have similar meaning. For this study, discourse or definitions given by experts that refer to any of the nomenclatures,

will be used. Consequently, Logan says new media technologies are digital media that are interactive, incorporate two-way communication, and involve some form of computing as opposed to old media such as the telephone, radio, and television. On their parts, Castell cited in Danladi & Malam submit that:

The advent of new communication technologies in the closing years of the 20th century, has brought about a new means of communication between communities and social groups. This advancement saw the proliferation of mobile phones and introduction of web 2.0 and its interactive tools that created a virtual space, where individuals meet and discuss issues that affect public good. These communication tools are relatively cheap and highly accessible. They have created new ways for people to express themselves on issues that matter most to them, thereby introducing a new shared space in which individuals are linked to each other and to society in a collective celebration of what they hold in common.

Digital media, according to Dominic, cited in Salami is "a system that encodes information: sound, text, data, graphics, video, and so into a series of on and off pulses that are usually denoted as zeros and ones. Once digitised, the information can be duplicated easily and transported at extremely low cost". On their parts, Diri & Diri note that these social networking sites are acting as great platforms for mobilisation. People are feeling free in sharing their thoughts on any issue and youths are raising their voice against social acts such as the violation of human rights, corruption, etc. These social networking sites are proving themselves a boon at least in bringing to the fore thoughts of people on these social issues".

The above views about the new media shows that they bring about connectivity, interactivity and commonality in an unprecedented manner. Stressing this point, Amana & Attah note that by granting new form of interconnectivity and interactivity hitherto unknown, by altering the processes of media text creation and consumption within the reach of the generality of peoples, the employment of the social media especially after web 2.0 has radically altered for all times, the dynamics of forms of interaction. More so, Kaplan & Haenlein, Abubakar, cited in Wogu & Egwu view the social media as a collection of technologies and computer-mediated tools such as networking platforms, blogs, media, wikis, sharing tools, and the virtual worlds that facilitate such interaction between peoples from diverse cultures and backgrounds in time and space".

According to Salamii, digital media in relations to the existing traditional media of communication came into existence following the development in technologies which present various other methods of communication to the world. The advent of these digital technologies known as the Information and Communication Technologies presented the world with unprecedented opportunities that could never have been imagined.

6. Empirical Review

Many researchers within the field of media and communication studies and those outside this terrain have developed interests in studying the new media, due to their ubiquitous nature, huge audiences that stay glued to them and their liberalization feature. Therefore, many researches have been done in this area. A few of those works will be reviewed in this study.

Study by Omekwu, Eke & Odoh entitled The Use of Social Networking Sites among the Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, ascertained that the new media are used a great deal by the students. The work, which was carried out to examine the extent of usage of social networking sites by the undergraduate students of the UNN, to examine the purpose of the usage of social networking sites by UNN undergraduates and to determine benefits of using social networking sites among the students, etc., also ascertained that UNN undergraduate students use the social networking sites to communicate with friends, watching movies, for discussing national issues like politics, economy and religious matters, and for academic purposes, among other findings.

Similarly, a study by Amry entitled The Impact of Whatsapp Mobile Social Learning on the Achievement and Attitudes of Female Students compared with Face To Face Learning in the Classroom, found out that mobile learning based WhatsApp social networking has a high positive impact on the achievement test of students. Students prefer this innovative educational technology based mobile learning. The objective of the study includes to explore the impact of Whatsapp mobile learning activities on the achievements and attitudes of online students and to compare those findings with students who are subjected only to face-to-face instruction in the classroom. Consequently, the study also found out that mobile learning-based WhatsApp social networking has a high positive impact on the achievement test of students, as they prefer this innovative educational technology based mobile learning.

A study by Adjin-Tettey & Mbatha entitled Digital Natives' Appropriation of New Media Technologies: A Survey of Literature, ascertained that social connectivity/capital, belongingness, interactivity, and inclusion are the driving force behind the digital natives' usage of new media technologies. Digital natives, as used by the above cited authors, refer to younger generation of the human race who are born during the era of internet super higher way compared to those who were born earlier before this time (those referred to as digital emigrants).

Study conducted by Englander et al., cited in Yeboah & Ewur established that students spend more time using SNSs for other purposes apart from educational use, thus affecting their academic performance. Similarly, study by Yeboah & Ewur, entitled The Impact of Whatsapp Messenger Usage on Students Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana,

found out that 76% percent of the respondents said the use of whatsapp has more negative effect on their studies and only 24% percent said it has positive impact on their studies. Most of them explained why they said it affects them negatively, stressing that a student can be stacked on his/her phone for hours chatting with friends through whatsapp without noticing the number of hours spent behind the phone not for any relevant reason. Little time is left for academic purposes since much of their precious time is wasted on whatsapp chatting with friends.

A similar study by Ezeah, Asogwa & Obiorah entitled Social Media Use among Students of Universities in South-East Nigeria, revealed that one of the purposes which Nigerian students use the social media to achieve is watching movies. The study whose objectives are to find out why Nigerian students use the social media, to ascertain whether the use of the new media reduces the amount of time the students devote to their studies. and to find out whether the use of the social media have positive inputs on the students' studies, also established that the students use the social media to expose themselves to pornographies. Based on these findings, the researchers conclude that the purposes of the students' use of social media would not make them studious or engage in constructive intellectual exercise.

