

New media Utilisation and Student Entrepreneurship Development in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of new media in promoting students' entrepreneurship development in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. The study was guided by four objectives which examined students' exposure to new media platforms, the influence of new media on entrepreneurial skills, the role of digital platforms in business promotion, and the challenges associated with the use of new media for entrepreneurial purposes. A survey research design was adopted because it enabled the researcher to obtain quantitative data on students' perceptions, behaviours, and experiences regarding digital entrepreneurship. The population comprised 4,754 regular students of the School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT), Auchi Polytechnic for the 2024/2025 academic session. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined. Questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. Out of the 400 copies distributed, 340 were successfully completed and returned, representing an 85% response rate. Data collected were analysed using frequency tables and simple percentages. Findings revealed that students are highly exposed to new media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, which are extensively utilised for business communication, marketing, and customer engagement. The study further established that new media enhances entrepreneurial skills such as opportunity recognition, creativity, and innovation while serving as a cost-effective tool for product promotion and sales. However, challenges including high data costs, limited digital marketing skills, cybersecurity risks, and online competition were identified as constraints affecting optimal utilisation. The study concludes that new media significantly promotes student entrepreneurship development but requires institutional support, improved digital infrastructure, and enhanced digital literacy programmes for sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: New media, Student entrepreneurship, Digital platforms, Entrepreneurship development, Auchi Polytechnic.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has increasingly gained recognition as a fundamental driver of economic growth, innovation, and youth empowerment in developing countries. In Nigeria, where youth unemployment rates remain high, entrepreneurship is widely promoted as a pathway to job creation and economic independence. Higher education institutions, including polytechnics, therefore play an essential role in nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets and supporting the practical development of venture creation skills. In recent years, the emergence and rapid expansion of new media technologies have transformed how students acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, start businesses, and promote their products or services. New media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, and various e-commerce or digital payment applications have become critical tools for opportunity recognition, customer engagement, marketing communication and innovative value delivery. As such, examining the impact of new media on student entrepreneurship development in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, is both timely and necessary.

New media refers broadly to digital communication technologies that enable interactivity, content creation, and networked communication (Fuchs, 2022). Compared to traditional media, which are mostly one-way and linear, new media promote participatory culture, user-generated content, real-time communication and global reach. The ubiquity of smartphones, the affordability of mobile data, and the social relevance of digital platforms among young people have positioned new media as a powerful enabler of youth innovation and enterprise development. According to Adeyemi and Yusuf (2023), over 75% of tertiary education students in southern Nigeria rely on social media for learning entrepreneurial skills, discovering market trends and networking with potential customers. This aligns with global observations that Generation Z entrepreneurs increasingly begin their business journeys on social media platforms long before formal registration or investment (Kemp, 2024).

At the polytechnic level, where the curriculum emphasizes technical and vocational competence, new media tools have become an informal “digital incubator” through which students learn practical business skills that complement classroom teaching. Social networks expose learners to entrepreneurial role models, promote knowledge sharing, stimulate creativity, and provide access to low-cost promotional tools (Okoro & Nwosu, 2024). Young entrepreneurs can now create digital shops, share products through videos and images, advertise at minimal cost, and interact directly with consumers. For example, a student

fashion designer at Auchi Polytechnic can upload pictures of newly sewn outfits, receive feedback instantly, take orders via WhatsApp, collect payments through mobile banking apps, and deliver goods with ease, activities that were nearly impossible two decades ago without substantial capital.

Furthermore, new media serve as an important channel for building entrepreneurial intention among students. Entrepreneurial intention, the willingness or determination to engage in entrepreneurial activity, has been shown to increase when students interact with digital content relating to successful entrepreneurs, innovative ideas, business storytelling, and tutorial-based videos (Ezenwa & Okafor, 2022). A study by Ibrahim and John (2023) found that social media engagement significantly influences students' confidence in launching and managing small ventures within Nigerian polytechnics.

Despite these opportunities, the degree to which students benefit from new media technologies varies widely across institutions. The impact of new media tools is shaped by factors such as digital literacy, the availability of reliable internet service, institutional support, affordability of smartphones, and students' awareness of platforms' commercial potential. Although Auchi Polytechnic students are active users of platforms like Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp, anecdotal evidence suggests that many use them primarily for entertainment rather than structured business activities. Research by Adetunji and Bamidele (2024) also shows that even though Nigerian students possess high levels of social media usage, only a fraction employ these tools effectively for entrepreneurship due to knowledge gaps, distractions, and poor strategic planning skills.