These studies did not, however, investigate Understanding Edo State University's Undergraduates' Awareness and Usage of The New Media. This is the gap in literature which the current study seeks to fill.

7. Methodology

The study adopted survey research design, while questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. A sample size of 210 was drawn from the population of the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue, Edo State, Nigeria, which, according to the University's Registrar's office, stood at 2900. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used to track the respondents, where the copies of questionnaire were administered and collected. Data collected was presented on tables, as well as, analysed using simple percentage and Weighted Mean Score (WMS). On WMS, scores above 3.0 are considered as Positive, scores on 3.0 reflect Undecided, whilst below 3.0 are seen as Negative.

8. Discussion of findings

Findings of this work show that the extent of awareness and knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University is High, with 4.7 and 4.5, respective Weighted Means Score (WMS). The import of the above results is that the extent of awareness and knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue is high and positive. The above results tandems with the outcome of the findings x-rayed in the empirical reviews of this Paper, particularly, the work carried out by Asemah, Okpanachi

& Edegoh, on the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Nigeria.

Also, the findings indicate that the extent of utilisation of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University is High. It also indicated a positive response result regarding the issue of use of social media daily, except when out of data; and that majority of the undergraduate students of Edo State University have more than three social media accounts. The implication of the above results is that undergraduate students of the University are social media savvy and enthusiasts; and that the undergraduate students of Edo Sate University Uzairue, use the social media a great deal. This corroborates with the assertion that the University is an e-university, and may accounts for the giant strides made by the University during the Covid-19 pandemic-lockdown – As the only tertiary institution in Nigeria that did not shutdown academic activities (Lectures and Examination of students), through out the period the pandemic held sway.

Similarly, findings revealed that the extent of contribution of new media technologies to EDSU undergraduate students' learning is High, and that the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue (EDSU) agree that social media assist them to do group discussion and made dissemination of information pertaining to lectures-attendance, and Test, easy. The findings also indicate a positive response result, which shows that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that lectures are sometimes held via social media. The implication of the above results is that the undergraduate students of Edo State University utilised the new media technologies for academic activities, relationships, and companionship, rather than for entertainment.

Instructively, findings from the study indicate a positive response result regarding the purpose New media technologies serves at EDSU, that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that social media serves academic purposes, used always for academic purposes, for relationships, and not utilised only for entertainment purpose. The above implies that the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue do not employ or use the new media technologies for entertainment purposes, but, as well, for other purposes indicated above. The above findings tacitly agree with the outcomes of the work done by Omekwu, Eke & Odoh on the use of social networking sites amongst the undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, employed at the empirical review of this Paper.

Further, findings established that difficulties or challenges exist, whilst utilising new media technologies in Edo State University Uzairue, and that the challenges include, Poor network from the GSM service providers; addiction or difficulty arising from students' inability to stay off social media for a day, as indicated by the findings. The import of the above is that the students agree that poor network from the GSM service providers constitutes a major challenge to the use of New media technologies in Edo State University Uzairue.

Data presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: What is the extent of awareness of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University (EDSU)?

Table 1: Extent of awareness of New Media Technologies by EDSU Undergraduate student

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Very high extent	158	790			75
High Extent	52		208		25
Undecided	-	-			-
Low Extent	-	-			-
Very Low Extent	--	-			-
	210	998	4.7	HIGH	100

The Table shows that the extent of awareness of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University is High.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of EDSU?

Table 2: Extent of knowledgeability of New Media Technologies by EDSU Undergraduate students

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Very high extent	122	610			58
High Extent	88		352		42
Undecided	-	-			-
Low Extent	-	-			-
Very Low Extent	--	-			-
	210	962	4.5	HIGH	100

Table 2 shows that the extent of knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University is High.

Table 3: On whether Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Googleplus, Pinterest, My MFB, YouTube, Xing, Linedin, Skype, MySpace, Vk.com, Vine, Twoo, Meetup, Medium are social media platforms

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	141	705			67
Agree	69		276		33
Undecided	-	-			-
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-				-
Total	210	981	4.6	POSITIVE	100

Table 3 indicates that the undergraduate students of EDSU's knowledge of the social media platform is positive.

Research Question Three: To what extent have the undergraduate students of EDSU utilized the new media technologies?

Table 4: Extent of utilisation of New Media Technologies by EDSU Undergraduate students

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Very high extent	105	525			50
High Extent	105	420			50
Undecided	-	-			-
Low Extent	-	-			-
Very Low Extent	--	-			-
	210	945	4.5	HIGH	100

Table 4 indicates that the extent of utilisation of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University is High.

Table 5: You have at least three social media accounts

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	158	75
No	52	25
Total	210	100

The table indicates that majority of the undergraduate students of Edo State University have more than three social media accounts.

Table 6: I use social media daily except when I do not have data

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	105	525			50
Agree	88	352			42
Undecided	17	51			8
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-	-			-
	210	928	4.4	POSITIVE	100

The table indicates a positive response result regarding the issue of use of social media daily, except when out of data. This result, also, indicates that majority of the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that they use social media daily, except when they are out of data.