Moreover, new media come with notable constraints. Issues such as online fraud, cyberbullying, misinformation, and exposure to unrealistic entrepreneurial narratives can hinder business growth. High levels of digital distraction can reduce productivity and academic performance. Market saturation, especially in common student ventures such as thrift fashion, pastries, cosmetics and phone accessories, can reduce profitability and discourage long-term business commitment. Payment risks, delivery challenges, and customers' lack of trust in online transactions also constitute barriers (Ojo & Raphael, 2023). Infrastructure gaps, including unstable power supply and irregular internet access, further limit the entrepreneurial potential of new media within Nigerian polytechnics.

Nevertheless, evidence continues to show that when students receive proper training in digital marketing, branding, pricing, customer service, and content creation, their business outcomes significantly improve. For instance, Amadi (2023) demonstrated that Nigerian

polytechnic students who participated in structured digital-skills workshops increased their business sales by at least 30% within three months due to improved online promotional strategies. This underscores the importance of institutional engagement. Auchi Polytechnic, as one of Nigeria's leading polytechnics with a strong reputation in technology and vocational innovation, is well positioned to harness new media for entrepreneurship development through its entrepreneurship development programmes (EDP), digital literacy workshops, student clubs, skill acquisition centres and SIWES-related practical projects.

Given this background, assessing the role of new media in promoting student entrepreneurship in Auchi Polytechnic is essential for understanding how digital tools are shaping the entrepreneurial ecosystem on campus. Such assessment provides insight into students' levels of awareness, usage patterns, skills, opportunities and challenges. It also helps the institution identify gaps in support systems and design more effective programmes that integrate digital technology into entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, understanding this relationship enhances policy formulation in areas such as digital inclusion, ICT infrastructure, student capacity building and innovation support.

The significance of this study lies in its potential contributions to academic research, institutional strategy, and policy development. Academically, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital entrepreneurship in African higher education. Practically, it assists Auchi Polytechnic in evaluating how social media and other new media resources can be leveraged to improve student venture creation, value addition and income generation. For policymakers, the findings may support the formulation of interventions aimed at strengthening Nigeria's digital economy through youth participation.

In addition, new media technologies are reshaping how young people perceive and participate in entrepreneurship. For students of Auchi Polytechnic, who operate in an increasingly competitive and technologically driven economy, understanding and utilising new media tools is no longer optional but essential for entrepreneurial success. This study therefore investigates the impact of new media in promoting students' entrepreneurship development in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, highlighting both opportunities and challenges, and providing evidence-based suggestions for improvement.

New media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and various e-commerce tools have become widely used by students of Auchi Polytechnic. Many students run small-scale ventures including fashion design, food services, cosmetics, graphic design, photography and online retailing, often using these platforms to advertise products, engage

customers and receive payments. Despite this widespread use, there is limited empirical evidence on whether new media usage is significantly enhancing students' entrepreneurial skills, business performance and long-term venture intentions.

Furthermore, observations on campus show that although students spend considerable time on social media, much of this engagement is directed toward entertainment rather than productive business activities. Many students lack adequate digital-business skills, including online marketing, branding, pricing strategies and customer management. Issues such as poor network connectivity, unstable electricity, online fraud, cyberbullying, and high data costs further hinder the effective use of new media for entrepreneurship. These challenges raise questions about how effectively new media is contributing to student entrepreneurship development within the institution.

Despite the potential of new media to support business growth, the absence of structured institutional support in the form of digital literacy training, entrepreneurship mentorship, and technology-driven incubation programmes has limited students' ability to fully exploit digital tools. Therefore, it becomes necessary to assess the actual impact of new media on entrepreneurship development among students in Auchi Polytechnic and to identify existing gaps that require intervention.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the extent to which students of Auchi Polytechnic are exposed to and utilize new media platforms.
2. Examine how new media tools influence students' entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, opportunity recognition, and business innovation.
3. Assess the role of new media in promoting students' business activities including product promotion, customer engagement, and sales.
4. Identify the challenges students face while using new media for entrepreneurial purposes.

Literature Review

Concept of New Media

New media refers to digital communication technologies that enable the creation, modification, sharing, and exchange of information through electronic devices and internet-based platforms. Unlike traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers, and

magazines, new media is characterized by interactivity, user-generated content, real-time communication, and global connectivity (Lister et al., 2021). The concept emerged from the convergence of computing technologies, telecommunication networks, and digital content production, resulting in a media environment where information flows seamlessly across geographical boundaries.