Research Question Four: To what extent have the new media technologies contributed to undergraduate students' learning?

Table 7: Extent of contribution of the New Media Technologies to EDSU Undergraduate students' learning

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Very high extent	89	445			42.5
High Extent	71		284		34
Undecided	50	150			23.5
Low Extent	-	-			-
Very Low Extent	--	-			-
	210	879	4.2	HIGH	100

Table 7 indicates that the extent of contribution of new media technologies to EDSU undergraduate students' learning is High.

Table 8: Social media assist me and my classmates to do group discussion.

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	123	615			59
Agree	70		280		33
Undecided	17	51			8
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-	-			-
	210	946	4.5	POSITIVE	100

The table shows a 4.5 positive response, and that the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue (EDSU) agree that social media assist them to do group discussion.

Table 9: Do you use the social media for academic activities?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	210	100
No	-	-
Total	210	100

The table indicates that all the undergraduate students of Edo State University also utilise the social media for academic activities.

Table 10: Social media platform has made dissemination of information on lectures- attendance, and Test easy

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	105	525			50
Agree	53		212		25
Undecided	35	105			17
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	17	17			8
	210	859	4.0	POSITIVE	100

The table shows a Positive response result, and that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that the Social media has made dissemination of information pertaining to lectures-attendance, and Test, easy.

Table 11: Lectures are sometimes held via Social Media in Edo State University Uzairue

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	71	355			34
Agree	88		352		42
Undecided	17	51			8
Disagree	17	34			8
Strongly disagree	17	17			8
	210	809	3.9	POSITIVE	100

The table indicates a 3.9 positive response result, which shows that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that lectures are sometimes held via social media.

Research Question Five: What purpose does new media technologies serve the undergraduate students of EDSU?

Table 12: New media technologies such as Social media serves academic purpose at EDSU

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	158	790			75
Agree	52		208		25
Undecided	-	-			-
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-	-			-
	210	998	4.7	POSITIVE	100

The table indicates a positive response result regarding the purpose New media technologies serves at EDSU. This result also indicates that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that social media serves academic purposes.

Table 13: How often is the use of social media for academic purposes in EDSU?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Never	-	-
Always	122	58
Sometimes	71	34
Rarely	-	-
Often	17	8
Occasionally	-	-
Total	210	100

The table indicates that majority of the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue agree that social media is used always for academic purposes.

Table 14: Do you use social media for entertainment?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	88	42
No	122	58
Total	210	100

The table indicates that majority of the undergraduate students of Edo State University do not use the social media for entertainment, and as such, it does not serve only entertainment purpose.

Table 15: Do you use the social media for relationships?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	154	73
No	37	18
Maybe	19	9
Total	210	100

The table indicates that majority of the undergraduate students of Edo State University agree that they also use the social media for relationships.

Table 16: Social media give me companionship

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	70	350			33
Agree	71		280		34
Undecided	69	207			33
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-				-
Total	210	837	4.0	POSITIVE	100

Table 16 indicates that the undergraduate students of EDSU agree that social media give them companionship, and as such, serves companionship purpose.

Research Question Six: What constraints do undergraduate students of EDSU encounter, whilst utilizing new media technologies?

Table 17: it is difficult to stay a day without the use of New media technologies

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	70	350			33
Agree	53	212			25
Undecided	17	51			8
Disagree	35	70			17
Strongly disagree	35	35			17
	210	718	3.4	POSITIVE	100

The Table shows a weighted mean score of 3.4, and a positive response result to the issue of difficulty in staying without the use of social media. This indicates that majority of EDSU agree that it is difficult to stay a day without the use of new media technologies.

Table 18: Poor network from the GSM service providers (MTN, GLO, Airtel, Etisalat) constitute a challenge to my usage of social media.

OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	WEIGHTED	WMS	RESPONSE RESULT	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	105	525			50
Agree	70		280		33
Undecided	35	105			17
Disagree	-	-			-
Strongly disagree	-	-			-
	210	910	4.3	POSITIVE	100

The table indicates a positive response result regarding the issue of poor network from the GSM service providers constituting a challenge/constraints to the usage of social media. The above result indicates that the students agree that poor network constitute a challenge to the use of social media in EDSU.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the extent of awareness and knowledgeability of the new media technologies by the undergraduate students of Edo State University Uzairue (EDSU), is high. Given the above, the study recommends that this tempo or level of awareness and knowledgeability be sustained and publicised, so as to encourage other tertiary institutions in Nigeria to follow same trend. The study, further, amongst others, concludes that challenges abound in the use of new media technologies at EDSU. Given the above, it is recommended that urgent steps be taken to address the challenges established by this study, particularly, the challenge of poor network services from the GSM service providers, within and around the campus. Management of Edo State University Uzairue, and indeed, tertiary institutions in Nigeria, should install Improved-Wi-Fi and other internet connectivity pack-

ages on campuses. As this, greatly, will assist students in overcoming poor network services associated with the Nigerian GSM service providers - MTN, Globacom, Airtel and Etisalat.

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