Scholars generally agree that new media encompasses platforms such as social media networks (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, X), instant messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram), blogs and vlogs, online news portals, e-commerce platforms, podcasts, websites, mobile apps, and online learning management systems (Adekunle & Nwankwo, 2022). These platforms allow users, especially young people, to create, distribute, and consume content in ways that traditional media cannot. The interactive nature of new media makes audiences not just passive receivers but active participants in the communication process (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2020).

One of the defining characteristics of new media is digitization, which allows information to be stored, retrieved, and shared effortlessly in electronic form. This process enhances the speed, accuracy, and accessibility of communication. Another key feature is interactivity, where users engage in two-way communication, unlike the one-directional flow associated with conventional media (McQuail, 2022). Additionally, new media is networked, meaning that content is distributed across interconnected devices and platforms, enabling collaborative communication and large-scale information sharing (Boyd, 2020).

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a broad and dynamic concept that has been defined from economic, managerial, sociological, and psychological perspectives. Generally, entrepreneurship refers to the process through which individuals identify business opportunities, mobilize resources, take calculated risks, and create value through the establishment of new ventures or the expansion of existing ones (Hisrich, Peters & Shepherd, 2020). It involves innovation, creativity, opportunity recognition, and the willingness to take initiatives in creating goods and services that meet societal needs.

Economically, entrepreneurship is viewed as a critical driver of economic growth, job creation, and socio-economic development. Schumpeter's classical theory describes the entrepreneur as an innovator who introduces new products, new methods of production, new markets, and new organizational structures (Schumpeter, 2021). According to this perspective, entrepreneurship contributes to the continuous transformation of the economy

through “creative destruction,” where outdated ideas and technologies are replaced with more efficient and productive innovations.

From a managerial perspective, entrepreneurship involves organizing and managing resources, including human, financial, and technological assets, to achieve business objectives. The entrepreneur is seen as a strategic decision-maker who coordinates activities, allocates resources efficiently, and adapts to changes in the business environment (Kuratko, 2022). This perspective emphasizes leadership skills, risk-taking ability, and the capacity to plan, organize and sustain business operations. Modern definitions expand the scope of entrepreneurship to include opportunity-driven behavior. Entrepreneurship is now understood as the ability to identify unmet needs in society and develop innovative solutions through the creation of new products, services, or ventures (Olawale & Garba, 2023). This opportunity-driven approach aligns with contemporary digital entrepreneurship, where individuals use new media platforms, mobile technologies, and digital tools to identify markets and reach customers more efficiently.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship is closely linked to creativity and innovation. Innovation, whether in product design, marketing strategies, technology adoption, or customer engagement, is central to the entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneurs must be creative thinkers who can generate new ideas, solve problems, anticipate market trends, and develop unique strategies that give them a competitive advantage (Nwosu & Adeoye, 2022).

In the context of higher education, student entrepreneurship refers to the involvement of students in entrepreneurial activities such as starting small businesses, engaging in creative ventures, offering services, or adopting digital platforms to market products and generate income. Many tertiary institutions encourage entrepreneurship as a strategy to reduce unemployment and promote self-reliance among graduates (Ezenwafor & Okoye, 2021). Through entrepreneurship education, students acquire skills such as critical thinking, opportunity recognition, financial literacy, marketing competence, and digital innovation.

In recent years, technological advancement has expanded the landscape of entrepreneurship, leading to the rise of digital entrepreneurship, where business activities are conducted primarily through online platforms. The emergence of social media networks, mobile applications, and e-commerce platforms has lowered the barriers to entry, enabling students and young entrepreneurs to start small ventures with minimal capital (Ojo & Abiola, 2023). This trend is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where unemployment rates are high and digital media provides new pathways for economic engagement.

In summary, entrepreneurship is a multifaceted concept involving opportunity recognition, innovation, risk-taking, and value creation. It plays a fundamental role in economic development and has become increasingly important for students seeking financial independence and career sustainability in a competitive labour market.

Concept of Student Entrepreneurship Development

Student entrepreneurship development refers to efforts aimed at equipping students with the skills, motivation, exposure, and opportunities required to start and manage successful ventures. This includes training in creativity, innovation, financial literacy, marketing, opportunity recognition and leadership.

Polytechnics in Nigeria, including Auchi Polytechnic, offer Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) designed to strengthen practical skills. Ibrahim and John (2023) argue that modern entrepreneurship education must integrate digital tools to remain relevant in a technology-driven economy. New media therefore become essential components of student entrepreneurship development.

Role of Digital Skills and New Media in Campus Entrepreneurship

Recent shifts in student entrepreneurship at Auchi Polytechnic reflect broader trends in digitalisation. Students now use smartphones and social media extensively to market products, solicit orders, and manage customer relationships. New media lowers transaction and marketing costs and enables rapid feedback loops that accelerate product iteration (Okoro & Nwosu, 2024). For many students, platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube function as low-cost storefronts and learning resources; they watch tutorial videos to learn trade techniques, replicate successful content strategies, and adopt online payment methods where feasible (Adeyemi & Yusuf, 2023).

However, the effective integration of new media into institutional entrepreneurship support remains uneven. While some departments incorporate digital marketing or e-commerce modules into practical courses, others still rely primarily on traditional, face-to-face methods. There is therefore an institutional gap between students' informal digital practices and the structured entrepreneurship curriculum.

Student entrepreneurship at Auchi Polytechnic commonly manifests in sectors aligned with campus demand and technical skills, food services, fashion and tailoring, graphics and printing, ICT services, crafts, event planning, and small-scale agro-processing. Student artisans and service providers often combine workshop skills with social media promotion to secure orders from staff, neighbouring communities and alumni networks. Where mentorship

and market linkages exist, student ventures occasionally graduate into sustained micro-enterprises that employ other students (Amadi, 2023).

Entrepreneurial competitions, trade fairs and campus market days, when organized, have proven effective in showcasing student products and connecting learners with potential customers and investors. These events also provide experiential learning opportunities in pricing, sales, inventory management and customer service.

New Media as a Tool for Business Promotion and Marketing

The emergence of new media has created unprecedented opportunities for student entrepreneurs to acquire business knowledge, promote products and services, engage customers, and identify viable market opportunities. However, despite these advantages, several structural, technological, and behavioural challenges limit the extent to which students can effectively leverage digital platforms for entrepreneurial development. Scholars such as Ojo and Raphael (2023) argue that recognising these constraints is essential for designing practical interventions capable of strengthening digital entrepreneurship among students.

One of the major challenges confronting student entrepreneurs is limited digital literacy. Although many students actively use smartphones and social media platforms for personal communication and entertainment, this familiarity does not automatically translate into professional digital competence. Amadi (2023) notes that many students lack specialised skills in digital marketing, e-commerce management, online branding, and data analytics. Consequently, student entrepreneurs may struggle to develop professional content, execute targeted advertising campaigns, interpret engagement metrics, or optimise online visibility. This skills deficit reduces the ability of new media to function as an effective entrepreneurial tool.

Another significant constraint relates to poor internet connectivity and the high cost of data services. Effective participation in digital entrepreneurship depends heavily on stable and affordable internet access. Daramola (2024) observes that inconsistent network services and expensive data subscriptions remain persistent challenges across many Nigerian institutions. These infrastructural limitations restrict students' online presence, reduce access to training resources, delay customer communication, and increase the operational cost of managing online businesses. As a result, the potential benefits of new media platforms are not fully realised.

Cybersecurity threats also represent a critical barrier to the successful adoption of new media for entrepreneurship. Student entrepreneurs operating online are exposed to risks such as hacking, phishing attacks, identity theft, and digital fraud. According to Ojo and Raphael (2023), limited awareness of cybersecurity practices heightens vulnerability to financial loss and reputational damage. In addition, widespread concerns about online scams can discourage customers from engaging in digital transactions, thereby weakening trust and slowing business expansion.

The problem of content saturation and intense competition further complicates the digital entrepreneurial environment. As increasing numbers of small-scale businesses migrate to social media platforms, competition for audience attention becomes more intense. Okoro and Nwosu (2024) argue that platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have become highly competitive marketing spaces where visibility depends on creativity, consistency, and strategic branding. Without innovative promotional strategies, student entrepreneurs may experience low engagement levels, reduced sales performance, and difficulty retaining customers.

Time management challenges and digital distractions also undermine effective utilisation of new media. Social media platforms are structured to maximise user engagement through entertainment and social interaction, which can divert attention away from productive entrepreneurial activities. Adeyemi and Yusuf (2023) maintain that student entrepreneurs often struggle to balance academic responsibilities, business operations, and personal online engagement. Excessive exposure to non-productive content may reduce efficiency, weaken business planning, and negatively affect marketing consistency.

Closely related to these challenges are issues of trust and credibility in online transactions. Many consumers remain cautious when dealing with student operated businesses due to concerns about product authenticity, payment security, and delivery reliability. Eze and Musa (2022) explain that the absence of formal business registration, established reputation, or verified customer reviews can limit consumer confidence. This credibility gap restricts market expansion and reduces the effectiveness of new media as a sales channel.

In summary, although new media provides significant opportunities for entrepreneurship development, student entrepreneurs encounter multiple barriers including limited digital literacy, inadequate internet infrastructure, cybersecurity risks, intense online competition, time management difficulties, and credibility challenges. Addressing these issues requires coordinated interventions such as digital entrepreneurship training, improved

internet accessibility, mentorship support systems, and awareness programmes on safe online business practices. By mitigating these constraints, institutions such as Auchi Polytechnic can enhance students' capacity to maximise new media opportunities and achieve sustainable entrepreneurial success.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the foundation for understanding the relationships between variables in a study. In this research, the framework explains how new media adoption influences student entrepreneurship development at Auchi Polytechnic. It integrates three complementary theories, Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) and Technological Determinism Theory to capture both the adoption process of digital platforms and their impact on entrepreneurial activities.

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory was propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962 to explain how new ideas, technologies, or practices spread within a social system over time through communication channels. According to Rogers, the adoption of an innovation occurs through five sequential stages namely knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. These stages describe the process through which individuals first become aware of an innovation, develop interest, decide whether to adopt or reject it, put it into use and eventually confirm their decision based on perceived benefits.

In the context of this study, new media platforms such as social media networks, blogs, YouTube channels, online marketplaces and digital learning platforms are regarded as technological innovations. Polytechnic students constitute members of the social system who adopt these technologies at different rates depending on their level of exposure, interest and perceived usefulness. Rogers categorised adopters into five groups namely innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards, each reflecting varying degrees of willingness to embrace technological change.

New media contributes significantly to entrepreneurship development among students by creating awareness of business opportunities, providing access to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, facilitating networking and mentorship opportunities and enabling access to wider markets. Through digital platforms, students engage in innovative business practices such as online marketing, digital branding, freelancing and e-commerce activities, thereby enhancing their entrepreneurial capacity.

The relevance of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how and why students of Auchi Polytechnic adopt new media tools for entrepreneurial purposes. The theory further clarifies how differences in adoption patterns among students influence the overall level of entrepreneurship development within the institution. As noted by Ibrahim and John (2023), variations in adopter categories significantly shape the speed and extent to which entrepreneurial innovations spread among students, ultimately determining the success of new media driven entrepreneurship initiatives.

Technological Determinism Theory

The Technological Determinism Theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. The theory posits that technology serves as a primary driver of social change by shaping human behaviour, culture and economic activities. McLuhan's famous assertion that "the medium is the message" emphasizes that the nature and structure of a technology influence how people think, interact and organise their activities beyond the actual content transmitted through the medium.

Applied to this study, new media technologies are viewed as forces reshaping students' entrepreneurial mindset and practices. The availability of smartphones, internet connectivity and digital platforms has transformed how students learn entrepreneurial skills, identify business opportunities, communicate with customers and run or expand their businesses. Technology therefore becomes not only a communication tool but also a catalyst for innovation and economic participation among students.

Within Auchi Polytechnic, new media has reduced traditional barriers to entry into entrepreneurship by enabling students to establish and manage businesses with minimal capital investment. Through online services, digital marketing platforms and remote work opportunities, students are able to participate actively in entrepreneurial ventures without the limitations associated with conventional business structures.

The relevance of Technological Determinism Theory to this study lies in its explanation of how technological advancement directly influences entrepreneurial behaviour. The presence and continuous use of new media technologies make entrepreneurship more accessible, flexible and innovative for students. The theory further explains the transformative impact of new media on entrepreneurial development and provides insight into how technological adoption reshapes entrepreneurial activities among students of Auchi Polytechnic

METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed the use of a survey as their technique of study, which is suitable for gathering quantitative and qualitative data from a sample population to describe the characteristics, perceptions, and behaviors of student entrepreneurs regarding new media use. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafu, and Okpanchi, (2017), a survey is a type of research design intended to collect large and small samples from a population to investigate the distribution, incidence, and interaction of educational activities such as sociological and psychological variables. This design is appropriate because it captures the current state of student entrepreneurship development and the role of new media without manipulating variables (Adewale & Musa, 2023).

The population of this research work consists of the regular students of the School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT), Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu. The numerical strength of the population of students in regular programme in the 2024/2025 academic session in the School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT) is 4,754 (MIS, 2025).

Apparently, it was not possible to study the entire population. The researcher determined the sample size from the population.

Okwandu (2004) recommends the Taro Yamane's formula for researchers in determining the sample size from a given population. It was adopted in this study. Taro Yamane's formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = sample size

N

N = Population

$1 + N(e)^2$

0.05 = Margin of error

$$n = \frac{4750}{1 + 4,750 \times 0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4750}{4751 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{4750}{11.87}$$

$$n = 400$$

Using the above formula, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined for this study. Consequently, questionnaires were administered to 400 students selected from the study population. The study adopted a convenience sampling technique, which enabled the researcher to select respondents who were readily accessible within the Auchu Polytechnic

environment. The population comprised students of the School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT), and the sampling technique was deployed by visiting lecture halls, departmental surroundings, and other academic locations within the Polytechnic where SICT students could easily be reached. Students who were present at the time of data collection and willing to participate were approached and given equal opportunity to respond to the questionnaire until the required sample size of 400 respondents was achieved. This approach ensured that participants were drawn from different levels and departments within the school, thereby providing a reasonable representation of the accessible population despite the non-probability nature of the sampling method.

The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection because it allows the researcher to gather information from a relatively large number of respondents within a short period. The instrument was considered suitable as it requires minimal administrative skill, reduces interviewer bias, and guarantees a higher level of anonymity, thereby encouraging respondents to provide sincere and unbiased answers. The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires directly to respondents within the Auchu Polytechnic community. The completed copies were retrieved immediately after administration to minimise loss, ensure a high response rate, and reduce the likelihood of incomplete responses. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, out of which 340 copies were correctly completed and returned, representing an adequate response rate for statistical analysis.

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation. Copies of the instrument were presented to experts in Mass Communication and research methodology who carefully examined the items to determine whether they adequately measured the variables under investigation and aligned with the research objectives and questions. Their observations and corrections guided the

modification, restructuring, and refinement of ambiguous or unclear items before final administration. This process ensured that the instrument effectively captured relevant information required for the study.

The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study conducted among a small group of students outside the selected sample but possessing similar characteristics to the study population. Responses obtained from the pilot test were analysed to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Necessary adjustments were made based on identified inconsistencies to improve clarity and stability of responses. The reliability test confirmed that the instrument was consistent and capable of producing similar results when administered under comparable conditions, thereby making it suitable for the main study.

Data Presentation

Four hundred copies of the questionnaire were delivered to respondents; 340 copies were filled out and returned. The gathered information is organised into frequency tables and assessed with the help of fundamental percentages.

Objective 1: Determine the extent to which students of Auchi Polytechnic are exposed to and utilize new media platforms.

Table One: Type of new media platforms mostly used by students of Auchi Polytechnic

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Facebook	47	13.8
Whatsapp	230	67.7
Instagram	10	3.1
Snapchat	16	4.6
TikTok	37	10.8
Total	340	100

According to the information in table one, WhatsApp and Facebook are the most frequently used platforms among student entrepreneurs, reflecting their popularity for business communication, order collection, and marketing. TikTok and Snapchat are

increasingly being adopted for video-based promotion and skill acquisition. Instagram is relatively less popular among students, which aligns with contemporary trends of youth preferring visually-driven platforms.

Table Two: Opportunity identification of new media toolson students' entrepreneurial skills

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Helps identify business opportunities	126	36.9
Discovered new market trends online	167	49.2
Learnt about competitors activities	47	13.9
Total	340	100

Students reported that new media significantly facilitates opportunity identification. Platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok allow students to monitor trends, observe competitors, and understand customer preferences.

Objective 3: Assess the role of new media in promoting students' business activities including product promotion, customer engagement, and sales.

Table Three: Extent of Respondent use of new media for business promotion & marketing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To a large extent	99	29.2
To a very large extent	199	58.5
To some extent	42	12.1
Total	340	100

New media is a critical tool for student entrepreneurs in promoting their business activities including product promotion, customer engagement, and sales. The findings

indicate that, to a very large extent, students can reach wider audiences, create engaging content, and advertise at minimal costs,

Objective 4: Identify the challenges students face while using new media for entrepreneurial purposes.

Table Four: Challenges in Leveraging New Media for Entrepreneurship

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Access constraint/Data cost	141	41.6
Difficulty in creating engaging content	120	35.4
Cyber security and online fraud risks	79	23
Total	340	100

Despite the benefits, students face challenges that hinder optimal use of new media. High internet costs, cybersecurity risks, competition, and content creation difficulties affect business performance.

Table Five: Strategies for improving the use of new media to enhance student entrepreneurship development

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Enhanced digital infrastructure	47	13.8
Digital skills training	37	10.8
Peer mentorship programs	10	3.1
Cyber security awareness	16	4.6
Support mechanisms	230	67.7
Total	340	100

Table five shows respondents' views on the recommendations for improving the use of new media to enhance student entrepreneurship development. 230 respondents representing majority 67.7% recommend a support mechanism which include the establishment of campus-based digital entrepreneurship support centers to provide guidance, funding information, and tools for students seeking to start or grow businesses online. 47 respondents representing 13.8% recommends enhanced digital infrastructure which involve Auchu polytechnic in collaboration with telecom providers to provide affordable internet packages for students to facilitate seamless use of new media for entrepreneurship. Other

recommendations by respondents include digital skills training, peer mentorship programs, integration into curriculum, cyber security awareness,

Discussion of Findings

This section presents a detailed discussion of findings based on the stated objectives of the study. The discussion integrates empirical results, theoretical explanations, and existing literature in order to provide answers to the research questions guiding the study.

Exposure and Utilisation of New Media Platforms among Students

The first objective of the study sought to determine the extent to which students of Auchi Polytechnic are exposed to and utilise new media platforms. Findings presented in Table One reveal that WhatsApp recorded the highest level of usage among respondents, followed by Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram. The dominance of WhatsApp indicates that students prefer platforms that support direct communication, instant feedback, and low data consumption. These features make WhatsApp particularly suitable for business communication, order collection, customer interaction, and informal marketing activities.

The high exposure level confirms that new media platforms have become embedded in students' daily academic, social, and entrepreneurial practices. This finding aligns with earlier studies which argue that social media platforms function as accessible entrepreneurial infrastructure for young people (Okoro & Nwosu, 2024; Ibrahim & John, 2023). From a theoretical perspective, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains this pattern as students gradually adopt digital platforms based on perceived usefulness, peer influence, and observable benefits. Innovators and early adopters within the campus environment appear to influence wider student participation, thereby accelerating adoption across the institution.

Influence of New Media on Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

The second objective examined how new media tools influence entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, opportunity recognition, and business innovation. Findings in Table Two demonstrate that a significant proportion of students discovered market trends online and identified business opportunities through new media exposure. Students reported learning about competitors' activities and consumer preferences through digital platforms.

These findings suggest that new media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a learning environment that enhances entrepreneurial competence. Exposure to online content enables students to observe successful business models, replicate innovative ideas, and experiment with new approaches to product development and service delivery. The results support the Diffusion of Innovation framework, which posits that awareness generated

through communication channels stimulates innovation adoption and entrepreneurial experimentation.

Furthermore, the findings validate arguments within Technological Determinism Theory that technology shapes human behaviour and economic participation. The availability of smartphones, internet access, and digital platforms has transformed how students acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, thereby fostering creativity and innovation within campus enterprises.

Role of New Media in Promoting Students' Business Activities

The third objective assessed the role of new media in promoting students' business activities including product promotion, customer engagement, and sales performance. Table Three shows that the majority of respondents indicated using new media for business promotion to a very large extent. This confirms that digital platforms have become central marketing tools for student entrepreneurs.

The findings demonstrate that students leverage new media to reach wider audiences at minimal cost, interact directly with customers, showcase products visually, and receive real time feedback. Unlike traditional advertising channels that require substantial financial investment, social media platforms provide affordable promotional alternatives suitable for student owned enterprises. This supports previous research highlighting the effectiveness of digital business models among youth entrepreneurs (Oladejo & Musa, 2023). The results also reflect assumptions of the Technology Acceptance Model, which suggests that users adopt technologies they perceive as useful and easy to use. Students' continued reliance on social media marketing indicates strong perceived usefulness and behavioural intention toward digital entrepreneurship practices.

Challenges Faced by Students in Using New Media for Entrepreneurship

The fourth objective identified the challenges students face while using new media for entrepreneurial purposes. Findings in Table Four indicate that access constraints and high data costs constitute the most significant challenge, followed by difficulties in creating engaging content and cybersecurity risks. These results confirm that although students are highly exposed to digital platforms, structural and skill related barriers limit optimal utilisation. Poor internet infrastructure and expensive data subscriptions reduce consistent online engagement and increase business operating costs. Additionally, limited digital literacy affects students' ability to design professional promotional content capable of attracting customers in highly competitive online environments.

Cybersecurity concerns further complicate digital entrepreneurship activities. Fear of fraud and online scams may discourage both entrepreneurs and customers from fully embracing online transactions. These findings corroborate earlier studies which identify infrastructural limitations, knowledge gaps, and digital risks as major obstacles to student entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Ojo & Raphael, 2023; Adeyemi & Yusuf, 2023).

Strategies for Enhancing New Media Use for Student Entrepreneurship Development

Table Five provides insight into strategies recommended by respondents for improving the use of new media in entrepreneurship development. The majority of students advocated for stronger institutional support mechanisms, including the establishment of campus based digital entrepreneurship support centres. Such centres could provide mentorship, access to funding information, digital tools, and professional guidance for student entrepreneurs.

Respondents also recommended improved digital infrastructure, affordable internet services, digital skills training, peer mentorship programmes, and cybersecurity awareness initiatives. These recommendations indicate that students recognise entrepreneurship development as requiring collaborative support involving institutional management, industry stakeholders, and technology providers.

The findings reinforce the theoretical position of Technological Determinism Theory, which emphasises that technological environments shape economic participation. When institutional systems provide adequate technological support and skills training, students are more likely to transform digital exposure into sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that new media serves as a powerful catalyst for entrepreneurship development among students of Auchu Polytechnic. While adoption levels are high and entrepreneurial benefits are evident, the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship depends largely on institutional support, infrastructure availability, and students' digital competence. Addressing identified challenges will strengthen the capacity of students to translate new media engagement into sustainable entrepreneurial success.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of new media on student entrepreneurship development at Auchu Polytechnic with emphasis on students' exposure to new media platforms, the influence of digital tools on entrepreneurial skills, the role of new media in business promotion, and the challenges associated with its utilisation. The findings clearly demonstrate that new media has become an integral component of entrepreneurial activities among students.

The study concludes that students of Auchi Polytechnic are highly exposed to and actively utilise new media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, for communication, marketing, and business operations. This high level of exposure indicates that new media has evolved beyond social interaction to become an important economic and entrepreneurial resource within the campus environment.

Furthermore, the study establishes that new media significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial skills. Through digital platforms, students are able to identify business opportunities, monitor market trends, develop creativity, and adopt innovative business practices. New media therefore functions as both a learning environment and an entrepreneurial incubator that supports skill acquisition and innovation.

The findings also confirm that new media plays a crucial role in promoting students' business activities. Digital platforms enable low-cost marketing, customer engagement, brand visibility, and market expansion. As a result, entrepreneurship has become more accessible to students who may lack substantial financial capital but possess digital access and creativity. However, despite these benefits, the study concludes that several challenges limit the optimal use of new media for entrepreneurship development. High internet data costs, inconsistent connectivity, limited digital marketing competence, cybersecurity risks, and difficulties in creating competitive content remain significant barriers. Without strategic institutional and policy interventions, these challenges may restrict the sustainability and growth of student enterprises.

Overall, the study concludes that while new media has strong potential to drive entrepreneurship development among students of Auchi Polytechnic, its full benefits can only be realised through improved digital capacity, institutional support systems, and enabling technological infrastructure.

Recommendations

Based on the objectives of the study and the findings obtained, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Auchi Polytechnic management should collaborate with telecommunications providers to provide affordable campus-based internet services and improved digital infrastructure. Reliable and low-cost internet access will encourage consistent utilisation of new media platforms for entrepreneurial learning and business operations.
2. The institution should integrate digital entrepreneurship training into the curriculum across departments. Practical courses in digital marketing, e-commerce management, content creation, online branding, and data analytics should be introduced to enhance students' creativity, innovation, and opportunity recognition abilities.
3. Auchi Polytechnic should establish campus digital entrepreneurship support centres where students can access mentorship, marketing guidance, business incubation services, and professional advisory support. Regular entrepreneurship fairs, digital trade exhibitions, and online business competitions should also be organised to promote student ventures and increase market exposure.
4. To mitigate challenges faced by student entrepreneurs, the institution should organise periodic workshops on cybersecurity awareness, safe online transactions, and digital business ethics. In addition, peer mentorship programmes should be encouraged so that experienced student entrepreneurs can guide beginners on effective content creation, audience engagement, and online business management.
5. Government agencies, entrepreneurship development centres, and private sector partners should collaborate with Auchi Polytechnic to provide micro grants, startup funding opportunities, and access to digital tools for student entrepreneurs. Such support mechanisms will help students transition from small campus businesses to sustainable enterprises after graduation.

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